

# Parent Tot

**Ages: 6 months - 3 years**

## Testable Skills:

Age.

Is the swimmer old enough to stand in chest deep water alone without support on a bench?

Almost entirely requires age 3.

Skills for Guppies:

- Old enough: 2
- Do they follow directions without parent?

## **Instructors should know:**

The best thing for an instructor to know about Parent Tot is confidence and nuance behind WHY we do the activities and games.

- Understanding of why we hold children the way we do.
- Understand the nuance of progressions.
- How to talk to adults; we know information they do not. Be confident in that.
- What different toys are good for infants and toddlers and the difference between them.
- How to sing and be engaging / entertaining.
- How to work a TV and internet connection.
- Ability to explain how to hold a child or demonstrate it with confidence.

## Quick test:

Is the swimmer at least 6 months old and under 3?

## Pool location for classes:

Shallow end or a comfortable depth for all participants to stand.

This class is for Parents and their infant/toddler children to experience swimming in a safe and fun class.

## **Supervisors look for:**

Pay attention to staff that are outgoing, loud, and confident. They will be the first to jump at an opportunity to work with adults.

Most swim instructors that are younger (15-20) can be intimidated by working with adults and their children.

**\*\*REMEMBER\*\***

People are signing up for a Parent Tot class for 2 reasons:

- They want to spend time in the water having fun with their child.
- They want to learn how to start teaching child to swim; or teach the child to swim.

They are coming to our program to LEARN what they do not, or DO what they cannot do alone.

It is our responsibility to give them the information (how to hold, what to do, what progressions to follow), and provide opportunities for the parent and child to bond in a safe welcoming environment.

# Games, Songs, Education

## Repeat everything always

Beyond repeating instructions and scripts for how to hold for front and back glides, repeat your activities and songs.

Infants and younger children love repetition because they know what is happening next.

Blues Clues played the same episode every day of the week. Kids love it. They'll love the predictability of the same songs, and the same flow at Parent Tot lessons.

Make the activities interesting and vertical.

## Variations in progressions

Vertical activities are the skill variations available in each one: different support holds for front glides as example.

Each activity should have an option for a:

- Beginner infant 6mos.
- Beginner 1-2 yo.
- Experienced parent tot participant
- Advanced 2-3yo looking to explore the water.

The games and songs are all very individually based, instructors should be giving specific tailored feedback and instruction to parents on HOW to teach to their child's level of comfort.

## Avoid lazy, uninterested, stale

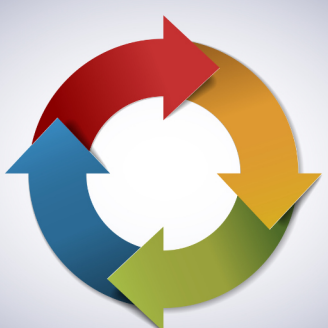
When the activities and songs/games are always the same it is natural for instructors to fall into a rut.

Signs your Parent Tot class is dull:

- Instructor doesn't get in the water.
- Instructor doesn't sing or dance to songs.
- Parents do their own things; not the group activities and songs but play independently.
- Instructor stands in one spot for more than a few minutes.
- Infants and toddlers are not excited about doing the songs or games.

Cure: Be active! Be engaged! Talk to parents!

## **Do**



<p><b>Activity 1:</b> Bubbles and Bobs</p> <p>Ask everyone their age. Do that number of bobs with bubbles.</p> <p>If swimmer does not want to go completely underwater, offer alternative following underwater progression:</p> <p>Shoulders, Chin, Lips, Nose, etc.</p>	<p><b>Activity 2:</b> Walk around the pool</p> <p>Push benches together, or in a space they can stand, walk in a square or circle.</p> <p>Keep swimmers moving. Each time they get to a corner, kiss the water.</p>
<p><b>Activity 3:</b> Walk around the pool with bubbles</p> <p>Continue walking in the same square space or across two benches.</p> <p>Kiss the water in the corners, but when passing from one bench to the other must put lips in and blow bubbles.</p>	<p><b>Activity 4:</b> Introduce supported front glides with instructor.</p> <p>Begin close, and support swimmer so that they do not go underwater.</p> <p>Encourage chin in water.</p>


## **Do**

<p>Put your (fingers) in the water</p> <p>Push off to/with me</p> <p>Have swimmer put hands on shoulders, hand, or initiate alone.</p> <p>Stand immediately in front of swimmer, within arm reach.</p> <p>Replace "reach in front of you" by "put your hands on my shoulders."</p> <p>Instructor starts near swimmer.</p> <p>Instructor stands "just" out of reach, swimmer must reach for support.</p> <p>Support hips or belly to keep at the surface.</p> <p>Swimmer straight arms. Encourage face in water. Encourage constant kick.</p>	<p><b>Beginner</b></p> <p><b>Moderate</b></p> <p><b>Advanced</b></p>
<p><b>Hands on Hands</b></p> <p>Instructor supports swimmer by holding "streamlined" hands (one on top of the other).</p> <p>Instructor uses other hand to support belly.</p> <p>Start immediately in front of swimmer "just" outside of arm reach.</p> <p>Instructor holds out hand, palm up with shoulders in the water.</p> <p>Use script to encourage a horizontal glide, jump to instructor's hand.</p> <p>If comfortable, back up and allow a short glide before grasping hand.</p>	
<p><b>Hands on fingertips</b></p> <p>Instructor puts fingertips under swimmer's "streamlined" hands.</p> <p>Support is largely mental. Fingers are a reminder of instructor support; trust.</p> <p>Instructor is there but not actively lifting or holding swimmer at the surface.</p>	

## **Avoid**



## **Avoid**



# Parent Tot Skills

## Water comfort

The primary goal of a parent tot class is to increase the comfort and familiarity of the swimming pool and water to an infant.

We start lessons early to establish healthy, fun, memories of swimming.

The more comfortable a parent is in the water with their child, the more comfortable the child will be swimming for the long term.

Go slow. Build confidence. Earn trust, and look for happy babies.



## Supported front glides

Parent skill:

- Football hold
- Palms up hold on belly
- Knowledge of scooping and face in water with kisses.

Swimmer skills:

- relaxed comfort with face in water, breath held, and arms straight.
- Joyful smiles when held by parent moving through water with ease.



## Supported back glides

Parent skill:

- Head on shoulder
- Head in hand
- Fingertips under neck.

Swimmer skills:

- Comfortable laying on back with ears in water.
- Relaxed body, legs straight, body floating.



## Scooping

Parent Skill:

- Football hold grip in front float.
- Consistent cue like "1, 2, 3!"
- Backwards step and scoop pushing water over the child's face.
- Smile and embrace.

Swimmer skills:

- Expectation of scoop and going under with comfort.
- Closed eyes, breath held, relaxed recovery.



## Games, songs, splashing

Do the parent and swimmer join in the games songs and activities?

Parents and swimmers should have fun! The point of the class is to build confidence in the water together sharing in relaxed playful activities.

Do the parents and the swimmer look like they're having fun?

Are they laughing, playing, and exploring the pool?



## Teach the parent

The parents are taking a Parent Tot class to learn how to swim; how to work with their child, and how to get their new child ready for the water.

They WANT to know what to do. We have more experience and mastery over progressions than they do.

Be bold. Explain why we play games, why we hold children certain ways, and what the benefits are.

Approach the parent frequently and have a conversation.

What are their goals? How can you help them with those goals?

## Increase difficulty

Each parent tot skill has vertical difficulty; front floats can be done with hesitant swimmers and advanced 3 year olds.

You can do the same activity and have many different skill variations within the activity.

Make sure that while you're following a predictable pattern to your lessons you're also providing growth opportunities.

Follow up with a parent and show them the next step in the front float progression or the next advanced hold for supported back glides.

Make things harder as they master each step.