

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A SWIM SCHOOL



Are you leaving our program, is your child graduating, are you moving away and unsure what to do about your child's swimming lessons after Waterbabies?

As we are a specialised program, unfortunately we cannot recommend any specific swim schools but what we *can do* is give you a process to go through to help you make an **informed choice** when looking for suitable swimming lessons for your child.

Obtain a list of swim schools in your area and don't restrict yourself to your immediate area as you may have to travel a bit for the "*right one*". **Get ready to ask some questions...**

THE PROGRAM

- Does the swim school have "philosophy" and does it resonate with you and what you've already experienced in the water with your child?
- Are the classes age and stage appropriate for your child? Is there large variation in age and ability within the class? (e.g. *experienced children and new beginners together*)
- Is there consistency with the same teacher each week or do they change often?
- Is the technical program unified or does it differ with each teacher?
- Does the program use flotation devices (if so, how often and for what purpose?)
- Are parents in the water with their child or is it teacher/children only and if so, what age is the child before they go into independent classes? (Please see over page for *readiness for independent classes.*)
- What age do the children move into independent classes (without their parent)?
- Are the teachers in the water with the children or are they directing from the pool deck?
- School age children do participate in certificate based *learn to swim* programs, but for children under school age, does the program issue certificates for passing stages? Is the focus on achievement / pass and fail) or based on individual ability and your child's level of happiness and harmony in the water?

THE POOL

- What is the water temperature? Will you /your child feel comfortable in the temperature?
- Is the water quality excellent and does it feel "clean"?
- Is the water shallow or deep? Where will the water level be up to on you?
- For older children in independent classes, be aware when transferring from a deep water learning pool to a standing depth pool, it can be a distraction and interrupt their natural swimming ability. This is usually due to the novelty of being able to stand in the water and children do love to bounce around when they can stand. They may need time to integrate into their new swimming environment.
- How large is the pool and how many classes are held at the same time? Is there ample space?
- What distractions are there (e.g. water aerobic classes, school lessons, poolside cafe etc.)

GO AND WATCH

- Go along and observe classes of your child's age group. Are parents taught how to teach their children with focus on sound technical handling, reading body language and learning readiness to participate? Or is the lesson teacher focused, meaning does the teacher do the submersion and other activities while the parents stand by? and if so, what level of permission is sought from both the parent and the child? (**Remember... Do it with the child, not to them**)
- What is the preparation and the time dedicated toward getting children ready for submersion?
- Are program skills appropriate for **your** child's ability and are individual adaptations given for those children not ready or capable?
- What is the teaching approach if children are unhappy or upset in the class?
- **How do you feel when you are watching?** Is the lesson happy and play based? (*Play is learning... and learning is play*) Is there encouragement, praise and joy? How well are the children swimming?

We hope you find a great new place to swim, however if you are not satisfied with your answers to the above questions, perhaps you need to consider setting aside time each week to be in the water with your child and continue your learning process together. You can reinforce the skills and activities you have already learnt at Waterbabies and provide a fun, loving and respectful water experience for your child. If you choose this path, have questions or any teaching difficulties with your child, then please contact the Oceanic Waterbabies office.

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