

Fear or Adjustment?

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Children are not born with fear, it is created and developed. A child does not know what things are dangerous or that they could get hurt unless it is told to them.

In swimming, a child does not know what 'drowning' means. Children only comprehend the warning tone of your voice and the concerned or worried expression on your face.

Learning to swim is like any other new experience, whether it be a babysitter, daycare, going to school, visiting the doctor or any change of plans/routine.

It is an unknown activity and involves unknown persons.

The caution and hesitancy that a child may initially show at swimming lessons is no different than is expected or experienced in any other new situation. The main reason for tears or clinging can be easily overcome by loving parental support and enthusiasm.

Some of the items below may affect your child's behavior:

Separation from the parent

The pool is HUGE in relation to the size of the child

The instructor is a new and unfamiliar person

Sounds echo around the pool area and seem louder

The water tickles when it gets in their ears and eyes

There is nothing to hold onto when they lie on their backs

No matter how fast they 'run' they can't move quickly

Natural instinct is to hold their breath when their face is covered

Water isn't as firm or supportive as the ground

In addition, moods and developmental levels affect learning:

Tired, hungry, grouchy, rushed, irritable, loss of control

They may be going through an independent, bossy, whiny or clingy stage

The most important thing we need to remember is that they are children, not little adults. With patience, caring, concern and parental enthusiasm, children can learn to enjoy safe swimming and water safety.