



Mission San Jose Aquatics

SwimAmerica™

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know if my child needs swim lessons?

Every child should know how to swim. Swimming is the only sport that can actually save your child's life. Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental deaths among children ages 18 and under. Teaching your child to swim, could save their life!

Preschool children need swim lessons to learn safety skills. The most important skill is the "roll over", a skill where your child will learn to float on his/her back and get air. Other skills like swimming to the wall in case he/she accidentally falls into the water need to be learned as well.

School age children need swim lessons to learn to swim on top of the water. Underwater swimming cannot save their lives! Children tire quickly underwater, and trying to sustain underwater swimming may even cause a drowning! Learning good freestyle stroke with proper air exchange will help your child build confidence in the water and may save his or her life.

Our definition of "learning to swim" is a child who can swim 300 yards of freestyle, 100 yards of backstroke and a 100 individual medley (25 yards of each of the "Olympic" strokes: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle). When children can accomplish this they graduate from station 10!

How long will it take for my child to learn to swim?

This depends on several things, such as your child's age, pool experience, comfort level in the water, listening skills, enthusiasm and level of fitness. It may take 30 or more lessons for a pre-school child to learn the basic skills of floating, kicking, returning to the wall and rolling over on their back to get a breath. Everyone learns at different rates. A child, who is apprehensive, may take a little longer. A child may seem almost "stuck" at a station and then progress through the next few stations quickly.

What do we need to bring to class?

Have your child wear [flip flops](#) and bring a [towel](#). [Swimsuits](#) should be snug fitting and quick drying. We encourage students to wear Speedo training suits which are designed to shed water and make swimming easier. Many "fashion suits" for girls or baggy shorts for boys retain water, and actually feel very heavy in the water, making it harder to learn. We encourage [caps](#) for children with long hair and goggles. All the pools are chlorinated which may bother your child during lessons. We recommend competitive quality [goggles](#) for youths taking lessons because they are comfortable and easily adjusted. As an added service to our clients, we have SwimAmerica Caps and Goggles on sale, poolside.

How does the SwimAmerica station program work?

SwimAmerica features lessons for school age children (ages 5-15), and preschool children (ages 3-4). Both the school age and preschool curriculum features a 10-step program that allows each child to progress at their own rate. When children pass the advancement goals for a particular station, they are immediately promoted to the next station, so there is no need to wait until a new 2-week session begins. SwimAmerica students are directed towards specific goals in each station and immediately rewarded for successful completion of goals through our unique "Award of Achievement Certificate System".

If you are new to SwimAmerica, and you signed your child up for **"beginner"**, your child will start off in station **1**. If you signed your child up for **"Beginning Swimmer"** they will start off in station **4**, but they will first be assessed to see if they can pass the performance goals for stations 1-3, because we believe the skills learned in stations 1-3 are prerequisites to great swimming. Station 4 is an exciting station because children are actually learning how to stroke with their arms – they are learning to swim! ***Be assured, if you are new to our program***, we will test your child on the first day and make sure he/she is in the correct class. Adjustments are made quickly so learning can begin. ***Our definition of "learning to swim"*** is a child who can swim 300 yards of freestyle, 100 yards of backstroke and a 100 individual medley (25 yards of each of the "Olympic" strokes: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle). When children can accomplish this they graduate from station **10!**

I've signed up for all 4 sessions and my child passed station 10 during session 3 - Now what?

Congratulations! Your child can really swim! Your child will advance to a 10+/Drill Master. In this station, we will continue to refine your child's technique, work on competitive starts and turns, and we will teach your child 20 or more stroke drills that our competitive swimmers use. Your child will learn how to perform each drill, as well as the unique name and purpose of each drill.

Now that your child can really swim, there are other programs your child may want to become part of. Your child may want to join our year round swim team or seasonal team.

How will be child be rewarded?

During the first week of lessons, each **NEW** SwimAmerica participant will receive a **waterproof Red, White and Blue SwimAmerica certificate**. These certificates have the station numbers printed on the front, the advancement goals for each station, printed on the back, and are the perfect tool for tracking your child's progress. When children are promoted, they earn a gold SwimAmerica sticker to place on the station they passed. Please help your child take pride in their accomplishments by displaying their certificate at home. As you will notice, we make a big deal out of each student's advancement. **Please maintain these life-long certificates. Returning SwimAmerica Students may replace a lost certificate for \$1.00.** SwimAmerica Students will also earn a **custom ribbon** for each station passed, and students who pass the School Age Station 10, will be awarded a **custom medal**.

Make-up Policy

Class participants register for classes, which meet on specific days and times. Unless Mission San Jose Aquatics cancels a class due to hazardous conditions (lightening, pool problems, etc), attendance in scheduled classes is the responsibility of the participants. We cannot provide refunds or make-up classes or allow the participant to attend a different class when the absence has been the sole responsibility of the participant.

Could you tell me a little about your staff?

Our program director, Debbie Potts has been coaching and teaching swimming for 32 years and swam competitively for 13 years. She's been named one of America's finest coaches and the one of the top 5 teaching coaches in America. She is the author of several swimming related articles and books and has spoken all over the country. Debbie has coached all levels, from novice to national competitor. Our Site Supervisors have numerous years of competitive swimming, teaching and coaching experience. All of our coaches are credentialed "SwimAmerica" Coaches and are "fine swimmers". Our coaches teach students how to swim by the most effective method known. They teach politely and with humor and enjoyment. Every student receives personal attention and a caring approach to instruction. We provide a safe teaching and learning environment.

Please tell me more about your pools. Are the heated? Are they indoors?

We rent Ohlone College and Irvington High. All the pools are outdoors. Ohlone College has been home to our team since 1989. It is an Olympic Sized pool, (a 20 lane x 25 yard pool) heated between 80-81 degrees. Children between the ages of 5 and 18 swim there year round. Irvington High is a 6 lane x 25 yard pool heated to 83-84 degrees. ***We will have shaded designated parent viewing areas at both locations.***

Can I sign up for more sessions?

If there is space available, you can add more sessions. On deck registrations can be made through our deck manager or site supervisor either on the Thursday prior to the next session, or if there is still space, on the first day of each new session. There is no multi-session discount and registration may only be made one session at a time.

How do I get to the Ohlone College Pool and where can I park?

Ohlone College is off of Mission Blvd. Take the Pine Street entrance into Ohlone College. Pass the baseball field. After the 2nd stop sign, turn left into the next parking lot. You can park in the lot near the swimming pool for a fee (metered parking \$2.00 per day) or you can park on Mission Blvd (free parking, but it's a hike). ***Your best bet:*** When you register, purchase a special parking pass through MSJA for \$14.00, valid from June 22-August 31, 2009. If you stay with your car, you can drop off and pick up and not charge.

How do I get to the Irvington High Pool and where can I park?

Irvington High is on the corner of Grimmer Blvd. and Blacow. Take the Blacow street entrance into the parking lot. The pool is located behind the gym. Park in the student parking lot on Blacow. **PLEASE WALK TO THE POOL. DO NOT ATTEMPT DRIVE BACK TO THE POOL AREA.**

How Come you do not teach SwimAmerica on a year round basis?

Mission San Jose Aquatics rents water on a year round basis at Ohlone College. The only time we can rent water is from 3:45-7:00PM and our USA Swim Team fills the pool. Our goal is to build an indoor swimming complex. When this happens, we will teach SwimAmerica on a year round basis.

SAFETY FIRST!

***WATCH FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS IN THE PARKING LOT!!
DRIVE CAREFULLY AND SLOWLY***