



# TRANSITION INTO GOGGLES



Happy submersion is the key to learning to swim.

However when it comes to going underwater, children aged from approximately 15 to 36 months usually experience more sensitivity with their eyes and they can begin to resist and protest. This is the time to consider the transition into goggles.

Getting goggles on children is a learning process, straight forward for some and a struggle for others, parents included. There are a few considerations before attempting to pull, push or shove a pair of goggles onto a child's head and get them "happy" to go underwater. Parents and teachers hold the key to making this transition smooth and free from stress and drama. We know that once a child is comfortable wearing a good fitting pair of goggles, they are much happier and resume their former love of going underwater.

To support the child's transition into goggles, we encourage parents to be happy role models and lead through positive example and that means wearing goggles also. A patient, gentle approach will strengthen trust between parent and child and in turn, will enhance the underwater connection as parents will be able to read their child's body language more effectively.

For teachers, goggles are important for the underwater scanning aspect of our program so we can make sure children are happy, relaxed and their breathing and submersion development is on track.

## What are the best goggles to buy?

- Goggles with molded eye surrounds are a comfortable fit. Older children may benefit from a mask style goggle with a more expansive view.
- Eye contact is important, so buy goggles with clear or only slightly tinted lenses and if available, quick release straps can be helpful.
- Contact our office for a pair of goggles to suit your child.

## Let's get started

- Take a positive approach and involve your child in getting their first pair of goggles, such as choosing the colour and letting them open the packet for the first time. Tie a strip of ribbon onto the strap so you know which goggles are yours.
- Let your child take their goggles into the bath and show them how to play **water windows** during bath time. HOW? The first steps begin above water. Hold your own goggles up to your eyes, look through and then lower them (no straps are on the head... Yet!!). Encourage your child to copy you and make a game of it, holding the goggle cups on the eyes longer and longer each time and looking at each other. Do this to help your child get used to the feeling of having goggles touching their face.
- Leave the goggles in the bathroom for your child to play with and talk about how goggles make eyes happy underwater so we can see toys and of course, each other.

## Putting goggles on the head

- **Be very gentle** and start by thoroughly wetting your child's hair. Goggle straps will catch and pull on dry hair and this hurts! For some it will cause so much distress, they will not have a bar of it again.
- Run your hands firmly but gently, a few times around their eyes and then over their head as if you were placing the strap over their head. Your touch will help sensitise the skin where the goggle eye cups and straps will go.
- Initially, a team effort of two adults will work best to put them on; one facing the child to put the goggle cups over the eyes and to observe their response before the other gently places the strap over the head.
- Adjust the strap ideally, to sit high on the back of the head for a comfortable fit and so they don't slide down. If there is a pony tail involved, place the strap above the ponytail to help prevent the strap sliding down. Make sure the strap is not flattening the ears as it will slide down too and most likely make the goggles leak. We call this "fish bowl" eyes.
- Once familiar with this process when your child is above water, show them how to lift their goggles off their eyes up and rest them on their forehead (*like sunglasses*). This action gives the child control and reduces parents interfering with the process.
- Use play as an incentive to encourage your child to wear their goggles. E.g. use a mirror to look in, find a new toy by looking for it underwater or play in the shower with them on. Get creative and make it fun. Remember play is learning and learning is play

- **Be mindful**

Children with sensitive scalps, those who are uncomfortable wearing hats or having their head/hair touched, may find wearing goggles initially upsetting. We often find a contributing cause to be unresolved head sensitivity from their birth experience, such as the use of forceps or vacuum extraction and there may be a stronger reaction if the child was injured in this process. Be very gentle and patient as you encourage your child to wear goggles.

- Positive language is so important when talking about goggles around your child. It is unwise to use negative reinforcement such “you can’t swim or see without goggles on”. The child may take this on and believe that they cannot swim or see without goggles, which is of course untrue.
- If your child is fussing and does not want to wear them then just let it be... there will be other opportunities in class, on another day or they will come to realise it’s more comfortable with them on. The more they are pushed to wear them, the stronger the battle of wills and nobody wins.

Keep it fun and your child will learn to love their goggles and enjoy their underwater world!



### Let me see!

I’ve been good at submersion and I will be again  
But my eyes are now sore and that means pain  
I guess I need goggles like yours mum and dad  
But it won’t be easy and you might get mad

And when you get mad you’ll force them on my head  
Pull my hair in the process and make it worse instead  
You’ll put them on from behind, you won’t see how they fit  
My nose squashed in the goggle and one eye just a slit

There’ll be fiddling and fussing and not just from me  
We missed our turn at the platform and I still can’t see  
Duck dives are over and so is swim through the hoop  
Now we’ve all gathered to sing goodbye to the group

This might take some time and we’ve got to get it right  
I don’t want to quit but I’m prepared to fight  
Be gentle and patient and positive with me  
I’ll be happy to wear my goggles  
Just you wait and see



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Oceanic Waterbabies