



## **FAQ' s**

**I hear you say your priority is survival skills. Will my child learn to actually swim?**

Yes. At ISR, we believe that part of survival for a child who can walk is swimming. Children learn the swim-float-swim sequence so that they could get themselves to safety. The difference in our program is that they will learn swimming AND survival skills and how to be an aquatic problem solver.

**Will my child need additional lessons?**

Based on our research, we know that refresher lessons are important because children change so much both cognitively and physically during the first 4-5 years of life. It is important that their water survival skills grow with their bodies.

Frequency depends on the child's age, growth rate, skill level and confidence level. The goal of refresher lessons is to help your child adjust his/her new body size and weight to his/her existing skill level. Your instructor will work with your child to help fine-tune his or her aquatic experience to assist with building efficiency, which will result in self-confidence. This is especially important if your child has not been able to practice any appropriate aquatic skill between seasons.

**What is the retention rate with ISR lessons?**

ISR claims a retention rate of 94-100% up to one year following lessons. Having said this, children will explore and may pick up bad habits watching other children or with interference like floating in a bathtub or playing on the steps. As your child goes through lessons, you will begin to understand, through communication with your Instructor, what activities may interfere with his/her learned Self-Rescue skills. Contacting and/or returning to your instructor in a timely manner are imperative to maintaining effective habits.

**Why do you have the children swim in clothes?**

Because 86% of children, who fall in the water, do so fully clothed, we want our students to have experience with such a situation. If a child has experienced the sensations of being in the water in clothing prior to an emergency situation, he/she is less likely to experience panic and be able to focus on the task at hand. If you have ever jumped in the water with clothes on, then you know that there is a significant difference in weight and feel with clothes as opposed to a bathing suit.

**Why are lessons 5 days per week and for only 10 minutes?**

The reason for this is multifaceted. First, repetition and consistency are crucial elements of learning for young children. Research shows that short, more frequent lessons result in higher retention. Second, most children have fairly short attention spans and will not be able to focus on the task for longer and we want to take advantage of the best time for learning. A third reason is that, though the pool temperature is maintained at 78-88 degrees, the temperature is still lower than your child's body temperature. Lessons are work and therefore will also be losing body heat. Instructors check students regularly for temperature fatigue since this is an indicator of physical fatigue.

**If more frequent but shorter lessons are better, then why don't you teach 7 days/week?**

Everyone needs a little break from learning to process the information and in this case to give muscles a chance to recover. In addition, you need to be able to spend time with your family, as does your instructor. Weekends are family time. Periodically, if weather or other issues have cause lessons to be cancelled for numerous days, your instructor may choose to offer make up lessons on a weekend. This is strictly up to the instructor and based on the availability of parents.

**Why does it take 4-6 weeks for my child to learn this?**

The 4-6 weeks is an estimate that is based on the average time in which it takes most children to learn these survival skills. Every child is unique and ISR's Self-Rescue program is specifically designed based on your child's individual strengths and needs. It is important to realize that this is an average which means that some

children will actually finish more quickly while others will need more practice. ISR is dedicated to safety and, therefore, we want to provide your child with the time and best opportunity to become proficient in his/her survival skills. We will always honor your child's needs.

**Why should parents enroll their children in ISR lessons?**

ISR parents are intelligent and enroll their children because they understand their children's abilities and want to give them every opportunity to learn. They also feel it is important to teach their children how to help themselves should they find themselves alone in the water. Research shows that there are better times to learn certain things and swimming is best learned early in life.

**Are swimming lessons for infants and young children safe?**

YES! ISR is dedicated to safety and maintaining numerous safety protocols to promote safe lessons. Your child's health and well-being are our highest priority and are closely monitored on a daily basis. In addition, your child's medical and developmental history is a mandatory part of the ISR national registration process, all of which is held strictly confidential. All ISR instructors undergo an intensive and rigorous training that far exceeds any other training program of this kind. Each ISR instructor is also required to attend a yearly re-certification symposium that includes quality control as well as continuing education. Your education in the area of aquatic safety for your entire family is an integral part of your child's lessons. You will receive access to the "Parent Resource Guide", written by Dr. Harvey Barnett and JoAnn Barnett, which will inform you of every aspect of swimming for infants and children.

With research, you will find that ISR is the safest survival swimming program but also the most effective for teaching infants and young children.

**What is the AAP's position on swimming lessons for young children?**

In May of 2010, the AAP has now changed its policy regarding the age at which children may start swimming lessons, based on research stating that swim lessons may actually provide reduction in drowning risk of children ages 1- to 4-years-old. That study, "Association Between

Swimming Lessons and Childhood Drowning" published in the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, March, 2009, by Brenner et. al. was the first study to probe the relationship between drowning reduction and swimming skills. That study concluded that, "Participation in formal swimming lessons was associated with an 88% reduction in the risk of drowning in the 1- to 4-year-old children..."

The AAP encourages parent's to consider that starting water-survival skills training at an early age must be individualized, based on the child's frequency of exposure to water, emotional maturity, physical limitations and health concerns related to swimming pools.

**What is ISR and how is it different from other swimming programs?**

ISR is the product over 45 years of ongoing development in the area of aquatic survival instruction for infants and children. ISR's primary focus is to teach your child to become a productive swimmer, or floater in any depth of water. The goal of ISR is that your child becomes an "aquatic problem solver." ISR will greatly increase your child's chance of surviving an aquatic accident, even when fully clothed!

**How can you teach babies and young children to swim?**

ISR instructors teach infants to swim by honoring each child's individual strengths and experiences. They understand the fundamentals of the behavioral sciences, child development and of sensori-motor learning as it relates to the acquisition of aquatic survival skills; they use this education to guide each child through the sequence of learning to swim and float.

**Can you really teach a child who is not verbal how to swim?**

Yes. Consider that children learn to sit, crawl and walk before they learn to speak. Because we teach through sensori-motor learning, verbal skills are not required for a child to acquire Self-Rescue skills. We are able to communicate with our students through touch and positive reinforcement while striving to set our students up for success every step of the way.

**Can't babies swim naturally?**

Unfortunately, babies cannot naturally swim. If this were the case, there wouldn't be so many drownings every year. According to the Center for Disease Control and Accident Prevention, drowning is the leading cause of accidental death for children ages 1-3 in the United States.

**Why don't parents participate in the water during the lessons?**

We do not want the baby to initially associate the water with the love, attention and affection of the parent while in the water. Also, it takes incredible concentration and objectivity to teach the baby how to respond to an aquatic emergency and our research shows that parents often find it too difficult to be objective to be effective teachers with their own children in the water.

**Do parents have to leave during the lessons?**

No. You are truly the best cheerleader your child could have. Your positive support and encouragement is invaluable to creating an effective learning environment for your child.

**How do the kids react during the first few lessons?**

Children often fuss during the first few lessons because they are in a new environment and around new people. As your child becomes more confident in his/her ability in the water, the fussing will decrease.

It is not unlike the first time you tried a new exercise class, or were asked to perform a task at work that you'd never done before: the first time you try a new task it is always challenging, until you get the hang of it. It is the same for your young child. Your child is learning to perform a skill that he/she's never done before.

**Will my child fear the water because of lessons?**

There is an important difference between being fearful and being apprehensive because you are not yet skilled in a new environment. ISR is not like traditional swim lessons; it is a drowning prevention program that teaches survival swimming. Sometimes as a parent, you make choices for your child's safety, like sitting in a car seat, because you know they are important. The same can be said for ISR.

FUN can be defined as when SKILL meets CHALLENGE. Once competent in their skills, many children cannot be dragged away from the pool. They are having entirely too much FUN.