



**City of Kerrville  
Parks & Recreation Department  
Aquatics Division**



**SWIM LESSONS  
PARENT HANDBOOK**

# Program Overview

The mission of the Jeff Ellis-Swimming program is to promote independence and confidence for every student. Learning to swim is an essential skill that all children should eventually learn. This program is designed to be taken progressively. Each level is a stepping stone to the next level. Skipping levels may result in incomplete knowledge and skill level. When a child achieves a certain level of comfort in the water it will increase their overall self esteem and confidence. This process is a joint effort between the instructor and the parent and they are both crucial to the success of each student. All of our instructors are Ellis & Associates Licensed Lifeguards and Swim Instructor Certified.

## Contact Information

Please feel free to contact us about our swim lessons program.

**Rosa Ledesma**  
Parks & Recreation Specialist  
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Olympic Pool  
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(830) 896-8816

Parks & Recreation Department Office  
Bandera Hwy (Kerrville-Schreiner Park)  
Kerrville, TX 78028  
(830) 257.7300  
[kerrpark@kerrville.gov](mailto:kerrpark@kerrville.gov)  
[www.kerrvilletx.gov](http://www.kerrvilletx.gov)



### **!!WARNING!! Important Information !!WARNING!!**

- A certificate from any one of our classes does not ensure against drowning!
- Panic is the major cause of drowning and even a good swimmer can panic.
- Parents should actively watch children at a pool or wading pool at all times, even when there is a lifeguard on duty. Parents know their child's ability level and can spot a problem more quickly than a lifeguard.
- Never assume that a child is safe in any sort of water toy including rings, floats, noodles, and kickboards. The child may lose control of the float and find themselves too far from the side of the pool or in danger's way.



## **Your feedback is important to us!**

We would appreciate your comments on our programs, instructors and facilities. We continually strive to improve so we can offer the best possible program. Surveys will be distributed every session and can be turned into the Aquatics Management.

## **Schedule**

There will be three 2 week sessions offered this summer and we encourage children to participate in as many as possible, especially if this is their first summer of swim lessons. All sessions will run Tuesday-Friday. On the first day of class, each student will be assessed to determine if they are in the appropriate level. A progress report will be issued on the fourth day of class to show what skills each student has mastered and which areas need improvement. On the final day of class, every student will receive a completion card and if passed, a certificate.

## **About our Facility**

Our facility is comprised of a baby pool and a 20 yard X 50 meter Olympic Pool. There are a number of opportunities that the City of Kerrville has to offer and we encourage you to take full advantage of them. Visit [www.kerrvilletx.gov](http://www.kerrvilletx.gov) to learn more information about the programs and events we offer.

## **Registration**



Registration begins May 1<sup>st</sup> each year at the Parks and Recreation Department office, so remember to register as soon as possible because space is always limited. Online registration is also available at our website. Waivers must be submitted to the Parks & Recreation office *prior* to the start of class. Listed below are some important things to remember about registration.

- Classes may be combined or cancelled if the minimum number of students enrolled is not met.
- If your child has special needs, please inform staff when you register.
- If your child has a medical condition, please submit a medical clearance to the Parks & Recreation Department upon registration.
- All fees must be paid in full at the time of registration.
- Online registrations are considered as electronic signatures for the waiver.
- There are no full refunds so please double check the classes that you sign up for.

# Policies

## Cancellations / Refunds

**Pre-session cancellations, refunds and / or transfers** must be requested in writing with the Parks & Recreation office two (2) weeks prior to the first day of the session. We must have adequate time to prepare for necessary instructor assignments based upon attendance. No refunds will be given for less than two (2) weeks notice. You may choose one of these refund options if you cancel in writing within the two (2) week time period:



- Transfer your registration fee to another program, pending availability
- Request a refund of your registration fee minus a \$20.00 processing fee per program per participant.

**E-mail cancellations to** [kerrpark@kerrvilletx.gov](mailto:kerrpark@kerrvilletx.gov)

**Medical-** A doctor's note is required for a refund (minus the \$20 processing fee) due to extended illness or medical reasons.

**Level Transfers-** Suggestions for correct levels will be done to the best of our and the parents ability at the time of registration, however, there may be times when an Instructor recommends that a participant be moved up or down a level based on their swimming abilities. Level transfers are for the best interest of the participant to ensure that they are in the correct class for their swimming abilities and to help them get the best out of swim lessons. Instructors and / or management will consult with parents / guardians prior to moving the participant; however, participants will not be allowed to stay in a level that is too advanced for them. Refunds will not be given for incorrect level placement at registration.

## Weather Policy / Pool Closures

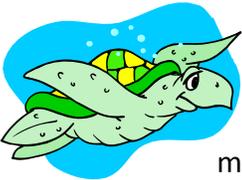


For safety reasons, there may be times when the facility must be closed and cleared due to bad weather or other conditions. The facility will re-open when the weather is safe (the bottom of the pool is clearly visible, thunder is no longer heard, and lightning is no longer seen).

- Closing for rain** (this consists of heavy rain- where the lifeguards cannot see the bottom of the pool clearly), is up to the discretion of the Manager on Duty.
- Closure for thunder and lightning** is necessary. The facility will be closed 30 minutes from every time thunder is heard or lightning is seen. If the inclement weather continues, the facility may be closed for the remainder of the day at the discretion of the Parks & Recreation Department. Only if the facility is closed for the remainder of the day will Rain Checks be issued.

- c. **If mechanical problems occur**, the pool will be closed. If the pH and / or chlorine are not in range, or if there is poor visibility, it will be grounds for closure.
- d. **RWI (recreation water illnesses)**, for health reasons, the pool will need to be closed and treated if fecal contamination occurs.

### Make-ups



Living in Texas, we are all aware that weather is unpredictable and cancellations happen ever so often. If we experience any type of mechanical problem in which impedes pool operations, we will have to close the pool and adjust the swim lessons schedule. We will try our best to inform you 30 minutes prior to any cancellation, so please make sure that we have your best contact phone number upon registration. Also, if there is bad weather (rain, thunder, lightning, etc.) please call the Olympic Pool and / or Parks & Recreation Department office to determine the status of the facility and / or lessons.

Cancelled classes will be held on Mondays and / or time may be added to classes to accommodate any lost class time. Furthermore, absences or tardiness are not subject to makeup classes. For the benefit of your child and the class, please make sure that your child is on time to each class.

### Viewing Lessons

As stated earlier, swim lessons will promote independence and confidence. Children will usually have difficulty breaking away from their parents for the first time in the water. Attaining the trust of the instructor will be vital to the success of each student and this will be impossible unless there is separation throughout the lessons. Parents are permitted to console their children if they happen to become upset, disruptive or to take the child to the restroom. Otherwise, parents, family and friends are to stay in the designated viewing areas (the lobby or large pavilion) and refrain from being on the pool deck unless absolutely necessary. Family and friends are not allowed in the pool at any time while lessons are in progress. Participants are not allowed in the water unless their lesson is in progress; this includes the baby pool and pre and post lesson. For the pre-school classes, if the Instructor feels that the child would best benefit from the class with a parent present, the Instructor will ask the parent to be present in the water until the child is ready to move on without a parent in the water.



### Restroom Policy

Children 5 and under will be escorted to the restroom during class time if a parent / guardian is unavailable take them. Children 6 years and older will be allowed to go by themselves. Please encourage your child to go the bathroom before class begins.

## Conduct

We reserve the right to remove children from classes if they are disruptive, verbally or physically abusive to other students or instructors. No refunds will be given.

## Completion Certificate



Each participant that successfully completes a level will receive a completion certificate. If your child does not receive a completion certificate, feel free to speak with the Swim Instructor on the skills your child needs to master before moving on. Exit skills requirements for passing the levels are located later in this handbook.

## Teamwork

For every student to succeed, it will take more than the effort from the Swim Instructor. The parent plays a significant role in their child's swim lesson. Listed below are several pointers to help your child with swim lessons.



- **Prepare your child for swim lessons** by explaining exactly what will be happening. Try to bring your child to the pool in advance so that they are more familiar with the area.
- **Be prompt** so that your child is not rushed. Children can get anxious if rushed.
- **Follow rules and regulations.** You are responsible for your child's actions, not the instructor or lifeguard. Teach, talk about, and review the pool rules with your child and lead by example. Rules are posted in the lobby and near the diving boards.
- **Attend every lesson** so that they do not regress or feel behind the other students.
- **Complete all the levels** so that your child has the safety skills to be safe in the water.
- **Be patient**, because pressuring your child could cause a regression or even a fear of the water.
- **Avoid comparisons.** No two children develop at the same rate. Each child learns at a different pace depending on factors such as physical growth, individual development, comfort, practice, and previous experience. Respect your child's qualities and do not compare them to their siblings or other children.
- **Always be encouraging and positive** of your child's efforts because it will make them try harder during their next lesson or free swim.
- **Try to practice and reinforce** what your children have learned in swim lessons so that they will have a better chance of moving on to the next level.



## Things to Remember...

- Students should be ready to swim when they arrive for swim lessons.
- Remind your child of the facility rules.
- Apply sunscreen to your child.
- Make sure that your child has gone to the restroom before the lesson begins.
- Swim diapers must be worn by diaper-wearing participants.
- Gum and candy are not permitted.
- Goggles are not permitted.
- Long hair should be tied back as not to impede vision.
- Participants must wear a swim suit / swim attire. Shirts and pants are not allowed as they restrict swimming abilities. Swim shirts, wetsuits, etc. are okay.
- Admission must be purchased for open swim during operational hours.
- Participants are not allowed in the water until lessons begin.
- Please stay in the designated viewing areas.
- This program is designed to be taken progressively. Each level is a stepping stone to the next level. Skipping levels may result in incomplete knowledge and skill level.
- Feel free to speak with the instructor about your child(ren) as often as you like.
- Have fun!

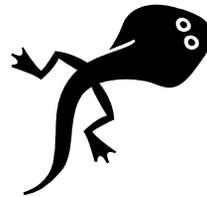
# Level Goals & Objectives

*Note: It is important to note that these are goals and objectives for the levels. Instruction may vary depending on the class ability level and it may take several sessions for participants to complete a level. Exit skills must be successfully completed in order to pass the level.*

**Water Exploration and Safety (Tadpoles) - Ages 6 months - 2 years:** This class is an introduction to water safety and basic water skills for both parent and child. The Water Exploration and Safety class is meant to allow the child to explore the water in a supervised and fun environment with the guidance of the instructor and parent. **Parent and/or guardian participation in the water is REQUIRED for this level.**

Skills Taught:

- ❖ Out-of-water exploration
- ❖ In-water exploration
- ❖ Blowing bubbles with mouth and nose submerged
- ❖ Pouring water over head
- ❖ Underwater exploration
- ❖ Submerging face
- ❖ Front float
- ❖ Back float
- ❖ Roll from front to back
- ❖ Roll from back to front
- ❖ Assisted jumping into pool
- ❖ Lifejackets
- ❖ Water Safety
- ❖ Kicking movement
- ❖ Arm Movement



**Preschool + Parent Level (Seahorses) - Ages 2-3 years:** The objective of our Preschool + Parent swim class is to help students feel comfortable in the water while mom or dad is at their side. **Parent and/or guardian participation in the water is REQUIRED for this level.** Students will learn elementary water skills that they can build on as they progress through the various swim lesson levels. We introduce the WaterSmart Rules that are encouraged by Sophie the Safety Seal — our very own mascot for the Jeff Ellis Swimming Program.

Skills Taught:

- ❖ Submerging face
- ❖ Bobbing
- ❖ Jumping into water
- ❖ Front float
- ❖ Back float
- ❖ Front crawl arms



- ❖ Front glide
- ❖ Back Glide
- ❖ Front glide with kick
- ❖ Back glide with kick
- ❖ Front crawl stroke
- ❖ Elementary backstroke
- ❖ Safety topics

**Preschool Level (Guppies) - Ages 3-5 years:** The purpose of the Preschool Level class is to help students feel comfortable in the water without the presence of mom or dad. Students will learn elementary water skills and safety tips that will stay with them throughout all swim lesson levels. Sophie the Safety Seal's WaterSmart Rules are reinforced for increased aquatic safety.

Skills Taught:

- ❖ Submerging face
- ❖ Bobbing
- ❖ Jumping into water
- ❖ Front float
- ❖ Back float
- ❖ Front crawl arms
- ❖ Front glide
- ❖ Back Glide
- ❖ Front glide with kick
- ❖ Back glide with kick
- ❖ Front crawl stroke
- ❖ Elementary backstroke
- ❖ Safety topics



**Combined Swim Exam:**

The student must demonstrate the ability to comfortably perform a safety swim by jumping into chest-deep or deeper water and using a combination of front crawl and elementary backstroke for a distance of 25 yards.

**Beginner Level (Goldfish) - 6 years+:** The Beginner Level class builds on elementary water skills previously learned and teaches students the skills needed to complete a 25-yard swim for each of the following: elementary backstroke, front crawl, and backstroke. All elementary water skills are reinforced so that they become second nature to the students. All water safety rules are discussed as well.

Skills Taught:

- ❖
- ❖ Submerging face
- ❖ Bobbing
- ❖ Jumping into water
- ❖ Front float

- ❖ Front glide
- ❖ Back float
- ❖ Back glide
- ❖ Front glide with kick
- ❖ Back glide with kick
- ❖ Front crawl arms
- ❖ Elementary backstroke
- ❖ Front crawl
- ❖ Backstroke
- ❖ Introduction to breaststroke
- ❖ Safety topics



**Combined Swim Exam:**

The student must confidently swim 25 yards of the front crawl, backstroke, and elementary backstroke. During the front crawl the head should remain in water except during attempts to breath. Should be completed without assistance from instructor.

**Advanced Beginner (Dolphins) - 6 years+:** The Advanced Beginner class teaches students how to master stroke development and requires them to complete 50-yard swims of elementary backstroke and basic backstroke. Students are also asked to complete 25-yard swims of the breaststroke and front crawl with rhythmical breathing. We introduce scissor kick and sidestroke at this swim level too.

**Skills Taught:**

- ❖ Submerging face
- ❖ Bobbing
- ❖ Jumping into water
- ❖ Front float
- ❖ Front glide
- ❖ Back float
- ❖ Back glide
- ❖ Front crawl arms
- ❖ Front glide with kick
- ❖ Back glide with kick
- ❖ Front crawl
- ❖ Elementary backstroke
- ❖ Backstroke
- ❖ Breaststroke
- ❖ Sidestroke Arms
- ❖ Scissor Kick
- ❖ Safety topics



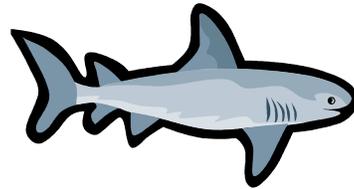
**Combined Swim Exam:**

The student must confidently swim 25 yards of the front crawl with rhythmic breathing. The student must swim 25 yards of breaststroke and 50 yards of backstroke and elementary backstroke.

**Intermediate Level (Sharks) - 6 years+:** The Intermediate level class strengthens students' coordination of key strokes. They are asked to complete 50 yards of front crawl with rhythmic breathing, 75 yards of backstroke, 50 yards of breaststroke, 50 yards of sidestroke, 75 yards of elementary backstroke, and 25 yards of butterfly. We introduce the sidestroke, butterfly and the act of treading water at this level.

Skills Taught:

- ❖ Front crawl
- ❖ Backstroke
- ❖ Breaststroke
- ❖ Sidestroke
- ❖ Elementary backstroke
- ❖ Introduction of dolphin kick
- ❖ Introduction of butterfly arms
- ❖ Butterfly
- ❖ Treading water



**Combined Swim Exam:**

The student must confidently swim 50 yards using the front crawl with rhythmic breathing, breaststroke, and sidestroke. The student must swim 75 yards of the backstroke and elementary backstroke and 25 yards of the butterfly.

**Advanced Level (Swordfish) – 6 years +:** This level is about building endurance and working on the technical aspects of the strokes. WE CURRENTLY DO NOT OFFER PROGRAMMING FOR THIS LEVEL.

Skills Taught:

- ❖ Front crawl
- ❖ Backstroke
- ❖ Breaststroke
- ❖ Sidestroke
- ❖ Elementary backstroke
- ❖ Butterfly
- ❖ Treading water
- ❖ Surface dive and underwater swimming

**Combined Swim Exam:**

The student must swim 100 yards using the front crawl with rhythmic breathing, breaststroke, sidestroke, backstroke, elementary backstroke, and 50 yards of the butterfly.



## Frequently Asked Questions about Swim Lessons

### **Q: What causes fear of the water?**

**A:** Some of the more common causes of early fear of the water have to do with the way parents or caretakers relate to their children in and around water. These causes include:

- Being raised by parents or caretakers who are afraid of the water and have either knowingly or unknowingly communicated this fear to their children;
- Being raised in an environment that prevents childhood water play, whether as a result of lack of opportunity or parental actions;
- Being forced into water activities beyond the ability or comfort level;
- Being carelessly handled in water experiences;
- Being involved in or witnessing a traumatic water accident; or
- Having a fear of the unknown or a great fear of new experiences.

### **Q: What helps prevent fear of the water?**

**A:** No matter how cautious you are, fear cannot always be prevented. You can help reduce fear in the following ways:

- Provide enjoyable non-threatening water activities that are simple and fun to build confidence and success.
- Arrange for regular, continued contact with a water environment for your child.
- Select safe water environments and supervise all water play.
- Treat water mishaps sympathetically, but do not alarm your child.
- Be aware of your facial expressions and choice of words so that you do not signal panic or fear.
- Lead by example. Follow the rules and enjoy the water with your child. Get your face wet and perform some of the simple and fun activities in the program.

### **Q: What if my child already has a fear of the water?**

**A:** Respect your child's feelings. Teasing or getting angry only makes matters worse. Progress slowly by following these guidelines:

- Provide plenty of time for your child to adjust to the new settings.
- Concentrate on activities with which your child is comfortable and ready.
- Expose your child to other children who are having fun.
- Enjoy the water yourself with your child.

### **Q: How many lessons is it going to take for my child to “swim”?**

**A:** Children vary widely when it comes to learning a skill. In general, each child's readiness is influenced by physical development, previous experiences, home

environment, parental attitudes, and individual preferences. For most skills, there are simple prerequisites, activities, and lead-ups that can prepare the child to perform these skills. For example, before children are ready to put their entire face in the water; they may need to practice blowing bubbles, washing the face, splashing, and putting parts of the face in the water. It may take 30-80 lessons before a child can swim independently.

**Q: What if my child cannot keep up with the class?**

**A:** The progress of your child is not compared with that of any other child. Because they have different experiences and backgrounds as well as different learning rates, children acquire skills at different times. The instructor can adapt and adjust the level of difficulty to the individual child. This way, your child will feel apart of the group, but will practice at his or her level. If you believe that your child needs to be in a different level class, consult with the instructor.

**Q: What can I do to help?**

**A:** You will be taking the first step by enrolling your child in swim lessons. You need to have your child attend class on a regular basis, work together with the instructor and take time for other practice and water play opportunities outside the program.

**Q: How many levels should my child complete?**

**A:** Your child should complete all of the Learn-to-Swim levels to develop full swimming competency. A child who has only completed level 4 or 5 may have acquired just the basic skills for swimming. It may take several seasons for a child to successfully complete all levels. If he or she swims only during the summer months, skills will be diminished. Regular practice is necessary to keep skills and progress to the next level.

**Q: Will my child be “drown-proof” after participating in the Learn-to-Swim program?**

**A:** Participation in any swimming lesson program does not “drown-proof” your child. It is only the first step in developing your child’s water safety and swimming skills. Year-round practice, regular exposure to water, and positive encouragement are the tools needed for developing your child’s comfort level in water and improving his or her swimming abilities.

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN OUR  
PROGRAM!**