



**SILVER BEAR**  
SWIM SCHOOL

## **Silver Bear Swim School Baby Bear Program**

Welcome to the Silver Bear Swim School Baby Bear program. You are about to embark on an enjoyable bonding and growth experience with your child unlike any other. Your baby will learn how to swim in a fun, warm, and nurturing environment. In addition, your baby will also receive many exceptional benefits only attainable in our special aquatic environment (see attached).

Below, you will find suggestions for your first few Baby Bear swim classes that will help ensure a positive experience throughout your baby's aquatic life.

### **PLEASE DO . . .**

**Arrive a little early** -- getting to your first class early can help alleviate any undue stress or confusion. If you are feeling a little anxious, you can bet your baby is too. Rushing will only exacerbate these feelings.

**Communicate** -- talk with your instructor early and often about any questions or concerns you may have. This class is meant to be enjoyable, and we understand that you may be nervous about submerging your baby. Your instructor needs to know how you are feeling so he/she can address your concerns.

**Attend classes regularly** - consistency is critical with children at this age. Attendance is key to your baby's performance and progress. More importantly, attending all your scheduled classes will help baby get into a swim routine. Knowing what to expect will help baby relax and enjoy swimming.

**Take advantage of our Baby Bear Orientation** - - although you will learn everything necessary during the course of your first few classes, orientations provide a more intimate setting to receive information, answer questions, and address concerns. Orientations also allow baby to get in the pool outside of the larger class environment and get acclimated. A Baby Orientation is offered to all families within the first two weeks of lessons, but is recommended before the first class. Please check with our front desk staff to schedule your orientation.

**Take advantage of our Family Swims** - - family swims are really fun for everyone, but they also give baby the chance to enjoy the pool outside of the structure of regular class.



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**Relax and have fun** - - remember that above anything else, our goal is for your baby to learn to love and respect the water. You can encourage this by relaxing and having fun. Our Baby Bear classes use repetition to give baby a sense of comfort, and a clear understanding of what to expect from each class. It won't be long before your baby is singing the songs and replicating the games we play.

**Stay in the water for the entire class** - - even if baby seems overly fussy, it is important to stay in the pool and let baby learn how to soothe themselves in the water. Although this may mean you and baby are playing on the step for most of class, staying in the pool is still making good progress. Taking them out because of crying can train them that this is a way to get out of certain activities.

### PLEASE DON'T...

**Worry about crying** - - most babies will cry during their first few classes. If your baby loves bath time you are already at an advantage. However, don't feel frustrated or self-conscious if your baby cries in the pool. We are introducing baby to a new environment, new activities, and people and this can be over-stimulating.

For the first few weeks of class, focus on fun and acclimating to this new environment. Hug and comfort your baby. Try to participate in the activities your instructor suggests, but don't put too much pressure on baby at first. If baby is upset, you can still try an activity. If it seems like too much for that day (you know your baby's limits better than anyone), then take a break. This is a good time to return to the step and allow baby to calm down.

Just remember that you are always going to come back to every activity each lesson and encourage baby to try again.

**Compare your baby to other babies** - - one of our core philosophies is that all children learn at their own pace and in their own style. For example, some babies will naturally start kicking right away and others won't even try for several months. Use encouragement and positive reinforcement while giving them the independence (hands off!) to try things on their own. Don't get frustrated if your baby is not at the same level as other students in your class. All babies will eventually master every skill – it is not a question of “if”, just “when”.

## **In addition to learning to swim, your baby will achieve many incredible, scientific benefits from the Silver Bear Swim School Baby Bear Program!\***

### **Enhanced parent-baby bonding:**

If nothing else, baby swim offers an entire half hour of parent-baby bonding in a warm, reassuring and comfortable environment. There are no phone calls, televisions or chores to get in the way of this very special time together. Parent and baby can overcome obstacles and celebrate the joys of success and progress as a team. For many families, baby swim becomes one of the highlights of the entire week.

### **Reduced risk of drowning:**

Research has shown that swim lessons can make children safer around water with one study showing a reduction of drowning risk by 88%.

### **Better development of the whole child:**

Studies have shown increased physical, mental, social and emotional development of babies who participate in year round swimming.

### **Improves motor development:**

Buoyancy is a unique and wonderful aspect of swimming that babies can gain from. On land, babies are weighed down by gravity while in the water they are free from it. Studies have shown that this element contributed to better balance, movement, and grasping techniques amongst children in swim lessons versus those who did not take lessons.

### **Accelerated cognitive development:**

Australian researchers found that children under the age of 5 who were involved in swim lessons are more advanced in their cognitive and physical development. As well, the research indicated better social and language skills, higher IQs, and stronger muscles.

### **Increased memory capacity:**

General scientific studies have linked better memory skills with the amount a person moves and exercises. Young babies can achieve more movement and get more exercise in the pool than anywhere on land.

### **Expanded cerebral communication:**

Cross patterning movements, like swimming, activate both cerebral hemispheres and all four lobes of the brain simultaneously. This can result in higher cognition and increased ease of learning.

### **Better social confidence:**

In baby swim class, children have many chances to share with other children and explore moving together. The babies learn to cooperate within a social structure, and learn by observing and mimicking. Babies will learn how to share, take turns and cooperate. Being part of a group can make a child feel needed, loved, and give them a sense of belonging.

### **Enhanced neurological development:**

Babies experience a great deal of stimulation from water resistance over their entire bodies while swimming. This stimulation encourages tactile and neurological development.

These benefits are summarized from the book "Water Smart Babies," in which all references are contained. "Water Smart Babies" can be purchased online for \$5 from [watersmartbabies.com](http://watersmartbabies.com).