

Aquatics Images, Games, Songs & Rhymes

Parent and Child Aquatics Images, Games, Songs and Rhymes

Much of a child's early learning takes place while playing games. In fact, play and fun experiences are essential for the development of a child's positive attitude toward the world. Images, games and rhymes make use of a child's natural ability to imagine and pretend while learning swimming-related skills.

IMAGES

Young children have very lively imaginations and like to pretend. Give a child a box to play with and it becomes a house, car, bus, train, plane, animal cage, gift and more. The use of images, or thinking of imaginary objects and activities, utilizes this natural ability and can enhance a young child's willingness to participate and enjoy aquatic activities.

To be successful, images should be:

- Simple and concrete;
- Something from the child's experience;
- Amusing or interesting; and
- Able to actively engage the child in movement or participation.

Following are examples of how to encourage children to use images to learn:

Water Adjustment

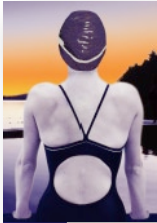
- Kneel at edge of pool like a frog to blow bubbles.
- Spill water out of containers to make waterfalls.
- Move hands in and out of the water like a porpoise jumping in the waves.
- "Paint" the child's body and then wash off the paint.

Kicking

- Use a kickboard to kick and be a motor boat.
- Have a horse race. Children can say "giddy-up" as they kick across the pool.
- Be a whale; kick in the back float position. The feet become the whale's tail.
- Kick to become a water fountain. How low or high can the water go?

Back Float

- Be a leaf floating on a pond.
- Float like a boat or a log.
- Be an airplane or a butterfly and stretch out your wings (arms).
- Pretend it is nighttime and quietly count the stars (lights).



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Underwater Exploration

- Be a submarine; listen to the sounds while blowing bubbles underwater.
- Pretend to be a seed. Go under the water and spread out your leaves or flowers (arms) when you surface.
- Open your eyes to see the fish and talk to the fish by blowing bubbles underwater; turn your face to the side with one ear remaining in the water to listen to the fish.

Arm Stroke

- Be a puppet; the instructor or parent patterns the child's arms.
- Swim with spoons (keep fingers together).
- Be a dog burying its bones by "digging in" with "big paws."

Front Float

- Be a rocket ship with arms overhead, and carefully blast off across the pool.
- With hands overhead, make long bunny ears.
- Pretend to be a super hero flying through the air.
- Stretch out arms and legs to be a big fish in the water.

Combination Skills

- Be a dog burying bones and growling to keep people away: look (turn head to side to breathe) and growl (place head in water and blow bubbles).
- Pretend to be a parachute jumper. Jump in the water, turn, level off and return to the edge of the pool.
- Be a favorite circus animal and do a front stroke through a hoop.

GAMES AND SONGS

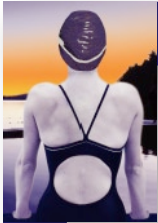
Games are associated with fun, but they provide for the development of these critical skills:

- Motor skills—Coordination, balance, gross and fine motor control, and spatial awareness;
- Survival skills—Personal water safety skills as well as general water safety knowledge; and
- Social skills—Interaction, cooperation and leadership.

Games and other activities must be chosen with care. They need to be appropriate to the level of ability of participants, help ensure safety and provide enjoyment. Games and activities can be educational or recreational in nature. They can be selected to teach new skills or practice skills already mastered.

When choosing games, consider:

- Purpose—Know the aim of the game or activity.
- Safety—Most activities can be made safe and suitable by adding rules or modifying the game. However, forethought and planning are necessary.
- Equipment—Prior to the lesson, organize special equipment required for the game.



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The games that follow are listed by the appropriate water-related skill and/or activity to be taught. Accompanying song lyrics are included. Some appropriate rhymes are also reprinted for possible use during class.

Water Adjustment

Birthday Party

Description: Have an imaginary party in the pool. Everyone blows bubbles (candles), sings songs and gets presents underwater.

Piggyback Ride

Description: Parents back up against the side of the pool. Children get on their parents' backs, putting their arms loosely around their parents' necks. Parents travel across the pool, stooping with a straight back while children kick their feet.

Motor Boat

Description: Form a large circle. Parents hold children in a float position on the outside of the circle. Have children start the engine by blowing bubbles. Instructor gives directions to have them speed up (blow bubbles fast), slow down (blow bubbles slowly) and put on the brakes (parents help children lean back into a back float position).

Adaptation: Parents tow children by their hands or support them under the arms.

“Pop Goes the Weasel”

Description: Form a circle. Parent holds the child. Traveling to the right or left, sing the song “Pop Goes the Weasel.” At the last line of each verse, the parent raises the child up in the air and lowers him or her back into the water to the shoulders.

Simon Says

Description: Tell the class that you are going to say and do skills, such as kicking, arm strokes and blowing bubbles. Explain that if you say the words, Simon Says, they should do the skills that you say and are doing. Explain that if they do not hear the words, Simon Says, they should not move.

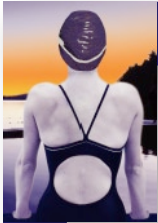
“Wheels on the Bus”

Description: Parents are in shallow water, holding their children in the hip-straddle position. Bouncing up and down, sing the song “Wheels on the Bus.” Have the parents and children mimic your movements in each verse as follows:

- Windows—Bob up and down together.
- Wipers—Hold the child under the armpits, facing the parent, and move from side to side, like a pendulum swinging.
- Horn—Slap the water.

“Down by the Station”

Description: The instructor is the leader. The instructor and children grab the edge of the pool and travel along the gutter, pretending the arms are train wheels. Parents remain within arm's reach of their children for safety. While traveling, blow underwater on “toot toot.” Explore the pool, including the pool lights, steps, ladders and water outlets.



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“Mulberry Bush”

Description: Everyone holds hands in a circle, or do as a warm up while children sit on the edge of the pool. Follow the directions in the song: wash face, ears, hair and so on.

Adaptation: If children cannot stand, parents hold the children in front as they form a circle. Swim terms may also be used in the song.

Water Exercises

Description: Instructor leads parents and children through exercises adapted to the water, such as jumping jacks, running forward, running backward, hopping, skipping and arm circles. If children are able to stand, they can perform the exercises beside the parent. If children cannot stand, parents hold their children while performing the exercises.

Finger Counting

Description: Submerging the face or entire body, children count their parent’s fingers underwater.

Blow the Cork

Description: If children can stand, have them each blow a cork until reaching a designated location, such as the wall or another child. If children cannot stand, parents hold them in a front position and move them to the designated location while the children blow the cork.

Adaptations: Use balloons or ping-pong balls.

I Spy

Description: Children identify objects placed underwater by size, color or shape. Objects may be spotted with or without submerging and may be picked up and given to the instructor or parents.

“London Bridge”

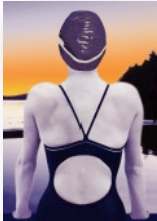
Description: Make a bridge by having parents extend their arms or having children hold kickboards up. Children go through the bridge in different ways, such as kicking, stroking their arms and using combined strokes.

Follow the Leader

Description: Instructor is the first leader and does a skill that everyone imitates, e.g., jumping, blowing bubbles or kicking. Take turns being leader. If children can stand, parents remain beside or behind child and do the skills along with the children. If children cannot stand, parents hold their children.

Retrieve the Balls (Corks)

Description: Starting at one side of the pool, children retrieve balls or corks floating on the other side of the pool. If children can stand, parents remain within arm’s reach of their children. If children cannot stand, parents hold their children.



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“Hokey Pokey”

Description: Stand in a circle and follow the directions in the song. If children can stand, parents remain within arm’s reach of their children and participate in the song. If children cannot stand, parents hold their children.

“Did You Ever See A Lassie”

Description: Form a circle. Parents hold their children in a side position. Parents gently glide their children forward on the stomach and backward on the back as the group sings. Repeat verse substituting “lassie” with “laddie.”

Water Push Ball

Description: Form a circle. Instructor places a soft foam ball in the center. Parents hold their children, while the children try to move the ball by splashing and pushing the water with their hands or by kicking from a back float position.

It’s Raining, It’s Pouring

Description: Have parents dribble, drop and splash water over children’s heads with items, such as sponges, cups and watering cans.

“If You’re Happy and You Know It”

Description: Sing the song and follow along with the words. If necessary, parents assist children with the motions.

Water Entry

Hoop Jumping

Description: Standing at the edge, parents assist children jumping into the water through a hoop. As children become more confident and skilled, parents reduce assistance until it is no longer necessary. Practice at varying depths.

“Humpty Dumpty”

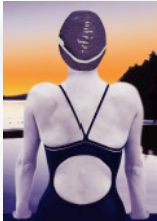
Description: Say the rhyme. Parents assist children “falling” or jumping into the water from a sitting or standing position. As children become more confident and skilled, parents reduce assistance until it is no longer necessary. Practice at varying depths.

“Jack”

Description: Parents assist children jumping in when the child’s name is called. As children become more confident and skilled, parents reduce assistance until it is no longer necessary. Practice at varying depths.

Children in the Pool (Tune of “Farmer in the Dell”)

Description: Repeat the following using each child’s name: “Mary’s in the pool, oh Mary’s in the pool.” Parents assist their children entering the water when their names are called. As children become more confident and skilled, parents reduce assistance until it is no longer necessary. Practice at varying depths.



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Imagination

Description: The instructor offers suggestions for ways to enter the water, such as like crocodiles, marching soldiers, ducks with flapping wings or doing the elephant walk.

Children enter the water using their imaginations based on the instructor's suggestions.

Parents assist children entering the water. As children become more confident and skilled, parents reduce assistance until it is no longer necessary. Practice at varying depths.

Adaptations: Make this a follow the leader activity. Vary entry points, such as from the side or using a ladder or steps and at varying depths.

Submerging

Treasure Hunt

Description: Have children retrieve various objects from the bottom of the pool. Vary the size of the objects and depth of location according to swimming ability and confidence level. Encourage children to keep their eyes open to make the task easier.

Submarine

Description: At a signal from the "Captain," children submerge. Have them submerge to a level consistent with their skill level: very beginning children may submerge to their noses; more confident children may put their faces in; and even more skilled children may submerge their entire head. The "submarine" under longest becomes the next "Captain." Each parent should remain within arm's reach of their child at all times.

"London Bridge" (See page 4)

Disappearing Fish Game

Description: Standing in a circle with the "It" person in the middle, each child attempts to disappear under the water before being tagged. Be sure that all children are able to submerge before playing this game.

Ring Around the Rosie

Description: Form a circle, holding hands. Alternate adult-child-adult. Everyone submerges to their comfort level when the words "We all fall down" are said.

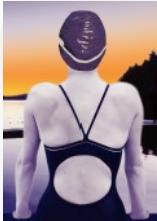
Buddy Bobbing

Description: Have each set of parent and child face one another and hold hands to be buddy pairs. The parent, buddy one, goes under and comes up while the child, buddy two, remains standing. Switch roles so that buddy one remains standing while buddy two goes under and comes up. Repeat several times.

Adaptations: Have two children of similar skills levels be buddy pairs. Parents remain within arm's reach of their children.

Baby Dolphin

Description: Instructor places the "baby" through a hoop into the outstretched hands of the parent.



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Washing Machine

Description: Parents pretend to put soap on the children's hair and scrub it clean. To rinse the soap off, direct the children to tip their heads to the right side, then to the left side; tip the head back; put the head partially under; and then submerge the head completely.

Tea Party

Description: Invite children and parents to a tea party. Describe what you will be serving. Sit on the steps or submerge to the bottom and act out a party, sipping tea and eating cookies. Encourage children to open their eyes when under the water.

The Best Log

Description: Parents place their children in a back float position. Children can be supported by their parents or with a kickboard. Instructor counts while children perform the back float.

Flotation

Battleship

Description: Position of ship at port is explained as being on one's back, looking for airplanes. The ship leaves the port and starts the engines by kicking. Children can be supported by their parents or a kickboard can be used.

"Twinkle, Twinkle"

Description: Children are on their backs with their arms and legs outstretched. Parents sing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" softly in their child's ear. The child can be supported.

Imagination

Description: Instructor encourages children to use their imaginations and "be" the image suggested, such as:

- Be a leaf floating on a pond.
- Float like a cork.
- Be a butterfly and stretch out arms or wings.
- Pretend it is nighttime and count the stars.

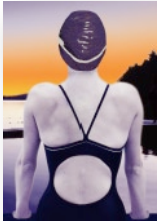
Parents assist or support children as needed. As children become more confident and skilled, parents reduce assistance until it is no longer necessary.

Merry-Go-Round

Description: Form a circle. Everyone holds hands. Have each parent and child pretend to be a pair of animals as on a merry-go-round, such as horses, camels, zebras and deer. Have everyone walk around the circle in the same direction. On the instructor's signal, have the parents support the children in a back float position. Give another signal and have them hold hands again and begin walking around the circle in the reverse direction. Continue with different skills as the instructor signals.

Rocket Ship

Description: Ask children to pretend to be rocket ships and to carefully blast off across the pool. Children can be supported by their parents or a kickboard can be used.



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Rolling Over

Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Description: While singing, parents gently turn children from front to back to front. Instruct parents to use gliding movements and assist the children.

I'm a Little Pancake (Tune of: I'm a Little Teapot)

Description: While singing, parents hold children (pancakes) in a back support position and walk backward. At the words “flip me over,” roll children to their fronts. Repeat the song and roll the children from their fronts to their backs. When first doing this activity, instruct parents to take care to keep the children’s faces out of the water. As children become more confident and skilled, children may be able to practice with their faces in the water and with less support from the parents.

Eggs for Breakfast

Description: Parents support children in a front float. Instructor calls out “Sunny side up,” and children roll over to a back float with assistance from parents. When first doing this activity, instruct parents to take care to keep the children’s faces out of the water. As children become more confident and skilled, they may be able to practice with their faces in the water and with less support from the parents.

Kicking

“London Bridge” [\(See page 4\)](#)

Simon Says [\(See page 3\)](#)

Red Light–Green Light

Description: Have children perform a certain skill, such as blowing bubbles, kicking or arm stroking. Ask them to start the skill on the command “red light.” Tell them to stop the skill on the command “green light.” Ask them to perform different skills, alternately starting and stopping them on your red light and green light commands.

Motor Boat [\(See page 3\)](#)

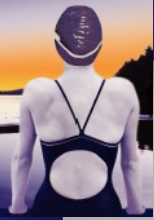
Water Fountain

Description: Form a circle. Have parents support children in a back float with their feet toward the center. Have children kick to see how they can adjust the water height; see how high the water can go and how low it can go.

Water Push Ball [\(See page 5\)](#)

Loud and Quiet Kicking

Description: On the instructor’s signal, have children kick loudly (splashing), then switch to quiet kicking (under water’s surface).



Kickboard Races

Description: Using kickboards, children pretend to be on horses and say “giddy-up” as they kick across the pool. Parents either provide support to their children on the kickboards or remain within arm’s reach, whichever is necessary based on skill levels. As children become more confident and skilled, parents reduce assistance until it is no longer necessary.

Arm Stroke

Frog in the Sea, You Can’t Catch Me

Description: While standing in the water, the instructor (frog) runs after the class as they walk and pull through the water. If the “frog” catches the “tadpole,” the caught person is the new “frog.” Parents may assist children as necessary.

Water Fountain

Description: Form a large circle with the instructor in the center. The children blow bubbles and scoop (stroke) into the center of the circle and touch the instructor’s hand. Once children touch the instructor’s hand, they turn on their backs and start kicking (splashing instructor). Parents assist or support children as needed. As children become more confident and skilled, parents reduce assistance until it is no longer necessary. Be sure that the children are far enough away from the instructor to avoid kicking him or her.

Imagination

Description: Instructor encourages children to use their imaginations and imitate the actions suggested, such as:

- Be a puppet, letting the parents pattern the children’s arms.
- Be a dog burying bones by digging in with big arms.
- Be a frog, pulling your arms at the same time.
- Make taffy.

Parents assist or support children as needed. As children become more confident and skilled, parents reduce assistance until it is no longer necessary.

Combination Skills

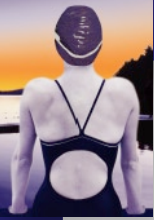
Steal the Fish

Description: Place a variety of objects at the bottom of the pool. When their numbers are called, children race for the objects. Children kick and/or swim to the objects underwater and then return to the starting point. Parents assist or support children as needed. As children become more confident and skilled, parents reduce assistance until it is no longer necessary.

Adaptation: Place floating objects away from the edge of the pool. Have children swim to and retrieve the floating objects and return to safety.

Around the Lighthouse

Description: The instructor stands in the water as a lighthouse. Have children swim around the lighthouse and back to the pool’s edge. Parents assist or support children as needed. As children become more confident and skilled, parents reduce assistance until it is no longer necessary.



Flip Flop

Description: Children are on the side of the pool. On the instructor's signal, have them jump in, level off, and begin swimming on their fronts. When the instructor says "flip," children turn over and swim on their backs. When the instructor says "flop," they roll onto their fronts again and continue to swim. Parents assist or support children as needed. As children become more confident and skilled, parents reduce assistance until it is no longer necessary.

Parachute Jumper

Description: Children jump into the water, turn, level off and return to the edge of the pool. Parents assist or support children as needed. As children become more confident and skilled, parents reduce assistance until it is no longer necessary.

WATER FUN 'N' RHYMES

The following rhymes are related to things found in and around water. The instructor should change each line, then act out the actions with the class.

Bullfrog

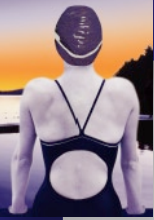
Here's Mr. Bullfrog
Sitting on a rock.
Along comes a little boy
Mr. Bullfrog jumps – KERPLOP!

Little Frog

A little frog in a pond am I,
Hippity, hippity, hop.
I can jump in the air so high,
HIPPIITY, HIPPIITY, HOP!

My Turtle

This is my turtle
He lives in a shell;
He likes his home very well.
He pokes his head out when he wants to eat
And pulls it back when he wants to sleep.



Songs and Lyrics

“London Bridge”

London Bridge is falling down,
Falling down, falling down
London Bridge is falling down
My fair lady.

Take a key and lock her up.
Lock her up, lock her up.
Take a key and lock her up,
My fair lady.

Off to prison we must go,
We must go, we must go.
Off to prison we must go,
My fair lady.

“Wheels On The Bus”

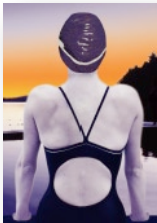
The wheels on the bus go
Round and round,
Round and round, round and round.
The wheels on the bus go
Round and round,
All through the town.

Repeat:

2. The windows on the bus go up and down...
3. The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish...
4. The horn on the bus goes beep, beep, beep....
5. The motor on the bus goes (blow bubbles)

“Down By The Station”

Down by the station
Early in the morning,
See the little puffer-belliers
All in a row.
See the engine driver
Pull the little handle,
Puff, puff, toot, toot,
Here we go.



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“If You’re Happy And You Know It”

If you’re happy and you know it
Clap your hands.

If you’re happy and you know it
Clap your hands.

If you’re happy and you know it
And you really want to show it,
If you’re happy and you know it
Clap your hands.

Repeat:

2. Blow bubbles...
3. Wash your hair...
4. Stroke your arms...
5. Kick your feet...
6. Shout “Hooray”
7. Jump up and down...

“Hokey Pokey”

You put your right hand in
You put your right hand out,
You put your right hand in and
You shake it all about (turn in place)
You do the Hokey Pokey and
You turn yourself around,
That’s what it’s all about.

Repeat with variations:

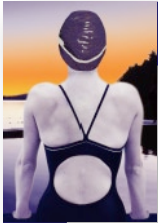
Left hand, head, whole self

“Pancakes” (Tune: “I’m A Little Teapot”)

I’m a little pancake on my back
I’m a little pancake nice and flat.
I’m a little pancake on my back,
Flip me over just like that!

“Pop Goes The Weasel”

All around the cobbler’s bench,
The monkey chased the weasel.
The monkey thought it was all in fun,
POP goes the weasel.



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“Humpty Dumpty”

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall
All the king’s horses and
All the king’s men
Couldn’t put Humpty together again.

“Jack”

Jack be nimble, Jack be quick,
Jack jump over the candlestick.

Little Turtle Rhyme

There was a little turtle
He swam in a puddle
He climbed on the rocks
He snapped at a mosquito
He snapped at a flea
He snapped at a minnow
He snapped at me
He caught the mosquito
He caught the flea
He caught the minnow
But he didn’t catch me.

Little Fish

Little fish goes out to play
He wiggles his fins
Then swims away,
He swims and swims in the water bright.
He swims and swims both day and night.

Here We Go ‘Round the Mulberry Bush

Here we go ‘round the mulberry bush, the mulberry bush, the mulberry bush,
Here we go ‘round the mulberry bush,
Early in the morning (everyone is in a circle).
This is the way we wash our face, wash our face, wash our face,
This is the way we wash our face
Early in the morning.

Repeat:

2. This is the way we kick our feet....
3. This is the way we blow some bubbles....
4. This is the way we jump up and down....
5. This is the way we clap our hands....