

# Teaching Early Water Safety



## When Can a Child Learn About Water Safety?

Children can begin water safety instruction as early as 6 months. The American Academy of Pediatrics supports parent-child water safety classes for infants 6 to 12 months, focused on comfort and safety, not independent swimming.<sup>1</sup>

### At this stage, lessons aim to:

- Help babies feel comfortable in water
- Teach parents safe handling in and around water
- Introduce floating and breath control through play

Some programs, such as Infant Swimming Resource (ISR), teach infants 6+ months self-rescue skills like holding their breath, rolling onto their backs, and floating until help arrives.<sup>2</sup> These lessons must be taught by certified instructors and tailored to development.

Swim lessons never replace constant supervision or safety barriers like pool fencing.



## Key Takeaways

- Infant programs focus on comfort, confidence, and basic floating.
- 6 months is typically the earliest recommended age to start.
- Regardless of skill level, supervision and safeguards are essential.
- National programs include Infant Swimming Resource (ISR), Infant Aquatics, and Swim Float Swim.<sup>2</sup>

1. American Academy of Pediatrics. (2024, May 29). Swim lessons: When to start & what parents should know. HealthyChildren.org. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Swim-Lessons.aspx>
2. Infant Swimming Resource. (n.d.). Infant Swimming Resource™ <https://www.infantswim.com/>

