

Let's go to swimming lessons!

Swimming lessons provide a range of health and safety benefits for all children. If you have concerns about your child participating in swimming lessons, here are some ideas we hope will help.



Where to start?

Some initial considerations to discuss with the swimming instructor:

- ❖ Is there appropriate access and amenities for your child?
- ❖ Do the instructors have any previous experience working with children with additional needs?
- ❖ Can they be flexible with the delivery of the lesson (eg starting with shorter lessons)?
- ❖ Can you trial before you commit?
- ❖ Would staff be prepared to liaise with other professionals to develop a plan for your child ?
- ❖ Would staff like more information to help them better understand your child's ability and participation needs?

Talking with others about your child's disability can sometimes be difficult - what you choose to share with others is entirely up to you. The information you do choose to share may help others develop good relationships with your child and better understand how they can help your child join in certain activities.

You may choose to share the Shaping Outcomes *inclusion guide*, *inclusion tips*, *disability factsheets* and/or *participation checklist* with the swimming instructor.

You can prepare your child by:

- ❖ Reading stories or watching videos about having a swimming lesson
- ❖ Playing and practicing what happens when you have a swimming lesson: you could visit the pool with your child and watch some lessons, and practice what happens
- ❖ Using visual supports to prepare your child for what will happen (eg photos of the pool, the instructor, a visual schedule to understand the order of events) – these can be used both before and during the lesson
- ❖ Developing a social story for your child about having a swimming lesson
- ❖ Visiting with your child before the lesson- so your child is more familiar with what happens during a swimming lesson and the pool environment

By understanding **what will happen** and **what is expected of them**, your child will feel less anxious or confused.

Be prepared with supports for your child's **sensory needs** – you may wish work with your early intervention specialist to develop a sensory profile for you child.

**While being prepared will give you the best chance to succeed, things don't always go to plan.
With the swimming instructor, reflect on what worked and what didn't to help you plan for your next lesson.**

For further information about swimming lessons:

<http://rainbowclubaust.com.au/>

<http://nsw.swimming.org.au/>

<http://www.austswim.com.au/welcome.aspx>

If you would like more information about community inclusion, we have developed a series of factsheets and checklists for families and communities.

These can be found at:

<http://www.directory.byronearlyintervention.org.au/>



Shaping Outcomes

early childhood intervention service

> because we can