PARENT ORIENTATION TO SWIMMING LESSONS

Length
Approximately 30 minutes

Suggested Materials, Equipment and Supplies

- American Red Cross identification
- Newsprint and markers, chalkboard and chalk or dry erase board and markers
  - American Red Cross Learn-to-Swim participants booklets: Raffy Learns to Swim: American Red Cross Learn-to-Swim Levels 1 and 2 (Stock No. 651307) and Waddles in the Deep: American Red Cross Learn-to-Swim Levels 3 and 4 (Stock No. 651308)
- Participant Handouts:
  - Brochure(s) for local American Red Cross course offerings
    - Swimming and Water Safety
      - *Swimming and Water Safety Brochure (Stock No. 654149)*
      - *Aquatics Program Catalog (Stock No. 651235)*
    - Together WE Prepare
      - *Together We Prepare, 5 Actions for Emergency Preparedness (Stock No. A1800)*
      - *Together We Prepare, 5 Actions for Emergency Preparedness (Stock No A1802)-Spanish*
      - *Volunteer with the American Red Cross (Stock No A1804)*
    - First Aid/CPR/AED
      - *Community First Aid and Safety Brochure (Stock No. 652107)*
      - *Workplace Brochure (Stock No.656687)*
      - *Infant & Child CPR Brochure (Stock No.656663)*
- See Aquatics Leader Activity Report
- See Leader Evaluation Form
- See Leader Agreement and Code of Conduct
- Optional: American Red Cross "Has Attended" certificates (Stock No. C3001)

Leader's Note: It is suggested that all materials be kept in an easy-to-store plastic storage bin or tub.

Purpose of Presentation

- To provide parents with an orientation to American Red Cross swimming lessons offered at a local aquatic facility.
KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency</td>
<td>A sudden, urgent, usually unforeseen occurrence or occasion requiring immediate attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifeguard</td>
<td>A person trained in Lifeguarding, CPR and First Aid skills who ensures the safety of people at an aquatic facility by preventing and responding to emergencies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to Swim is Fun!</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Information</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap-Up</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximate Time for Presentation: 30 minutes

TOPIC: INTRODUCTION

(TIME: 2 MINUTES)

Tell Participants:
- "Welcome!" – Introduce yourself to the parents.
- "Thank you for allowing me to speak to you about this important information."
- "Please introduce yourself and explain why you are attending this presentation"
- "Today we are going to provide you, the parents, an orientation to your child enrolling in Red Cross Learn-to-Swim courses offered at this aquatic facility."
- "I am now going to pass out a brochure(s) that lists courses offered by the local Red Cross."

Leader's Note: Point out the contact information for the local Red Cross in the brochure(s). If the contact information is not in the brochure(s), provide the information by writing it on newsprint for all to see.

TOPIC: LEARNING TO SWIM IS FUN!

(TIME: 15 MINUTES)

Ask Participants:
- "What are some of the benefits of learning to swim?"

Leader's Note: Note participants' responses on newsprint, chalkboard or dry erase board.
Ask Participants:
■ "Do any of you have any concerns or questions about enrolling your child in swimming lessons?"

**Leader's Notes:**
- Note participants' responses on newsprint, chalkboard or dry erase board.
- Make sure all questions and concerns have been covered by the end of this presentation. See [Frequently Asked Questions](http://example.com) for a list of questions commonly asked by parents regarding swim lessons and the American Red Cross.
- Provide each participant with your aquatic facility's course schedule. Make sure there is a local contact number so parents can get help selecting the right courses for their child.

Tell Participants:
■ "The American Red Cross Learn-to-Swim courses offered at this facility are designed to give your child a positive learning experience and teaches lifelong swimming skills."

■ "Regardless of your child's swimming ability, you can play a critical role in guiding, caring for, supervising, motivating and working with your child during this experience. The following are some suggestions to help you in providing the best experience for your child:
  - **Prepare your child for this experience.** Give your child an opportunity to visit the pool before the beginning of class. Describe what will be happening and perhaps talk to an instructor. Even very young children can benefit from this orientation. Be sure the instructor is certified as an American Red Cross Water Safety Instructor.
  - **Be prompt.** Children can get anxious if hurried. Allow plenty of time before and after class for showering, going to the bathroom and dressing.
  - **Follow rules and regulations.** You are responsible for your child's actions, not the instructor or lifeguard. Teach, talk about and review the pool rules with your child. Lead by example.
  - **Attend every lesson.** Frequent practice is the key to adjustment and learning. Children can regress quickly if not allowed to practice. It is a good idea to encourage a crying or hesitant child to continue attending the class. Just being around the pool and observing the activities can help your child adjust.
  - **Complete all the levels.** Make sure your child completes all the learn-to-swim levels so that he or she truly has the skills to be safe in, on and around water.
  - **Encourage safe practices.** Young children cannot be expected to exercise good judgment and caution. Children must be constantly reminded to walk slowly in the pool area and only enter the water with the instructor during the class and with you after the class.
  - **Have patience.** It is important not to pressure your child to perform before he or she is ready. Readiness results from maturity, experiences and other individual factors.
• **Avoid comparisons.** No two children develop at the same rate. Each child learns at a different pace depending on factors such as physical growth, individual development, comfort, practice and previous experience. Respect your child's qualities and do not compare them to their siblings or other children.

• **Provide encouragement.** A good rule is to encourage your child to do everything, but not to force him or her to do anything. Forcing a child will only bring negative results. Let your child know that learning involves lots of practice and they should keep trying.

• **Be positive.** Use a positive attitude when correcting behavior or enforcing rules. Discuss what behavior is expected in addition to pointing out what the child has done wrong.

• **Give praise.** Recognize your child's efforts, no matter how small the accomplishment. People are not motivated by failure or ridicule. Success promotes success. Praise should be descriptive of an action. Rather than simply saying "Good," say, "I like the way you blew those great big bubbles."

• **Facilitate practice and review.** Try out the skills and activities at home or during the recreational swimming hours at the pool. The bathtub, shower or wading pool is a perfect place for practice. The more practice, the better your child will learn and the more quickly he or she can progress. The American Red Cross Learn-to-Swim participant's booklets: "**Raffy Learns to Swim** for Levels 1 and 2 and **Waddles in the Deep** for Levels 3 and 4 help reinforce learning and charts your child's progress."– Show parents copies of the booklets.

**TOPIC: FACILITY INFORMATION**

**Tell Participants:**

- "Now I will discuss our facility's swim lesson policies."

**Leader's Note:** Provide participants with information on your facility's swim lesson policies. These may include:

- Facility rules and regulations
- Lesson times
- Lesson dates
- Number of lessons
- Length of lesson (5, 30 or 45 minutes)
- Design of lesson (warm-up, skill practice, water safety skills, play)
- Number of students
- Registration procedures and policies
- Make-up policy
- Other facility policies
Tell Participants:
- "Today you learned important information about enrolling your child in an American Red Cross learn-to-swim course."
- "I provided some suggestions to help you give your child the best experience when he or she is enrolled in swimming lessons."
- "You also received information about our facility's swim lesson policies.
- "Does anyone have any other questions about any of the topics we covered today?"
- "Remember to contact your local Red Cross for further information on enrolling in Preparedness courses."

Leader's Notes:
- Briefly answer any questions and thank the parents for their time and participation.
- Optional: Issue American Red Cross "Has Attended" certificates indicating Parent Orientation to Swimming Lessons.
- Complete the Aquatics Leader Activity Report, the Leader Evaluation Form, and any other required paperwork and submit to your local Red Cross chapter.