FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

SWIM LESSONS WELCOME GUIDE v'26

For nearly 160 years, the Y has been a leader in aquatics, teaching more people to swim than any other organization. At the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids, we're proud to carry that legacy forward with certified instructors who create safe, supportive and fun environments that help every swimmer grow while promoting the Y's core values: caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

Our instructors are not only trained in CPR, first aid, AED, oxygen administration and child abuse prevention—they're also trained how to teach, not just what to teach. We focus on developing confident, happy swimmers who feel empowered both in and out of the water.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Our swim lesson program is structured by age and skill level, building progressively to help swimmers advance. Stages are designed to foster confidence, safety and technique at every step. We aim for a 1:5 instructor-to-student ratio and reserve the right to limit the number of children we serve to maintain the safety of all children.

Age Group	Stage	Ratio Maximum
Parent/Child: 6 months-4 years old (30 minute class)	A and B	10-12
Preschool: 3-5 years old (40 minute class)	1-4	4-6
Youth: 6-12 years old (40 minute class)	1-6	4-8
Teen/Adult: age 13+ (40 minute class)	1-6	4-10

WHAT TO EXPECT

Welcome Letter

You'll receive a welcome letter that can be seen at the end of this guide on the first or second day of class. This will provide details about your child's stage and focus areas for learning.

Certificate of Achievement

At the end of each month, you'll receive a certificate confirming if your child is moving to the next stage as well as highlighting achievements and areas for improvement.

Goggles

Swimmers should first be comfortable in the water without goggles. We allow goggles after a child can do bobs, retrieve an object from the bottom and complete the "Jump, Push, Turn, Grab" safety skill—typically by Stage 3. Goggles must only cover the eyes (not the nose). If there's a medical need, please notify your instructor.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Monthly Swim Lessons

Most swim lessons meet once per week for four weeks. Additional seasonal options include twice weekly for four weeks and four consecutive days (1- or 2-week sessions). Class fees vary by format.

Holidays & Closures

In addition to certain school breaks, pool maintenance closures, no classes are held on:

- New Year's Day
- Easter
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve

Payment

- Payment is due before the first class. If not paid at registration, you'll be automatically drafted on the 20th of the prior month.
- Returned payments must be resolved within 24 hours or the spot may be forfeited.
- Waitlisted participants will be contacted if a spot opens.
- All payments must be received before the first class.

Refund Policy and Make Up Lessons

Refunds will not be available after the first class of a session. No partial refunds will be granted for missed classes or weather-related cancellations, although we will attempt to make up classes postponed for inclement weather. All programs have a minimum number of participants in order to begin. If registration falls short of this minimum, the class will be cancelled, and credit will be applied to your account for the canceled program. Prorated fees will not be granted for any participant who joins a program session after the starting date or who leaves the program session before the end date.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY:

If inclement weather or causes beyond our control occur, please check our mobile app, social media or website for any facilities-related updates. Membership dues are not refundable for times when a facility is impacted by an act of God. In the case of thunder and/or lightning, our pools will be closed for 30 minutes after the last thunder and/or lightning strike, according to facility protocol. Feel free to check with your center to see if programs are running.

SAFETY & EXPECTATIONS

Check-In & Pickup

- Swimmers check in with their instructor or deck manager.
- After class, instructors provide feedback to parents in the designated area.
- Children age 11+ meeting parents elsewhere must notify the instructor or deck manager.
- Children are supervised by staff until picked up.

Locker Room Use

- Arrive in swimwear if possible to reduce crowding.
- Use appropriate family, male or female locker rooms.
- Children 5 years old and under may accompany an opposite-gender parent in the locker room.

Emergency Procedures

Our staff is trained to handle all emergencies calmly and safely. Key signals include:

- One long whistle blast: Clear the pool immediately, exiting at the wall or exit point.
- One short whistle blast: Stop and look at the lifeguard for behavior redirection.

In emergencies like fire or tornadoes, children will be escorted to safe, designated areas. Please check out with a staff member before leaving with your child.

SUPPORTING ALL SWIMMERS

Behavior Guidance

We use positive reinforcement and redirection to help children make good choices. Staff speak to children at their level and intervene compassionately. After three reminders, we may separate a child briefly to reflect. Physical discipline is never used or tolerated.

If Your Child Cries

If a child cries for 10 minutes, we may ask you to assist. If crying continues, you may be asked to return later. We'll work with you to find a plan that best supports your child.

Diverse Abilities

We welcome swimmers of all abilities and will make every effort to provide accommodation. Please share your child's needs in advance. A parent or guardian may need to assist in the water if necessary.

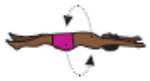
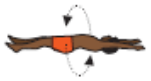
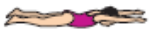
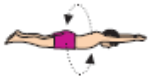
Diapering and Potty Breaks

Swimmers who are not potty trained must wear both a swim diaper and snug-fitting swimsuit. Please take your child to the restroom before class. If needed mid-class, we may escort the child to the restroom with staff (minimum of three people).

Welcome Letters information for the levels and skills:

Listed below are the skills we will be working on each session based on their level. We look for the students to comfortably and consistently perform each skill in order to progress to the next stage. Please speak with your instructor for any clarification. Stages 2 and above, the skills must be performed independently without any type of support from the instructor or teaching tools.

A / WATER DISCOVERY	B / WATER EXPLORATION
Blow bubbles on surface, assisted	**Blow bubbles** mouth & nose submerged, assisted
Front tow chin in water, assisted	**Front tow** blow bubbles, assisted
Water exit parent & child together	**Water exit** assisted
Water entry parent & child together	**Water entry** assisted
Back float assisted, head on shoulder	**Back float** assisted, head on chest
Roll assisted, back to front & front to back	**Roll** assisted, back to front & front to back
Front float chin in water, assisted	**Front float** blow bubbles, assisted
Back tow assisted, head on shoulder	**Back tow** assisted, head on chest
Wall grab assisted	**Monkey crawl** assisted, on edge, 5 ft.

1 / WATER ACCLIMATION	2 / WATER MOVEMENT	3 / WATER STAMINA
Submerge bob independently	**Submerge** look at object on bottom	**Submerge** retrieve object in chest-deep water
Front glide assisted, to wall, 5 ft.	**Front glide** 10 ft. (5 ft. preschool)	**Swim on front** 15 yd. (10 yd. preschool)
Water exit independently	**Water exit** independently	**Water exit** independently
Jump, push, turn, grab assisted	**Jump, push, turn, grab**	**Jump, swim, turn, swim, grab** 10 yd.
Back float assisted, 10 secs., recover independently	**Back float** 20 secs. (10 secs. preschool)	**Swim on back** 15 yd. (10 yd. preschool)
 **Roll** assisted, back to front & front to back	 **Roll** back to front & front to back	**Roll** back to front & front to back
 **Front float** assisted, 10 secs., recover independently	**Front float** 20 secs. (10 secs. preschool)	
Back glide assisted, at wall, 5 ft.	**Back glide** 10 ft. (5 ft. preschool)	
	Tread water 10 secs., near wall, & exit	**Tread water** 1 min. & exit (30 secs. preschool)
 **Swim, float, swim** assisted, 10 ft.	**Swim, float, swim** 5 yd.	**Swim, float, swim** 25 yd. (15 yd. preschool)

4 / STROKE INTRODUCTION	5 / STROKE DEVELOPMENT	6 / STROKE MECHANICS
Endurance any stroke or combination of strokes, 25 yd.	**Endurance** any stroke or combination of strokes, 50 yd.	**Endurance** any stroke or combination of strokes, 150 yd.
Front crawl rotary breathing, 15 yd.	**Front crawl** bent-arm recovery, 25 yd.	**Front crawl** flip turn, 50 yd.
Back crawl 15 yd.	**Back crawl** pull, 25 yd.	**Back crawl** pull & flip turn, 50 yd.
Dive sitting	**Dive** kneeling	**Dive** standing
Resting stroke elementary backstroke, 15 yd.	**Resting stroke** sidestroke, 25 yd.	**Resting stroke** elementary backstroke or sidestroke, 50 yd.
Tread water scissor & whip kick, 1 min.	**Tread water** scissor & whip kick, 2 mins.	**Tread water** retrieve object off bottom, tread 1 min.
Breaststroke kick, 15 yd.	**Breaststroke** 25 yd.	**Breaststroke** open turn, 50 yd.
Butterfly kick, 15 yd.	**Butterfly** simultaneous arm action & kick, 15 yd.	**Butterfly** 25 yd.

STAY CONNECTED

We encourage you to follow us and stay informed:

- Website
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Program Registration

JOIN OUR TEAM

Know someone looking for part-time work? We're hiring lifeguards, swim instructors (age 16+) and water fitness instructors (age 18+). Visit our website or talk to a member of our aquatics leadership team.

QUESTIONS?

We're here for you—reach out to your swim instructor or our aquatics leadership team with any questions or concerns. We're committed to helping your child feel confident, safe and successful in the water.