



# WATER WISDOM

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF AQUAVENTURES

HOW SWIMMING ENHANCES YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

## INFANT SWIM PROGRAMS

***“Physical activity programs for infants should enhance the sensory information provided from movement. They should give postural stability challenges and practice for fundamental locomotion as well as manipulative movement patterns.”***

At AquaVentures, our specially designed infant aquatic programs offer all the benefits of land based movement programs in the highly stimulating and sensory environment of tropical warm water. Our curriculum is unique, FUN and skill-driven. Our exceptional instructors will guide you through “an aquatic adventure playground” each lesson.



## THE “MAGIC” OF WATER!

*It's wet, splashy, noisy, slippery, smooth, soft, calm, soothing... what an amazing and stimulating environment! The tactile sensations of water moving over the entire body stimulates the development of the nervous system. The sensations of buoyancy provide a unique opportunity to be horizontal in this fascinating liquid environment (excellent stimulation for the vestibular system).*

*A child has a natural inner drive to organize these stimulating sensations. He gains a great deal of satisfaction from organizing sensations into a meaningful response, function or skill. When a child responds well to a challenge he has fun!*



# TODDLER AND PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

*“By the age of two, today’s child has spent an estimated 500 hours in a car seat, losing precious motor development hours.”*

*“Learning to swim in the pre-school years can enhance the overall blueprint of motor development”*

## **Movement Improves Communication Between Brain Hemispheres**

Connecting both cerebral hemispheres of the brain by developing coordination of both sides of the body is extremely important in the development of many gross and fine motor skills. Swimming, early childhood movement programs, gymnastics, and dance are the top rated activities for developing both sides of the body.

Good specialization of the hemispheric functions leads to a greater overall efficiency in brain processes, while poor specialization slows down language development and academic learning.

Movement helps to develop the whole nervous system. The child needs to progress from the brain stem up. Movement opportunities need to be provided constantly so that the child will be ready for reading, language and reasoning skills. If a child’s experiences skip the sensory/motor levels, then gaps will appear in his development and learning will be more difficult.

## **The Importance of Songs and Music in Swim Class**

When a child claps his hands together while singing “If You’re Happy and You Know It” during swim class, he is coordinating the two sides of his body. Music is multi-sensory; a child reacts to the sounds of music with motion, rocking, swaying, clapping and kicking in the water.



“Music is one of the few activities that uses both sides of the brain... at the same time.” By using the logical (left) and the creative/spatial (right) side of the brain simultaneously, the brain grows more connections across both hemispheres.

“The splashing, reaching, pushing, pulling, kicking, paddling in swim class all involve bilateral skill development that improves the coordination of both hemispheres of the brain with aids in language development and academic learning.”

## **Building Self-Esteem and Social Interaction in Swim Class**

The social benefits of involving children in early swim lessons are huge.

Swimming is so much fun! (Especially at Aquaventures!) When a child is having fun, his brain is more receptive to learning. Young children love to perform water activities and to be praised for their accomplishments. “The praise a child receives for a job well done gives him a feeling of acceptance and is necessary to build his self-esteem.” Swim class provides the opportunity for the child to meet other children and to try new things. “Through active movement in a group, the child gets to know himself and sees his connection with the rest of the world. It’s a way for him to understand his relationship with others.”

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# SWIMMING ENHANCES CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN THREE KEY AREAS

**1. Motor Development:** Swim class provides multi-sensory experiences; sight (visual), sound (auditory), touch (tactile) which all combine together in an active (kinesthetic) learning environment. By giving the child so many sensory experiences, his neural memories of motor skills are “exercised” and become more precise. The child will have an accurate base so that his proprioceptors (sensors of where the body is in space) can update his brain with information, so his brain can plan the next movement. This results in a stronger, more coordinated child.

**2. Cognitive Development:** More stimulation causes a child’s neurons to grow interconnecting fibers and twigs reaching out to the other neurons.



Each new synapse (chemical or electrical pathways between neurons) adds to a child’s perceptions. The more synapses a person has the more capable he is of learning.

**3. Emotional Development:** If the sensory-motor processes are well organized, a child will have an easier time learning emotional control. The more organized the brain is, the easier it is to instill self control and self-discipline. The easier the emotional, cognitive and complex skills are, the greater the feeling of success and self-esteem experienced by the child.

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“Swim class has abundant opportunities to share space with other children and explore movement together. A child begins to recognize his own uniqueness and the uniqueness of others. He cooperates within a social structure to learn... This strengthens his social confidence.”

## Learning How To Learn

Research suggests the relationship between movement and learning continues throughout life. The sensory motor skills learned through play and organized skill instruction mean the “proper neural pathways have been laid” for later learning.

More and more neuroscientists believe that movement must become as important as computer and “book work”.

It is widely believed that the “hidden power of movement” facilitates children’s intellectual achievement, brain development, reading readiness and language acquisition.



# EMOTIONAL BENEFITS OF MOVEMENT IN WATER

## **Freedom in the Water Environment**

Children can perform movements and positions that would otherwise be extremely difficult for them on land at their developmental stage. In the water, they can move freely in this wonderful three dimensional buoyant liquid. Take a look at the number of opportunities for freedom of movement and vestibular stimulation in a thirty minute swim class!

## **Parent/Infant Bond in the Water and Tactile Opportunities**

The skin is the largest organ in the human body. The skin to skin contact and touch between the parent and child in the water helps to satisfy the child's need for body contact and tactile stimulation. This simple, relaxing closeness in a liquid environment establishes a deeper emotional parent-infant bond. Research has shown that a supportive, loving touch gives the feeling of attachment, commitment and connection. The aquatic environment is an ideal medium for these warm, human interactions.



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