

KIDS AQUATIC SURVIVAL SCHOOL

Parent Information Booklet

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Welcome to Kids Aquatic Survival School.

Congratulations on your decision to bring your child to the program to learn the KASS aquatic survival skills.

The following is a guide to give you a greater understanding of your child's progression through individually designed lessons and ways to help prevent tragic aquatic incidents in the future.

It will inform you on what you can expect from your child's lessons and how you and your child can use their learned skills in the future to discover the fun of swimming and water enjoyment.

By choosing to have your child taught swimming survival lessons through KASS you are taking one of many steps in keeping your child safe when in and around the water. Please keep in mind that this program does NOT "DROWNPROOF" your child. Constant adult supervision is the most effective way to prevent aquatic accidents.

ABOUT US

Kids Aquatic Survival School was established in 2004. Richard & Rachelle Beesley were appalled and saddened that infant drowning was on the increase in Australia. When first told that children could be taught to swim, float, swim, like many they believed it was not possible. After observing lessons, they could not believe what they were seeing, children were performing these skills without assistance.

They were looking to change their current careers and decided that this was something that they would be interested in promoting in Australia. In 2004, Richard flew to the USA and trained as an ISR instructor. In 2007 Richard trained as a Master Instructor and Rachelle an instructor. After being associated with ISR, Richard & Rachelle believed it would be beneficial to work on their own.

Kids Aquatic Survival School is hoping to expand throughout the country to help bring down the drowning rates and move towards the goal of not one child aquatic tragedy in Australia.

Why We Are Different?

Our focus is on drowning prevention and aquatic survival, not just simply learning to swim. The ability to swim a few feet in the water is not necessarily going to save your child in an emergency situation. KASS lessons are not "swimming lessons" in the traditional sense. Your child will be learning aquatic survival skills and become an "Aquatic Problem Solver".

At KASS there is not just the commitment to the child by us but also the parent is required to be fully committed to the program. No child is "Drown Proof" and all children must be effectively supervised. Our experience has shown that the skills your child will learn in KASS lessons along with the parent education could mean the difference between, mental or physical disabilities, life or death.

Your child's ability to survive an aquatic accident depends on:

- Their ability to orientate themselves in the water and get a breath.
- Keep breathing until they can be rescued or can get out of the water on their own.

INSTRUCTORS.

Each KASS Instructor undergoes a minimum of 60 hours of in water training before gaining a licence to teach KASS lessons. KASS Instructors study child psychology, learning theory, physiology, and the behavioural Sciences. Not only do instructors do this training they must be certified as an Austswim swimming instructor. This gives them a greater understanding of the differences between the two types of lessons.

Each KASS instructor is encouraged to develop their own unique teaching style, while continuing to achieve KASS's high standards for professionalism, safety, and knowledge.

Individualised Teaching for Your Child.

Every child has their own level of physical skill, unique temperament, and way of learning.

Each KASS lesson is individually designed for your child. Your instructor will assess your child's retention and implementation of the skills taught in the previous lessons. The goal is to encourage your child to do more and more with each lesson, but always within the bounds of their physical ability and their own personal learning curve.

Keeping Lessons Safe for Your Child.

Our commitment to your child's safety begins before your child ever gets in the water, and continues through each and every lesson. Your child's KASS Instructor will always be near your child throughout the lesson.

REGISTRATION FORM.

You will be asked to complete the initial KASS registration form. On this form, we require information about your child's health history and current health status and medication. We ask these questions to enable us to identify any potential health issues that may affect your child's lesson, and to individualise those lessons to meet their health and safety needs. Your child's information is held in the strictest confidence. A certificate from your doctor may be required in certain circumstances.

The CARE Sheet: Child Assessment Reaction Evaluation

Prior to each lesson, you will be asked to complete this form on a daily basis. On this form, you'll be asked some simple questions to assess your child's physiological reaction to lessons.

In addition, you should also note on the CARE sheet any medication that your child is taking, allergic reactions, and if they have had ANY kind of injury, fever, rash, or vomiting.

It is essential that we are aware of any of these conditions. Certain medications, allergic reactions or injuries could affect the pace of the lesson, or possibly lead us to the decision that a lesson should not take place. Completing this form every day will allow you and your Instructor to monitor these aspects

of your child's health during the course of lessons, and help us make sure that lessons are safe for your child.

Below is an example of a CARE sheet

KASS CARE Interview

KIDS AQUATIC SURVIVAL SCHOOL

Name

In the past 24 hours since last lesson please answer the following questions!

Are there any changes to your child's activity level?

Has there been any abnormal URINE or BOWEL movements?

Has your child had any Medications?

Has there been and changes in APPETITE?

Does your child have any SKIN RASHES or INJURIES?

Has there been any changes in SLEEP patterns?

Has your child had anything to eat or drink in the last two hours?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions please give details below!

Lesson Type

Temperature

Enter

Record: 1 of 1 Unfiltered Search

ACTIVITY LEVEL

It is important to make sure that you child's activity levels are normal at home. It is crucial to ensure that the instructor is not over extending your child in lessons causing fatigue and possibly affecting their immune system.

BOWEL MOVEMENT

Keeping note of your child's bowel movements is one way to monitor a child's well being. A constipated child could find lessons very uncomfortable or, if

your child has had frequent loose stools, it may be a sign of an illness that may warrant keeping your child out of the pool that day.

URINE OUTPUT

Monitoring urine output is important to ensure that your child's fluid levels are in balance. A significant decrease in urine could be due to many factors, such as dehydration, introduction of new foods, or even teething. Monitoring urine output for any signs of water intoxication, also as known as hyponatremia.

Water intoxication can occur if your child drinks too much water in a very short period of time, or is not urinating out enough water. Your child will be monitored throughout the lesson to prevent them ingesting any significant amount of water.

DIET.

In our experience, we've found that certain foods are difficult for children to digest. If a child has difficulty digesting food, it can increase the amount of gas in their system, which can affect buoyancy, and make lessons more difficult or even uncomfortable for your child. Excessive gas can also make it difficult for your child to take good, full breaths during his swimming lesson.

During KASS lessons we recommend the child avoids the following foods.

Apples (including apple juice, applesauce or in any other form)

Check fruit juice containers as many are apple based.

Pineapples, Papayas, Peaches, Passion Fruits, Celery, Honey, Spinach

The timing of eating and drinking before lessons is especially important. Your child should not eat ANY food for at least 1 hour prior to the lesson. In addition your child should not have any dairy or milk products for at least 2 hours prior to the lesson. Because many children have difficulty digesting foods with excessive refined sugar or processed flour, these types of foods should also be avoided during KASS lessons.

Sleep

KASS lessons are physically demanding. Expect your child to be tired after the lesson. Although many babies and young children sleep for a longer period of

time after their lesson, some changes in the quality and duration of your child's sleep patterns may occur because their muscles are getting used to working in different ways, it is possible they may be awakened by muscles twitching as they relax, or even as a result of dreaming about swimming. Please rest assured that these responses are normal.

Safety During the Lessons

Throughout your child's lesson, you will see your Instructor following several different safety protocols to ensure that your child's lesson is as safe as possible. A key part of keeping lessons safe for your child is:

- Keeping the lessons brief (no longer than 10 minutes). Reducing the possibility of fatigue.
- Constant monitoring of temperature and physical fatigue.
- Monitoring your child showing any signs of having excessive air in their abdomen.
- By keeping pool temperatures between 26 and 31 degrees. This is to make certain that the test for temperature fatigue is accurate. Pool temperatures over 31 degrees increase the risk of dehydration in physically active lessons.

Our Instructors are specially trained to check for and recognise signs of temperature fatigue. Temperature fatigue occurs before physical fatigue, monitoring for temperature fatigue ensures your child will not be too physically fatigued after the lesson and that your child is in the water for the optimum learning period. Once fatigue occurs the child is likely to retain less of the skills they are learning.

During the lesson, you may notice your Instructor pressing their finger on your child's heel, or possibly on your child's back and watching the colour return to the skin. This is the method for checking potential temperature fatigue.

Safety After the Lessons.

When the lesson is complete, your Instructor will lay your child on a towel, on their left side. Encourage your child to remain lying on the left side for at least a minute to encourage a quicker recovery. Patting them gently on the back

may also help expel any air they have swallowed. Wrap your child in the second towel to keep them warm.

It is important that your child not "gulp down" a large quantity of fluids immediately after the lesson to avoid stomach ache and/or gas pain.

What to Expect During KASS Lessons.

Teaching your child aquatic survival skills are a cumulative process. Each individual part of the process is taught, and as a skill is mastered, the next skill is introduced, which builds upon what has previously been learned. Each child will learn and master these skills at a different rate, and sometimes in a different sequence.

Most children learn these skills after 6-8 weeks of lessons; however, a wide variety of factors can affect your child's rate of progress through the lessons:

- Illness
- Absences from the lesson
- Teething
- diet
- Devices like "floaties" or flotation swim suits hold children in a vertical position in the water, while swimming and floating require a horizontal posture in the water
- Children will also often plateau before achieving the next step.

KASS lessons are student directed.

We are constantly assessing how your child is learning, what they have mastered, and what they are still learning before moving to the next step.

It's also important to note that while all KASS instructors are taught the same methods, each Instructor has his or her own individual style and way of communicating. Both you and your child should be comfortable with the Instructor, and there should be a calm, professional atmosphere at the lesson or, at least as calm as one can expect when there are babies and toddlers involved! If you have any concerns or questions about your Instructor or your lesson experience, please don't hesitate to contact us via our email, info@infantswim.com.au

Your Child's Emotional Reaction to Lessons.

Your child is in a new environment and around new people; therefore, they are likely to cry during the lesson. They are also out of their comfort zone and being required to perform skills that are new to them. Babies are unable express themselves verbally, and crying is a completely normal reaction for a young child who is in a new and challenging situation. As your child becomes more confident in their ability in the water, their crying will decrease. Remember that your child is NOT crying because they are hurt or afraid or being forced to do something they are not capable of doing.

Many parents of pre-school age children, or particularly verbal toddlers, can find the first several days of lessons quite challenging. It's not uncommon for older children to announce that they don't want to do what the instructor asks, or they may call out for Mum or Dad. Again, this is simply a reaction to the fact that the first few days of learning any type of new skill can be difficult. However this period is usually brief

Parent /Care Giver Role in the Lessons.

As you observe lessons your child will look to you for your reactions. Encourage your child by:

- Being your child's number 1 cheerleader
- Showing your enthusiasm by watching, clapping and smiling.
- Avoid giving any instructions such as swim, float. If a child falls in there will be no-one to give verbal prompts.
- Avoid distractions, your instructor needs your child's complete attention.

At the completion of the lesson:

- Cover them in a towel to keep them warm
- Tell your child how well they performed a skill such as "You floated very well today."
- Keep your child laying on their left side for at least a minute.
- Pat your child's back.

What to Bring to Each Lesson.

2 Clean Towels.

Our "2 Towel Rule" was developed with your child's safety in mind. You will need one towel to lay on the pool deck, and one towel to wrap your child in after lessons. Layering one towel on the pool deck helps to minimise the contact your child has with the wet surface of the pool deck, which can harbour germs.

Sunscreen.

If you choose to use sunscreen during the lesson, please apply a waterproof sunscreen on your child at least 1 hour before the lesson. Please use only the minimum amount necessary, and make sure it is rubbed in well. This will help to ensure that the sunscreen has absorbed enough to be effective against sunburn, and that your child isn't too slippery for your instructor! Remember, even though the lessons are short, the sun's rays are powerful, especially when your child is in the water.

Food.

As you prepare for each day's lesson, remember your child should not eat ANY food for at least 1 hour prior to the lesson, and your child should not have any milk products for at least 2 hours prior to the lesson.

Swim Nappy.

Swim nappies can be purchased from us, speedo or the cancer council. Please do NOT use any type of disposable swim nappy. They are not effective in containing bowel movements or preventing the spread of disease in the water causing the closure of the pool for a lengthy period.

What to Expect at Each Lesson.

At the beginning of each lesson before handing your child to your instructor

- Complete the CARE Sheet
- Inform your instructor any necessary information which could effect your child's lesson,
- Discuss with your instructor any changes that may be required for the lesson.
- Lessons may be shortened for the following reasons:

1. Any signs of temperature fatigue (checked by pressing child's heel)
2. Having difficulty expelling air from stomach
3. To end on a high note
4. Any safety concerns

Burping.

It is completely normal for a child to have a few large burps during the lessons. Swallowing air is especially common when your child is first learning to float, and if your child cries during the lesson, they'll be swallowing even more air. Your Instructor will be continually monitoring your child and take the appropriate action. Some children may spit up a small amount while burping. However, if your child spits up anything more than a small amount of liquid while being burped, you may need to make some modifications to their diet. Dairy products, including cow's milk based formulas, are a common culprit, since immature digestive systems often have difficulty digesting dairy foods in a short amount of time. If this occurs, you may want to stop your child's intake of any type of dairy products at least 3 to 4 hours prior to the lesson, to allow more time for your child to digest the milk or dairy before the lesson.

BABIES YOUNGER THAN 1 YEAR.

The "Rollback to Float" Sequence.

KASS lessons are aimed at "Aquatic Survival". Between the age of 6-12 months or prior to walking the child is taught to orientate themselves irrespective of how they have entered the water and roll onto their back in a back float position. Here they can rest and breathe and wait until help arrives.

What to Expect During Lessons.

Each KASS lesson, not just during the first week, but throughout the entire program, will begin with the Instructor briefly reinforcing and revising the skills learned in the prior lessons. You'll notice that your Instructor may pick your child up and praise them after a successful activity. This is how your Instructor reinforces to your child that they have performed a skill correctly. Take your cues from the Instructor and praise your child at the same time

On the first day of lessons, your Instructor will focus:

- on building a rapport with your baby
- allowing them to experience being on their back with support
- balancing in the water with support becoming comfortable breathing and resting

Depending on your baby's response your instructor may begin teaching your child how to:

- close their mouth
- open their eyes underwater
- how to move in water

You may have heard or read that babies can swim "naturally". That is false. All purposeful swimming behaviours must be taught. If swimming was natural for a baby, why do so many drown each year?

What to Expect during the 2nd and 3rd Weeks of Lessons.

For young babies, the 2nd and 3rd weeks of lessons are usually devoted to teaching your child to:

- float independently
- roll from a face down position into a float and breathe
- perform these skills without cues and support
- make adjustments such as slowing kick and keeping arms out

What to expect during the 4th and 5th Weeks of Lessons.

These lessons are devoted to:

- Fine tuning skills
- Extending period of time the child performs these skills
- Placing child in a variety of positions to simulate falling into water.
NO CHILD WILL EVER BE THROWN INTO THE POOL.
- Experience the feeling of practising their skills fully clothed.
You will be asked to bring summer and winter clothing

After your child has been in the water with clothes on, your Instructor may require one or more lessons with your child just to make any small adjustments that the Instructor may feel is warranted.

We highly recommend that the person who would usually get in the water with your child should participate in at least one lesson in the water with your child and the instructor.

Children from 12 months to 6 years.

The "Rollback to Float" Sequence.

A child who is older than 12 months and is walking on their own is developmentally able to learn the "Swim Float Swim" sequence.

Young children who are older than 12 months generally are developmentally ready and physically strong enough to get out of the water should they fall in. The beginning of the program is devoted to building a rapport with the child and building their confidence in the water.

Skills are introduced with the instructor giving support and cues for each skill. Each skill is practised and monitored for retention and to make any necessary modifications.

This age group is taught to:

- Hold breath and open their eyes under water
- swim for a short distance
- roll into a back float position
- get a breath
- roll back over and swim
- look for an exit to swim to get themselves out
- float until rescued

What to Expect during your First Week of Lessons.

During the first week your child will receive instructions in:

- holding their breath under water

- opening their eyes under water
- back float
- holding onto the wall
- swim a short distance to the wall

What to Expect during the 2nd and 3rd Week of Lessons.

During these weeks your instructor will be:

- Reviewing skills taught in previous lessons.
- Modifying these skills
- Testing your child's retention of skills
- Focusing on roll onto back float from a face down position
- Teaching your child to:
 1. roll when they need to breathe
 2. roll out of the float, and to swim again in search of the exit. "swim-float-swim" sequence
 3. turn around in the water while swimming to locate an exit.
- Simulate different potential positions your child could be in if they fall in the water.
NO CHILD WILL BE THROWN INTO THE POOL.
- Teach your child to be a problem solver
- Learn to respect water and gain confidence

What to Expect towards the last Weeks of Lessons.

The last weeks of the course are devoted to:

- Consolidating "swim, float, swim" sequence
- Performing skills without verbal or physical cues
- Swim fully clothed, most aquatic accidents occur when children are fully clothed.
- Fine tuning and adjusting skills

Parent/Caregiver Lesson

We highly recommend that parents/carers do at least one lesson in the water with the instructor and your child. We have found that parents/carers who do this are more likely to be able to interact with their child in the water and have fun and improve the child's swimming abilities.

The more that your child is in the water swimming the greater they will improve and the more competent they will become.

Refresher Lessons.

Refresher lessons are extremely important after your child has become aquatically skilled.

Children grow very quickly. Your child's height, weight, body composition, centre of gravity, strength and co-ordination are always changing and evolving.

While KASS students retain a high percentage of the skills they have learned even after a full year without lessons refresher lessons are recommended. Swimming is a sensory-motor skill which is not forgotten but often needs practice to fine tune the skill to its previous standard. Growth affects your child's centre of gravity, and they will need to learn to make different types of adjustments to be able to maintain the back float position. They will also be capable of more and more effective arm and leg movements while swimming. Their confidence in their abilities will grow as they practise periodically with their Instructor.

What are Refresher Lessons?

Refresher lessons are, in many respects, a condensed version of the initial sequence of lessons. All the same safety procedures and protocols apply, just as in the initial series of lessons. Each refresher lesson will last no more than 10 minutes, and you should still complete the required CARE Sheet and follow the same dietary guidelines as you did with the initial sequence of lessons. Most refresher lessons will last between 1-3 weeks, although the exact number of lessons will vary greatly depending upon how much your child has grown since the last lesson.

The lessons will be focused on teaching your child how to make small adjustments that are necessary to easily roll onto their back and to maintain the float. Since your child will invariably have grown and acquired new physical skills since the initial sequence of lessons, the refresher lessons will focus on teaching them to perform the same skills in their "new" body.

Refresher lessons are especially important for children between the ages of 12 months and 4 years, since children in this age range grow physically and

developmentally at such a rapid pace. Please keep in mind that babies under 12 months who learned the "rollback to float" sequence should take the full series of lessons to learn the "swim-float-swim" once they are over one year of age, rather than refresher lessons for the roll back to float.

KASS instructors offer lessons on a weekly basis (Transitional Lessons) once the child has finished. This will also help to maintain and improve the child's skills, introduce other skills and have fun in the pool.

TRANSITIONAL LESSONS.

After your child has completed the initial sequence of lessons, we offer lessons to ensure that their technique in the water doesn't get "sloppy."

Transitional lessons are designed to help with the step between survival lessons and stroke lessons (learning to swim the four form strokes). These lessons help to fine-tune your child's skills, and to prevent problems in your child's technique and introduce them to using their skills for fun and safety in the water.

At Kids Aquatic Survival School (KASS) for a long time we have said that swimming improves swimming so if you can't get to the pool or don't want to get in, these are the lessons for you. Normally they run for a maximum 15 minutes and not only work on the previously learnt survival skills of Swim Float Swim but they also introduce different elements to swimming. Such elements include the use of kickboards, noodles and diving to get submerged objects form part of these lessons.

Although your child never forgets the skills that they have learnt they will be better at retaining them if they are in the pool practicing. It also allows your child to improve on their swimming skills that they have learnt and expand into another world of swimming.

The perfect for transitional lessons is winter. It is unlikely that you or your child will be in your pool over.

Remember, NO flotation devices like "floaties" or flotation vests.

When to Call your Instructor.

Because children are always growing and learning new skills, your child's abilities in the water will change from year to year (and sometimes even from month to month). Contact your KASS Instructor if you see your child doing any of the following:

- Swimming with their head up.
- Swimming for longer and longer distances without rolling over to get a breath.
- Rolling over too frequently, without swimming between rolls.
- Rolling over but not staying in a float long enough to breathe.
- Swimming in a vertical or upright position.
- "Coasting" in the water, rather than kicking forward.
- Rolling over to float and then not turning back over to swim.
- If your child has any type of accidental fall into the water at any time.
- If you feel something is problematic, don't let it go. Advise your KASS instructor of the issue because most likely the problem will not fix itself.

Please, don't try to fix the problem yourself. KASS Instructors are specifically trained in how to remediate these types of behaviours, and in many instances the matter can be resolved in only a few lessons. Trying to fix the problem yourself may make matters worse, and may lead to other problems in your child's swimming technique that could seriously affect their aquatic survival skills.

Safe Family Fun.

Keeping your child safe is one of your most important responsibilities. As parents, we don't give a second thought to using a variety of different types of safety devices in our homes, like baby gates, monitors, or cabinet locks. You probably wouldn't dream of driving in your car without your child in a car seat. Yet, there is only one thing in the world that is a guarantee against drowning, and that is your effective supervision of your child.

- SUPERVISIONS is thus the first, and most critical, line of defence to prevent drowning. If there is only one thing you remember from reading this guide, let it be the critical importance of supervising your child.

- **APPROPRIATE FENCING** around your pool, locks to prevent access to the pool. However, there is no device in existence that is guaranteed to keep any child out of the water, or that will prevent a child from drowning in any circumstance. Please ensure that your fence complies with local and state guidelines.
- **SKILLS YOUR CHILD HAS LEARNT.** This is where the skills your child has learned in Kids Aquatic Survival School come into play. If you are reading this, you've already taken the important step of having your child learn these skills.

KASS parents know about the importance of supervision, but other people who learn that your child has had swimming lessons may assume that this means your child can be in the water alone. Don't let that assumption be made, make it very clear that your child should be constantly supervised any time they are anywhere near the water.

Perhaps the most important thing you can do is raise awareness of the issue by talking about it. For many, water safety is something they don't think about until it's too late. Make it known to everyone who has responsibility for your child that water safety is an important issue.

Keeping Your Pool Environment Safe for Children.

If you have a pool in your backyard, you have a responsibility both to your children and other children to keep the pool environment safe. Below are some recommendations to achieve a safe environment:

- **Permanent Pool Fencing with a Self-Latching Gate.** Please check state regulations to ensure your fence meets these regulations. Regularly check your fence to ensure that the gate is self closing and there are no access points for the child to get through. Keep pool furniture inside the fence, because children can use furniture or even toys that are outside the fence as a stepping stool to climb over the fence.
- **Keep toys stored away.** Keeping toys in or around the pool is inviting the child into the pool area. Remove the incentive to be in the pool area by keeping toys away from the pool when they are not in use. Riding toys should never be used in or around the pool area.

- Keep a portable phone by the pool. Keep a phone by the pool in case of an accident, you can call for help immediately without having to leave the pool area. Remember, the phone by the pool should be used for emergencies. No phone call is important enough to justify compromising your child's safety.
- A key to preventing an aquatic accident is staying two steps ahead of your child. Think about where your child is going to be 5 seconds from now, to help prevent an accident from occurring.
- Keep jets aimed towards the shallow end and the steps. If your child does fall into the water, properly positioned jets will create a current that will guide them towards the shallow end and the steps so that they can exit the pool.
- Keep water level at the uppermost limit. Unlike community pools or hotel pools, most residential pools do not have an edge around the inside of the pool that your child can easily hold onto. Keeping the water level at the uppermost limit will help make it easier for your child to reach the outside elevated ledge, and to either get out of the water, or to hold onto the edge and call for help.
- If you have to leave the pool for any reason ensure you take the child with you.

It bears repeating effective supervision is the first and most important defence against drowning.

Having Fun in the Pool.

KASS trained children learn to respect the water and to enjoy swimming, and have confidence in their abilities in the water.

You know how important it is to supervise your child, and to keep your pool environment safe. It's also important that you and your child have fun together in the water.

Should there be any questions please don't hesitate to contact your instructor or KASS at info@infantswim.com.au.

Thanks

Richard & Rachelle Beesley