

Warren County YMCA
212 Lexington Avenue
Warren, PA 16365
814-726-0110
www.warrenymca.org

YMCA
Youth Swim Program

Parent Handbook

Dear Parents,

Thank you for enrolling your child/children in the Warren County YMCA Swim Lessons. Your child is in for a fun, safe and positive experience!

The Warren County YMCA's goal is to "water proof" Warren County. Since Kinzua country has an abundant source of recreational water, it is extremely important that children and adults know how to swim and enjoy water safely. The YMCA meets this goal by providing programs for all ages and ability levels.

We know that many parents, old and new, have many questions. For that reason, we are providing this parent handbook full of information that you will need to know for a successful lesson experience. Inside is information regarding locker room usage, credits and other guidelines and pertinent information. Please take the time to read and review the handbook.

Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions or concerns that you may have at 726-0110, ext. 116.

Sincerely,

Cathy Peterson
YMCA Aquatic Director

Objectives:

1. To teach swimming skills for personal safety and constructive use of leisure time
2. To provide aquatic activities for the purpose of improvement in range of motion, endurance, muscular strength, gross motor skills, perceptual motor skills and general physical fitness
3. To provide the basics for a lifetime sport
4. To enhance your child's enjoyment of the water

Lesson Program Overview:

Swim lessons are given in 5-week sessions. Levels are offered for all abilities. During the school year we offer a water adjustment class (Tumble & Splash) for children aged 18 months through age three (3). There are a total of two preschool levels (Tadpole & Aquatots) and five progressive levels (Polliwog, Minnow, Fish, Flying Fish & Shark). The majority of our lesson instructor to student ratio is set at 1:8 for all lessons. Some of the advanced levels may have a 1:10 ratio. Some classes may have smaller ratios if registration is not full. We must have a minimum of 6 registered students to run a class. Should we need to cancel a class due to lack of enrollment, we will make every effort to transfer your child into another class. If we are unable to transfer your registration, a full credit will be issued.

Registration:

The date of registration for each session is printed in the YMCA program guide. Class size is limited, so if a particular day and time are needed to fit your schedule, we strongly recommend that you come in person early on the first day of registration.

For your convenience there are several registration options. On the very first day of registration, phone registrations using a major credit card will be taken from 5:30am-12:00noon. Any other day, registration can be taken over the phone between 8:00am and 12:00noon. Registration can also be done in person. Our website (www.warrenymca.org) will be getting a major update and could possibly be up and running by Fall 2007.

Only YMCA members may register for YMCA swimming lessons unless it is the adult lessons. Due to changes in the YMCA insurance policy, all swim lesson participants **MUST** have a signed swim waiver on file. Anyone under age 18, must have a parent or legal guardian also sign the waiver.

Credits:

Partial credit (75%) is issued to participants who drop out of class either before or during the first week. After the first week of classes, no credit will be issued. Any credit issued will be mailed directly to you. Credit may be applied to any YMCA program.

Absences & Make Up Sessions:

Participants are urged to attend all class sessions. Unfortunately, we are unable to make classes up due to illness or missed classes. We have many children enrolled in our programs and we adhere to strict ratios. It would be unfair to other participants to add an additional child to the class. If the YMCA cancels a class for any reason, credits will be issued for missed classes.

Locker Rooms/Lesson Preparation:

Boys in 1st grade and up **must** dress in the Men's locker room. Girls in 1st grade and up **must** dress in the Women's locker room.

We strongly suggest that you leave no valuables in lockers. The Warren county YMCA cannot be held responsible for lost or stolen articles. You may bring a lock for your locker, but all locks must be removed from the locker after each daily use.

Please remove Band-Aids before entering pool. Participants are not permitted to chew gum or candy in the pool area. Shoulder length hair must be tied back or capped to keep it out of the swimmers eyes, as well as to help keep the pool clean. All swimmers are asked to shower before entering the pool area. After class, swimmers should dry off in the drying area by the showers to help keep the locker area dry and safe.

Food and drinks (except water in a plastic container) are not permitted in the locker rooms. No glass containers in the locker rooms.

Please allow enough time to dress and shower before class, so children do not miss the beginning of the class. Please do not change your child in the bathroom stalls. These are not changing areas. If dressing in the changing cubicles, please put your articles of clothing and bags in a locker when finished dressing so that someone else can utilize the changing areas. Do not forget to ask your child if they need to go to the bathroom before class begins. Preschool children **must** wait in the locker room until the swim instructor opens the door and lets them know that it is time for class. This prevents the little ones from being run over with older children or adults.

Bathroom Policy:

It is a strict aquatic department policy that our instructors and lifeguards may **not** take your child to the bathroom at any time. Please have your child go to the bathroom **before** class. If your child would need to go during the class, an instructor will call out to the lobby for the parent to come and take the child to the restroom. Swimmers age three (3) and older are **not** permitted to wear any type of diapers, including swim diapers. Children age three (3) **must** be potty trained to participate in our progressive swim lessons.

Showers:

This is an important step in helping to keep the pool clean. Taking a shower to remove body oils, sweat, lotions, deodorants and perfumes, enables us to use fewer chemicals in the pool. Also, rinsing with cool water helps to lower your body temperature, so there is no shock to the body when entering the water. After swimming and taking a shower, everyone should dry off in the designated drying area beside the showers. This will help keep the locker room area dry and safe.

Shoes:

Children may wear water shoes, flip flops or sandals in the locker room, shower area and on the pool deck. Water shoes may not be worn in the pool for swim lessons. The shoes add extra weight to the child's feet and lead to difficulty learning proper kicking techniques and supporting themselves in the water.

When should I not bring my child to lessons?

Open wounds and contagious diseases/illnesses are reasons to keep your child out of the pool until healed or well. At the Warren County YMCA we abide by the regulations of OSHA which has strict regulations regarding blood borne and other body fluids. Inform your child's instructor of any limitations or special needs your child may have, which could affect their health, safety, or ability to understand and follow directions or perform various skills.

If the building is closed for some reason, it will be announced on the radio (WNAE1310am) or a sign will be posted on the front door and credit will be issued. **There will be no make up classes or credits issued due to inclement weather.**

Start of the class:

If children arrive early for class, they must wait in the locker room until it is time for their designated class. An instructor will open the door and tell them when it is time for class. You may accompany your child into the pool area and make sure that they get to the correct spot for their

lesson. It is highly suggested that you leave your child's towel on the bar provided for immediate access after the lesson. Please have your child's name written on the towel. Parents are **NOT** permitted to stay in the pool area during swim lessons. This is to ensure that the instructor can have the child's total attention. If children are distracted, they do not learn well and there could possibly be a safety issue.

Dismissal Time:

Please meet your child, particularly younger ones, in the locker rooms at the end of class time. Check if your child has the correct towel and any other items (goggles, water shoes, etc.). If you need to speak with your child's instructor, please be brief in consideration of the students who are waiting for the next class to begin; most instructors have classes back-to-back. If more time is needed for a discussion, contact the aquatic director and someone will contact you by phone.

Parent Observation:

You are invited and encouraged to observe your child's final class of each 5-week session. Occasionally, observation is held on a day other than the last day due to holidays, teacher absences, etc. Parent observation signs are posted towards the end of the session stating the day of the next registration period and the day/time of the observation. We ask that at no time do the parents interrupt a lesson that is in progress. If you are needed we will signal you.

There are bleachers provided for the parents to sit on during the duration of the lesson. Please do not allow siblings, who are observing the lessons to get off the bleachers, run on the bleachers, run on the deck or go towards the water. This is a very important safety issue.

During your child's lesson, your child may have to use the bathroom. The instructors may not accompany your child to the bathroom. The instructor will signal you if your child has to go and you can accompany them to the bathroom. Remind your child to use the bathroom before class begins so that they will not miss any class time.

What should I do if my child is crying?

Many times first time participants can become overwhelmed with the lesson experience. It is not unusual for a child to become upset upon initial separation from the parents. Your child may show great apprehension or cry during the first few weeks of lessons. He/she may not wish to return or he/she may pretend to be ill. Be persistent and he/she will overcome his/her fears. Our instructors are trained to deal with this kind of situation. The best thing you could do for your child is to give your child to the instructor and leave the pool area immediately. Sometimes parents feel their child will be more comfortable with them on the pool deck, but this only makes the instructor's job more difficult and distracts your child and the other children in the class. Please let our trained instructors work with your child.

Extra Practice:

Bring your child to family or open swims and give him/her an opportunity to show you how they are learning to swim in class. The more opportunities given to the child to practice, the faster their progress will be. **Frequency** is a very important factor in learning.

Home Practice:

Practice in the bathtub at home is very beneficial. Spend part of each bath time blowing bubbles, getting face wet and lying back getting ears wet. Make a game of it. During bath time, let the water drip over the child's face so that he/she becomes accustomed to the feeling. For some children, this is an unnatural feeling and must be done gradually. Have your child practice floating on his/her back. Begin in a small amount of water and then increase the depth. This helps the child become accustomed to having water in his ears. For advanced levels, have children practice arm

movements for various strokes while standing on the floor. They can practice crawl stroke arms, back stroke arms, breast stroke arms and butterfly arms. In the summer if you have an outdoor pool, have children practice in it. Remember, **never, never** leave a child alone in the bathtub or swimming pool.

Testing:

Children are being tested continually during classes. There is no specific “Test Day”. There is no such term as “failure” in swimming. Each child will be passed on an individual basis when ready. Readiness is an important concept in learning, therefore, a child should never be pushed to perform skills that are beyond his ability.

Individual Differences:

Each child differs in his progress in all activities including swimming. It is discouraging to a child to be compared to another more skilled child. We want your child to really enjoy the water. Don't be discouraged if your child does not seem to be doing as well as another child. Your child's enjoyment in the water may take longer than others, but it is a lasting reward and is definitely worth waiting to receive.

Progress may be slow due to:

1. fear of water
2. unsatisfactory mental or physical adjusting to the water
3. poor coordination
4. short attention span
5. parent planting their own personal fear in child

Learning:

It is an established fact that learning occurs in spurts. Your child may progress very rapidly for a while and then suddenly seem to reach a plateau. Don't be discouraged, because he will suddenly begin to improve again at a steady pace.

Class Instruction:

Remember that the child reflects your attitude. Praise and cheerfulness are very important. Don't discuss your own fears in front of the child. The parent can either strengthen or weaken the relationship between pupil and teacher by the reaction to a complaint the child may make. Be positive in your attitude about the swim program. Discuss any persistent problems with the Aquatic Director. Regularity in class participation is **very important**. Practicing a skill will make it permanent.

Patches:

Patches are given to each child as he completes the various progressive levels of aquatics. A YMCA patch is awarded for completion of Tadpole, Aquatots, Polliwog, Minnow, Fish, Flying Fish and Shark.

Bubbles:

We use bubbles for our beginners as instructional devices. They allow for free movement of the arms and legs. As they progress, the bubbles is slowly deflated and the child will eventually swim on his/her own. The bubbles is **not** an approved PFD (personal flotation device). It is a teaching aid. You **must** always be in the water beside your child during a Family or Open swim if they are wearing a bubble and pay attention to them at all times. Swim suits with flotation devices inserted into them or life jackets are **not** permitted in our pool.

Tumble & Splash:

Tumble & Splash is a program held September through May for children age 18 months up to age three (3). This program gets very young children ready for regular YMCA programs. Parents **must** participate with their child doing various activities in the gymnasium and then heading to the pool for a water adjustment class. Parents will learn how to help their child adjust to the water and get accustomed to the aquatic environment. These are **not** swim lessons.

Volunteers:

The YMCA is always looking for volunteers. If you have any free time during the day and would enjoy volunteering in our swim program, please contact the Aquatic Director. The more help that we have, the more time a child will receive in the water.

YMCA Dolphin Swim Team:

The Warren County YMCA boys and girls swim teams compete on a regularly scheduled basis. Youths (age 6-18) interested **must** have completed at least the Minnow level of our swim program. This is a team sport that combines healthy competition with a family oriented group of people who become lifelong friends. Swim Team builds self-esteem, confidence and helps improve swimming skills for a lifetime.

YMCA Summer Swim League:

The Warren County YMCA offers a summer swim training league that introduces boys and girls (age 6-18) to the competitive skills needed for swim team. All swimmers **must** have attained at least the Minnow level of our swim program. Techniques is emphasized in this league. Usually they try to swim at least two (2) times with other summer leagues for practice and fun.

Other Questions or Concerns:

We want both you and your child to have a positive experience. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Cathy Peterson, YMCA Aquatic Director, at 726-0110,

Warren County YMCA Swim Skills

PRESCHOOL:

Tadpole	1 length on front (No bubble) 1 length on back (No bubble) Jump off board, swim to side	*Aquatots	1 length on front (No bubble) 1 length on back (No bubble) Jump off board, swim to side Turtle float (count of 12) Tread water (1 minute) Dive from side & recover object at 6 foot depth
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Both groups should learn proper way to wear PFDs

*after Aquatots, if still below 1st grade, child works on Minnow skills.

Warren County YMCA Swim Skills (continued)

1st GRADE & UP:

Polliwog	1 length on front (No bubble) Jump off board, swim to side Tread water (1 minute) Water polo skills (throw/catch)	1 length on back (No bubble) Turtle float (count of 15) reaching assists (arm & object)
Minnow	25 meters front crawl Front dive from side (12' depth) Front float (1 minute) Underwater swim (1/2 width) PFD (putting on & floating)	25 meters back crawl Tread water (1 ½ minutes) Back float (1 minute) Reach assist (arm & object) Water polo skills (throw/dribble-shallow)
Fish	50 meters front crawl 50 meters breast stroke Front dive from diving board 3 step & hurdle jump off board Underwater swim (width) Survival float front (3 ½ min) Ear squeeze knowledge Games – throw/catch ball, dribble ball, front/back rolls in shallow	50 meters back crawl 50 meters elementary back Tread water (2 minutes) PFD (HELP & Huddle positions) Boat safety rules Survival float back (3 ½ min) Reaching assist (pole)
Flying Fish	200 meters front crawl 100 meters breast stroke 25 meters butterfly Starts & Open turns Survival float front (7 min) Tread arms only (2 min) Boat safety (in/out, change positions) Games – sculling (head first & feet first), dribble ball, throw/catch ball in deep water, front/back rolls in deep	100 meters back crawl 100 meters elementary back 100 IM (butter, back, breast, crawl) Reaching assist (pole) Survival float back (7 min) Tread legs only (2 min)
Shark	200 IM 50 meters head-high crawl 50 meters right side stroke 50 meters over-arm right side 50 meters right lifesaving Tread arms only (5 min) Starts & Flip turns Surface dives (pike, tuck, feet first) Inflate clothes Games – water polo game, syncro skills (tub, back dolphin, shark, oyster, etc.	50 meters inverted breast 50 meters head-high breast 50 meters left side stroke 50 meters over-arm left side 50 meters left lifesaving Tread legs only (5 min) Inflate clothes Surface dives & recover object Mask, fins & snorkel