

Finding Swim Lessons

A Guide for Parents and Caregivers of Children with Disabilities

Every child has their own way of learning, and many families of children with disabilities need to take extra care to find swim lessons that are appropriate for their child. Use these tips & tricks to find a learn-to-swim program that works for your family.

Ask Your Network

Take advantage of the knowledge that could be in your community. Start by asking around your network about swim lessons in your community and if there are funding sources available.

Ask your county's Developmental Disabilities agency if there are funds available through Medicaid waivers, county grants/funds, etc. Your case manager, service coordinator, early intervention specialist, or intervention specialist may be able to help.



Word of Mouth

Other parents, online groups, support groups, diagnosis-specific organizations



Community Centers

Rec centers, YMCAs, swim schools, parks and recreation departments, schools with pools



Professionals

Pediatricians, intervention specialists, early intervention specialists, occupational or physical therapists, adaptive P.E. teachers

Questions to Ask

Once you find an instructor/facility, ask specific questions to get the full picture ahead of time:

- When are lessons offered? How long is a lesson? How many weeks/months long is a session?
- Has the instructor received disability/behavior-specific training?
- What are the accessibility features of the pool?
 - Is there a chair lift? Is the pool zero entry? Is the pool heated?
- Are there private/family changing rooms, or adult changing tables?
- Is my child cleared to be in the water?
 - Do they need to be toilet trained? Have they been cleared by their doctor?
- Is it a group lesson?
 - How many children will be in the water? What is the ratio of swim instructors to children? Will a parent be in the water with their child?
- Is the swim curriculum flexible? Can it be modified for parent-directed goals or the child's abilities?