

Cumberland County YMCA
Casco Bay Branch

Y SWIM LESSONS™

We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities.

Parent
Handbook

Casco Bay YMCA

Mission Statement

The Cumberland County YMCA is committed to building strong kids, individuals, families, and communities through programs and services that promote a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all, regardless of ability to pay.

Swimming and the YMCA

The YMCA has a long tradition of teaching people to swim. The very first YMCA pool was built in 1885, and the first classes in swimming began in the early 1900s. Today, tens of millions of people first learned to swim at a YMCA. As with any YMCA program, our objectives in aquatics are to grow personally, clarify values, improve personal and family relationships, appreciate diversity, become better leaders and supporters, develop specific skills, and to have fun.

Program Philosophy

Swim lessons, like all of the Y's programs, are not meant solely as an end unto themselves. The skills taught in the program are extremely important, but equally important are the character values that are taught in the classes. The values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility are modeled by all of our instructors and are incorporated into all of our programs.

At the Casco Bay Regional YMCA, our goal is to reach out to all members of our community to provide as many people as possible with an opportunity to learn swimming, aquatic safety skills and to have a positive experience in a safe setting.

Consistency is an important component of learning any new skill and parents should follow up with their children by discussing what went on in the swim class and bringing their family in for free swim time to practice the skills. Given that we have an ever-increasing number of children, with the need to learn swimming and water safety skills and the finite resources of pool space, time, and instructor availability, We do our best to place all children into a level.

Program Policies

Eligibility for lessons

Children must be current members at the time of registration and must have a membership that extends **through the end** of the swim class for which they are registered. Swim lessons are offered at no charge as a benefit of YMCA membership for a child who has a family or single parent with family membership. A child who has a Youth/Program membership must pay an additional \$50.00 program fee for each session of swim lessons. Parents do not have to be members when the child participates in a parent/tot class.

Safety and Class size

We take safety very seriously in the pool area. In addition to the swim instructors there is always a least one lifeguard on duty during swim lessons. We maintain an instructor-child ratio of 1:6 for Pre-School levels, 1:6 for Polliwog and Guppy classes, 1:8 for Minnow class, and 1:8 for Fish/Flying/Shark Fish classes. We also frequently have volunteer aides who assist the instructor with the class.

All pool rules must be followed during swim lessons. In addition, if a child is under the age of 8, **the parent must remain with the child in the pool area until they have made contact with the instructor.** Please do not assume that the lifeguard will take care of the child or that the child will simply wait at the edge of the pool for the instructor to arrive. Children are often very tempted by an empty pool, and parents are an important part of the child's safety network. We all need to work together to ensure that children are safe in the pool area and at the Y. Please wait with your child on the bench until the instructor has invited them into class.

Schedule of classes

All Classes are 30 minutes in length. There are generally three different blocks of lesson times, one in the morning, one in the early afternoon, and one in the late afternoon/evening. Class days and times are subject to change from session to session.

Attendance

Because swim classes are a progression of skills and each class builds upon the one before it, absences are not recommended. Children need to attend each class in order to learn and master the skills and gain the desired benefit from the classes. **Missed classes cannot be made up.** If you are going to miss more than one or two classes, we ask that you withdraw your child and wait for a class that will better fit your schedule. This allows the opening in the class to be filled by someone who can attend all lessons.

Parent observation

Parents are welcome to watch their child's swim lesson, but we ask that they do so from the viewing windows outside the pool area. Children generally perform much better when parents are not in the immediate area. Also, the noise level in the pool area with the additional people would make it very difficult for instructors and children to hear. If you have a specific concern or your child has a special need, please speak with the Aquatics Director before lessons begin. **All parents are invited to watch their child's class from poolside on the last day of lessons.**

Cancellations

Building closure, fecal or other accidents, thunder/lightning. If any of these occur we are unable to hold class's of any kind. Due to the nature of our session schedule we are unable to make up any canceled classes. There are no make-up classes for children who miss a regularly scheduled class that was still held. We do our best to call anyone who is scheduled for class when the pool has to be closed. Please make sure your info is up to date at the front desk. If you would like to be notified of any unscheduled closures by e-mail please leave your name and e-mail address at the front desk. (This truly is the fastest and most used.)

Progression

Swimming is a learning progression, like many other skills, and each child learns at his or her own pace. A child may spend several sessions in a certain level before he or she is ready to move on to the next level. **Even though the child may not be ready to move up to another level immediately, they are still gaining strength, endurance, confidence, and comfort, all of which are essential to success in swimming.** Practice is important, especially when a child is enrolled in a class that meets only once a week. Parents are encouraged to bring their children to the pool frequently to practice and reinforce the skills learned in class.

Evaluations

Children are provided continual feedback and their skills are checked throughout the session as they are completed, so there is no formal test. At the end of each session you will receive a certificate of completion. Also noted on the card is the next level your child should be enrolled in. **The emphasis is on learning rather than on passing or failing.**

The Swim Programs

The Casco Bay YMCA follows the YMCA USA swim lesson guidelines. Classes are offered for children beginning from the age of six months, and are divided into 10 course levels and two parent/tot programs.

Listed under each level is a brief description of the purpose of each level. There are different skills to be demonstrated comfortably and proficiently by the child before he or she will be moved on to the next level.

If you have questions regarding placement, please call the Aquatics Director at 865-9600, extension 109. A swim evaluation may be appropriate to ensure proper placement.

Skill Levels (pre-school)

Parent / Tot #1: Ages 6 - 24 months

This is the beginning level of participation for children, starting at the age of 6 months and ending at 24 months. The parents are active participants in the class. Children will not learn to swim in this class; it is a water adjustment/exploration class. Parents will learn skills to facilitate their child's enjoyment and safety in the water. Songs and games are often employed, and guided practice sessions teach skills such as water entry, bubble blowing, front kicking, back floating, and underwater exploration.

Pike w/Parent: Ages 2 - 3 years

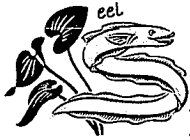
This is the next level of participation for children, beginning at the age of 24 months and ending at 3 years of age. The parent is an active participant in the class. Children will learn to swim assisted with the aid of an Independent Floatation Device (IFD). Songs and games are used with guided practice sessions to teach water awareness, front and back floats, dog paddling, rolling over, and front and back crawl action.



Pike (ARC Level 1) 3-5 years

***Minimum Requirements: Independent from parent, stand/walk independently in shallow end of Small pool, follows directions

This level helps children develop safe pool behavior, adjust to the water, and develop independent movement in the water. It is designed for new swimmers. Learning basic paddle strokes and kicking skills, pool safety, and become comfortable holding their faces in the water while blowing bubbles and swimming. Children will be able to submerge whole body (bob) when completing this level.



Eels (ARC Level 2) 4-6 years

*****Minimum Requirements:** Whole body submerge (bob) 3 times, can swim 5-10 ft without assistance

This level gets children acquainted with the whole pool while learning front paddle stroke, back float, water games, and basic water skills. Children can swim across the Small pool without assistance when completing this level.



Rays/Starfish (ARC Level 2-3) 4-6 years

*****Minimum Requirements:** Whole body submerge (bob) 10 times, can swim 15-25 yds without assistance

This level reinforces skills learned in Eels while building on their endurance. Children work on rotary breathing in their front crawl until it becomes a comfortable part of their stroke. Back crawl progresses with straight arm recovery becoming the true focus. Elementary backstroke is a complete stroke with arm and leg coordination attained. Children can swim 25 yards of front crawl in the Big pool when completing this level

Skill Levels (youth)



Polliwog (ARC Lower Level 1-2) 6+ yrs Beginner

*****Minimum Requirements:** Whole body submerge (bob) 3 times

This level gets children acquainted with the whole pool while learning front paddle stroke, back float, water games, and basic water skills. Children can swim across the Small pool without assistance when completing this level.



Guppy (ARC Lower Level 2-3) 6+ yrs Advanced Beginner

*****Minimum Requirements:** Front crawl with breathing across length of Small pool, Back crawl length of Small pool, Comfortable in Big pool

The children continue to practice and build upon basics. Front crawl with rotary breathing and back crawl are fine tuned. They are introduced to the progressive movements for the sidestroke, breast stroke and elementary backstroke. Additional synchronized swimming, wetball, and diving skills are taught. Children can swim 15 meters of front crawl in the Big pool without assistance when completing this level.



Minnow (ARC Level 3-4) 6+ yrs Intermediate

*****Minimum Requirements:** Front and back crawl - 25 yards (length of Big pool) w/ rudimentary rotary breathing on front crawl, Elementary backstroke

This is the initial intermediate level. Freestyle, backstroke, and the other strokes already introduced will be refined. Breaststroke will be introduced along with learning more synchronized swimming, wetball, diving skills, and first aid skills. Children can swim the length of the Big pool freestyle with rotary breathing and backstroke when completing this level.



Fish (ARC Level 5) 6+ yrs Advanced Intermediate

*****Minimum Requirements:** Front and back crawl - 25 yards (length of Big pool) w/rotary breathing, Sidestroke, Rudimentary breaststroke

Children continue to refine their Freestyle, Backstroke, and Breaststroke while increasing endurance swimming. Butterfly, Sidestroke, Freestyle and Backstroke turns will be introduced, along with the use of mask and snorkel, and additional first aid skills.



Flying Fish/Shark (ARC Level 6) 6+ yrs Avanced

*****Minimum Requirements:** Front and back crawl - 50 yards (2 lengths of Big pool) w/ bilateral breathing, Sidestroke, Breaststroke

In this advanced level, students work on refining their Breaststroke and Butterfly stroke and increasing their endurance. They develop the ability to perform more complex combinations of synchronized swimming movements, refine their diving skills, and develop better wetball skills.

Supporting a Child's Swimming: How Parents Can Help

Parents and their support are a crucial component of a child's success in learning to swim. Your encouragement and interest in your child's swimming show him or her that learning to swim is important and that you value his or her accomplishments. Some tips to help your child:

- Communicate openly. Talk to your child about the swim class. Talk to the instructor to find out about your child's progress (utilize the time before or after class, then the instructor should be available) and encourage your child to do so as well.
- Be patient with your child's progress. Each child learns at a different pace and is ready to learn new skills at a different time. Learning to swim involves a complicated series of new skills for a child to master, and it takes time to develop the necessary coordination and endurance.
- Practice with your child. Like any new skill, practice is crucial to develop and progress in swimming. It is important to practice as many of our classes are only offered once a week. Bring your child to the pool during free swim times, swim together, and help your child practice the skills. Speak with the instructor to find out which skills your child should work on. Be an active participant in your child's swim instruction.

- Have your child come on time, showered and ready to swim, and prepared:

Please send with your child:

Bathing suit

Towel (also available at the desk \$2)

Hair Tie/Swim Cap for long hair

Swim diapers (two tight-legged layers are required for those not toilet trained)

Goggles

Please do not send:

Flotation devices of any kind

Masks and Snorkels

Nose plugs

Fins

Y Casco Bay Regional YMCA Pool Rules

Rules are under the discretion of the lifeguard on duty:

- **Children 8 and under must be accompanied in to the water at all times.**
- **All persons under the age of 18 must to be swim tested before entering into deep water.**
- Showers are required by Maine State law before entering the pool.
- Those with shoulder length or longer hair must have it contained with a hair tie or cap.
- Children who are not potty trained must wear swim diaper plus swim suits or rubber pants. (**2 tight fit layers**)
- Proper swim attire (no street clothes or cut offs) must be worn in to the pool.
- The lifeguard has the right to limit the number of swimmers in either pool (Small Pool Max. 35 Swimmers)
- All swimmers must stay off of the platform in the small pool, as it is slippery.

Health and Safety

- Both pools are handicap accessible by lift, which is to be operated by staff only.
- Street shoes are prohibited on deck to keep the dirt, debris and other biological matter at a minimum.
- No food on deck. Only bottle water in plastic containers is permitted.
- Walk – pool deck can be slippery
- Please remove all band aids and hair pins before entering the pools.
- People with open cuts or wounds are advised not to use the pools. Chlorine inhibits new skin growth.
- Anyone with an infectious disease is prohibited from using the pools.
- It is the responsibility of the individual with a life threatening medical condition to inform the aquatic staff before entering the pool.
- All items must be kept clear of the pool railings separating the two pools.

Diving

- Diving is permitted only in the 9 ft area of the large pool.
- Forward dives only.
- Keep clear of pool ladders.
- Starting blocks are to be used under the supervision of certified swim coach.

Equipment

- Bubble belts, barbells, noodles, toys may not be brought in to the YMCA pools.
- Inflatables are not permitted.
- Kickboards are for lessons and lap swim only.
- Mask and snorkels may be used by adults only.

Lap Swim

- Please be courteous of others and alert the other swimmers before joining their lane.
- Two swimmers may split a lane each taking a side. When there are three or more swimmers please circle swim in a counter clockwise direction.
- Stay off lane lines.

Updated: 8/19/2008

Miscellaneous Information

Locker Rooms

Children who come for swim lessons should use the "Family" locker rooms whenever possible. Girls who can dress alone or who come with a female caregiver should use the girls' locker room; boys who can attend to themselves or who have a male caregiver should use the boys' room. The "Family" locker rooms are intended for mixed gender families (mother with son, father with daughter, etc.) or for those with disabilities preventing them from using the "Family" locker rooms. Please remember that family locker room space is limited, so time spent in there while others are waiting should be kept to a minimum. Also remember that the men's and women's locker rooms are for those aged 18 years and older.

Volunteers

The Aquatics Department is always looking for volunteers to assist with swim lessons. All that is required is a love of children & water and a willingness to help out. We will also assist in placing the children of parent volunteers in a class time that is convenient for the parent to help out. If interested please fill out the volunteer application found at the front desk.

Splash Parties

Splash party rentals are available in the Big and Small pools at a cost of \$100 for members and \$125 for Non-Members. This includes use of the pool for an hour and the use of the community room for an hour afterward. You can also expand the room space into our Primetime Room for an additional \$25. Rental times available are Saturday from 1-2pm and 4-5pm or Sunday 11-noon and 1-2pm. To book a date, contact the Aquatics Department.

Contact Information:

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Telephone: 865-9600 x109
FAX: 865-0484