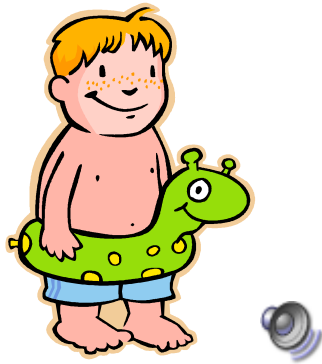


We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities.

YMCA
OF EASTERN
UNION COUNTY
SWIM LESSONS HANDBOOK



FIVE POINTS BRANCH YMCA
201 Tucker Avenue
Union, NJ 07083
908-688-9622

RAHWAY BRANCH YMCA
1564 Irving Street
Rahway, NJ 07065
732-388-0057

SECTION I – BACKGROUND AND PHILOSOPHIES

HISTORY OF YMCA AQUATICS

The YMCA has been the name known and trusted for aquatic safety and education for over a century. YMCAs in the U.S. have a proud history of serving the people in their communities in a variety of practical and effective ways. Through the years, the YMCA has made strides and advancements in the creation of aquatic instruction methods and programs. Today with a YMCA in almost every community, a national structure with guidelines on operating a safe and comprehensive aquatic program exists to continue the movement of YMCA swim lessons.

MISSION STATEMENT

The YMCA of Eastern Union County is a community-based organization rooted in Christian principles and committed to building healthy lives through programs that strengthen the spirit, mind, and body for all people of all ages, religions, and cultures.

NATIONAL THEME AND CORE VALUES

A national theme and core values are incorporated into all YMCA programs. The national theme of the YMCA is “We build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities.” Following this theme, the YMCA of Eastern Union County pledges to be a premier not-for-profit organization by offering programs that build the spirit, mind, and body while making a positive difference in the lives of our members. To develop character, the core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility are found and taught in all YMCA aquatic programs.

A PINNACLE PROGRAM

YMCA Swim Lessons teach swimming safety, water safety and life skills. At any given time personal growth, values, improved personal and family relationships, diversity, leadership development, and fun will be active components of our swim lessons.

SECTION II- THE PROGRAM

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

The YMCA Swim Lesson program is comprised of two main parts: the Youth and Adult program and the Parent/Child and Preschool program. The first component is for children six years of age and older. With modifications, this program can also be used to teach adults and people with disabilities. The second component is the Parent/Child and Preschool component. This is divided into two portions; 1) in which parent (or other caregivers) attend with children who are under the age of three; 2) for children three to

five years old who are usually unaccompanied by a parent. Our program uses the idea of progression. Each level builds upon the previous level.

PARENT/CHILD AND PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

The Parent/Child and Preschool Program have eight levels. The first four levels – Shrimp, Kipper, Inia, and Perch – are for children under the age of three and their parents. The second four levels – Pike, Eel, Ray, and Starfish – are for children ages three through five. All classes are thirty (30) minutes in length.

YOUTH AND ADULT PROGRAM

The Youth and Adult Program has nine levels. For the youth there are seven levels which include the beginning level of Polliwog, followed by Guppy and Minnow. Fish and Flying Fish are intermediate levels. Shark is the most advanced skill level. Porpoise is the last level within the youth program area. For adults, there are two levels of swim instruction offered: the adult beginner and adult intermediate. All Youth and Adult Program classes are forty-five (45) minutes in length.

LEVELS

Parent/Child

Shrimp (6 -8 months) - This is an introduction to the aquatic environment for both parents and their infants. Parents are encouraged to develop appropriate expectations for their children's performance in the water. Parents learn basic aquatic safety and have a positive experience with their children that helps them bond.

Kipper (9-12 months) - This level continues to provide positive aquatic experiences for parents and infants. The infants learn basic skills and have fun playing with toys and flotation devices. Parents review and learn more about basic aquatic safety.

Inia (13-18 months) - Children do more independent exploration of the aquatic environment with help from their parents. Parents continue to review and learn more about basic aquatic safety.

Perch (19-36 months) - Children start moving more independently through the water under their parents' guidance. Both parents and children learn about aquatic and boating safety. At this point the instructor begins to prepare the children to work on their own.

NOTE: The Parent/Child program offers unique scheduling possibilities. The YMCA, at the Aquatic Director/Coordinator's discretion will offer:

- *Each level separately*

- *Shrimps/Kippers and Inias/Perch*
- *Shrimps/Kippers/Inias and Perch*
- *All levels together*

Preschool (3-5 years old)

Pike- This level helps children develop safe pool behavior, adjust to the water and develop independent movement in the water. Pike is designed for new swimmers being taught basic paddle stroke and kicking skills, pool safety, proper use of IFDs and PFDs and comfort with holding their face in the water while blowing bubbles and swimming.

Eel- This advanced beginner level reinforces Pike skills. Eel is for children who are comfortable in the water. They are taught to kick, dive (when a safe water depth is available), float and perform the progressive paddle stroke. They also learn basic boating safety and the use of PFDs.

Ray- At this level children review previous skills, improve stroke skills, learn more personal, safety and rescue skills, build endurance by swimming on their front and back, learn to tread water and perform more progressive diving skills (when a safe water depth is available).

Starfish- Children at this level review previously learned skills and refine their strokes as well as their personal safety, rescue and floating skills. They also learn underwater swimming skills.

Youth (6-11 years old)

Polliwog- This is the beginning level for school age children. Polliwog gets children acquainted with the pool, the use of flotation devices and front and back floating. By the end of this level, children should know the front paddle stroke, side and back paddle, some synchronized swimming and wet ball skills.

Guppy- The children continue to practice and build upon basic skills. Skills are practiced without the aid of a flotation device. The children are introduced to lead-up strokes to front and back crawl, sidestroke, breaststroke and elementary backstroke. More synchronized swimming as well as some diving skills (when a safe water depth is available) is introduced.

Minnow-This is the initial intermediate level. The children further refine the lead-up strokes they have learned as their skills become more like those normally used in swimming. Additional diving skills are learned (when a safe water depth is available).

Fish- At this advanced level, students work to perform the crawl stroke, elementary backstroke, back crawl stroke and sidestroke with turns. They are still learning more diving skills (when a safe water depth is available) and are introduced to the use of a

mask and fins. They are introduced to the butterfly stroke, as well as more synchronized swimming movements.

Flying Fish- At this advanced level, students work on refining their strokes and increasing their endurance. Flip turns are introduced and practiced. They develop the ability to perform more complex combinations of synchronized swimming movements. They are also introduced to the use of a snorkel.

Shark- The students at this level continue to improve their strokes with starts and turns. They are introduced to inverted breaststroke, the crawl, the trudgen and the arm over sidestroke. They are also exposed to skin diving skills and safety. (*Available only at Rahway Branch YMCA*)

Porpoise- At this final level, students are exposed to a wide range of aquatic experiences through a class format. In class, these advanced swimmers learn new stroke and rescue techniques as well as develop leadership skills. (*Available only at Rahway Branch YMCA*)

Adult (12 years old and up)

Adult Beginner Level- This class was designed for beginning swimmers who want to learn to swim but are apprehensive about being in the water. This class is taught at a slower pace with an emphasis on swimming fundamentals and stroke technique.

Adult Intermediate Level- This class is for swimmers who are comfortable in the water and would like to work on stroke development and endurance. It is designed for the swimmer with limited swimming skills interested with improving their techniques.

NOTE: For classes which teach diving skills, the pool must have a minimum water depth of 9 feet, with 10 feet ahead of the wall at this depth. This allows for safe diving off the side. The only pool within the YMCA of Eastern Union County that meets this requirement is the Rahway Branch YMCA pool. For classes at the Five Points YMCA, diving safety will be emphasized rather than diving skills.

STAFF AND CLASS SUPERVISION

Following all state and YMCA guidelines, the YMCA of Eastern Union County will have at least one lifeguard on duty during all pool activities. Aquatic swim instructors teach swim lessons. All instructors have lifeguard training as a base to their instructing. As their teaching increases, many of our instructors have taken further steps to improve their teaching by completing Fundamentals of YMCA Swim Lessons and specialist instructor courses such as Youth and Adult swimming and Parent/Child and Preschool swimming. Coordinating and supervising all instructors and classes are lead by the Head Instructor and/or Aquatic Director/Coordinator.

CLASS RATIOS

Following the generally recommended ratios for swim classes, the YMCA of Eastern Union County schedules classes with one instructor in the manner:

Parent/child classes- 1:10 to 12 pairs

Preschool classes- 1:6

Youth classes-

Polliwogs and Guppies 1:8

Minnow and up 1:10

Adult instructional classes- 1:8 to 12

(Depending on the type of class and skill level of the participants)

SECTION III- POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CLASS AND SESSION LENGTH

All classes will have a predetermined start and end time. These times will be distributed prior to the start of the each session. All Parent/Child and Preschool classes are thirty (30) minutes in length. All Youth and Adult classes are forty-five (45) minutes in length. Classes are run on a session system and each session lasts for eight (8) weeks. Within a normal session, there will be one (1) class per week for a total of eight (8) classes in a session. During the summer months, shorter sessions are used in conjunction with our normal sessions to accommodate the need for swim lessons in the summer. Information about the summer sessions will be available prior to the start of the summer season.

CANCELLED OR MISSED CLASSES

The YMCA of Eastern Union County may cancel classes for insufficient enrollment, pool issues, and/or inclement weather. The Aquatic Director/Coordinator and/or Head Swim Instructor will make all decisions on class cancellations. Once it has been decided to cancel a class based on insufficient enrollment, the YMCA will contact those registered for the class and attempt to find another class or issue a credit. (See page 13). If a class or classes are cancelled due to pool issues or inclement weather, the YMCA will attempt to notify participants 30-60 minutes prior to the start of class via telephone or in person. When classes are canceled, make-up classes will be offered. Information concerning class rescheduling will be provided at the time of the phone call, in person or shortly thereafter. Swim lessons may fall on a day that coincides with a holiday. When this happens, a make-up class will be offered within the current session.

PARENT OBSERVATION OF CLASSES

The YMCA of Eastern Union County does allow parents to watch their children as they take part in lessons. To accommodate all parents and observers, special areas have been set aside for class observation in the pool area. Please sit only on benches and bleachers which are provided by the YMCA. For the safety of all, parents are asked not to stand near or next to the edge of the pool during lessons. This may obscure the lifeguard's vision and distract program participants.

PROGRESSION OF CLASSES

Each participant will progress to the next class only when the participant has met the predetermined qualifications for progression. It is not uncommon for participants to repeat a class more than once. To fully understand the requirements to progress to the next level in a class, speak with the instructor, Head Instructor, or Aquatic Director/Coordinator. On the sixth week of classes, participants will be notified whether or not they have progressed to the next level.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports are given out each session and will evaluate the participant's accomplishments. This will outline what skills the child must develop prior to advancing to the next level. If your child did not receive a progress report, please see the instructor, Head Instructor, or Aquatic Director/Coordinator. Progress reports are not given out for the parent/child classes or adult classes.

REGISTRATION

Registration for classes will be announced prior to the start of each session. For full membership members, registration will usually begin two weeks prior to the start of a new session. Program membership members will be allowed to register one week prior to the start of a session. All registration for swim lessons will be conducted at the Welcome Center of the YMCA. If you do not know which class to register for, a swim test may be arranged. When registering for classes (except Parent/Child and Adult), you will need proof of meeting the progression requirements prior to registering for all classes above Pike for Preschool and Polliwog for Youth. Proof can be in the form of a progression slip, progress report and/or swim test certificate. This requirement assures all participants are in the correct class based on their swimming ability. Any questions pertaining to swim lesson registration should be directed to the Head Instructor or Aquatic Director/Coordinator first before the Welcome Center. The YMCA of Eastern Union County will not prorate fees for classes due to late registration.

WHAT TO BRING TO CLASS

Swim lessons can be new to some, so the YMCA has put together a list of some things to bring to class:

1. Proof of Registration (receipt)
2. Appropriate bathing suit for the participant
3. Goggles (As long as they will not distract the participant from the class)
4. Towel
5. Non-slip water shoes for use on deck and in the locker rooms
6. Ear plugs (If a participant is subject to ear discomfort from the water.)

POOL RULES

The YMCA is proud to serve all and provide a safe and clean pool. In order to achieve this standard, we ask that each aquatic program participant follow these pool rules during swim lessons and other recreational and lap swim times. Along with these rules, everyone must adhere to the member code of conduct for the YMCA of Eastern Union County. (See Inserted Member Code of Conduct)

1. ANY PERSON SHOWING EVIDENCE OF ANY COMMUNICABLE SKIN DISEASE, SORE OR INFLAMED EYES, COLD, NASAL OR EAR DISCHARGES, OR ANY OTHER COMMUNICABLE DISEASE SHALL BE DENIED ADMISSION.
2. ANY PERSON WITH EXCESSIVE SUNBURN, OPEN BLISTERS, CUTS, OR BANDAGES SHALL BE DENIED ADMISSION.
3. ALL BANDAGES MUST BE REMOVED BEFORE ENTERING THE POOL.
4. DO NOT ENTER THE WATER IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING OR RECOVERING FROM DIARRHEA OR HAVE HAD ANY SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS OF A GASTROINTESTINAL (STOMACH) DISEASE IN THE PAST SEVEN DAYS.
5. ALL CHILDREN IN DIAPERS MUST WEAR PLASTIC PANTS WITH SNUG FITTING ELASTIC WAIST AND LEG BANDS. DO NOT WASH OUT SOILED DIAPERS IN THE BATHING WATER.
6. CHILDREN SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO USE THE RESTROOM BEFORE ENTERING THE WATER. IMMEDIATELY REPORT ANY

"ACCIDENTS" YOU OBSERVE IN THE BATHING WATERS TO A LIFEGUARD.

7. NO ANIMALS, EXCEPT FOR SERVICE ANIMALS, SHALL BE ALLOWED IN THE SWIMMING POOL, WADING POOL, HOT TUB, OR SPA AREA, DRESSING ROOMS, OR OTHER PARTS OF THE ENCLOSURE.
8. GLASS CONTAINERS SHALL BE PROHIBITED IN FOOD AND DRINK AREAS.
9. NO FOOD, DRINK, OR GLASSWARE IS ALLOWED IN THE POOL AREA.
10. ALL PERSONS SHALL SHOWER BEFORE ENTERING THE WATER.
11. CONDUCT WHICH ENDANGERS THE SAFETY AND COMFORT OF OTHERS SHALL BE PROHIBITED.
12. BATHING SHALL BE PROHIBITED DURING AN ELECTRICAL STORM.
13. PERSONS SUSPECTED OF BEING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL SHALL BE PROHIBITED FROM ENTERING THE WATER.
14. PLEASE REFRAIN FROM RUNNING IN THE POOL AREA.
15. PLEASE REFRAIN FROM THE USE OF PROFANITY OR FOUL LANGUAGE.
16. ALL CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 12 MUST BE SUPERVISED BY AN ADULT WHO IS IN THE POOL AREA.
17. SWIMMERS WEARING YMCA APPROVED FLOTATION DEVICES MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT WHO IS IN THE WATER. IN ADDITION, THE USE OF AIR-FILLED FLOTATION (SWIMMIES/WATER WINGS, RAFTS, ETC.) WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.
18. SWIMMERS WISHING TO SWIM IN THE DEEP END OF THE POOL WILL BE SUBJECT TO A DEEP END SWIM TEST TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE LIFEGUARD ON DUTY.

19. SMOKING IS PROHIBITED IN THE POOL AREA.
20. ALL SWIMMERS MUST WEAR A BATHING SUIT (NO CUTOFFS ARE ALLOWED).
21. STAFF IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR VALUABLES; PLEASE LOCK ALL VALUABLES IN A LOCKER.
22. PLEASE RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS AND REFRAIN FROM PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION.
23. THE LIFEGUARD(S) ON DUTY HAS TOTAL DISCRETION IN DETERMINING WHICH EQUIPMENT AND/OR TOYS WILL BE ALLOWED IN THE POOL.
24. LAP LANES ARE FOR CONTINUOUS LAP SWIM BY ADULTS. SWIMMERS UNDER THE AGE OF 16 WHO WISH TO SWIM IN LAP LANES MUST HAVE THE PERMISSION OF THE LIFEGUARD ON DUTY. LAP SWIMMERS MUST CIRCLE SWIM WHEN NECESSARY.
25. FOR SAFETY REASONS PLEASE DO NOT TALK TO THE LIFEGUARD(S) ON DUTY, EXCEPT FOR AN EMERGENCY. PLEASE DIRECT ALL QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS TO THE AQUATIC DIRECTOR/COORDINATOR OR SUPERVISOR.
26. DIVING AND/ OR JUMPING IS PROHIBITED IN WATER LESS THAN 9 FEET DEEP. FLIPS AND BACKWARDS JUMPS ARE NOT PERMITTED.
27. ONLY ADULTS (18 YEARS OLD AND OLDER) MAY USE THE WHIRLPOOL AND STEAM ROOMS.
28. THE STARTING BLOCKS MAY ONLY BE USED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF AN INSTRUCTOR OR COACH.
29. THE POOL SCHEDULE WILL BE ENFORCED FOR ALL HOURS OF SWIM.
30. USE OF THE AQUATIC FACILITY WITHOUT THE SUPERVISION OF A LIFEGUARD IS PROHIBITED.
31. PLEASE DO NOT HANG ON OR PLAY WITH THE LANE LINES OR SAFETY EQUIPMENT.

32. THE LIFEGUARD (S) ON DUTY HAS TOTAL DISCRETION IN
DETERMINING WHAT IS SAFE IN THE POOL AND POOL AREA.

CLASS RULES

While there are pool rules, additional rules exist which pertain just to the class setting. The YMCA provides the following general rules for all participants (instructors may choose to add to these rules for their individual classes).

1. Listen to your instructor and classmates.
2. Obey the lifeguard's instructions.
3. Be honest about your feelings.
4. Respect others.
5. Be responsible for your own learning
6. Enter the water only when a lifeguard is on duty and when told to do so by your instructor.
7. Throw away chewing gum before entering the pool.

For participants who do not follow pool or class rules, instructors will try to work with them so they understand why the behavior is unacceptable. YMCA instructors employ the methods of distraction, positive redirection, choice, verbalization, and eye contact as ways to improve the behavior of participants. In the rare case a consequence is warranted, there are two acceptable YMCA methods. The first is a natural consequence which will make the punishment relate to the inappropriate behavior. An example is having a child leave the water if he or she is splashing others. The second method is time-out. The instructor will remove the participant from the activity and have him or her sit alone for a set number of minutes. The number of minutes will not exceed the participant's age.

NOTE: It is imperative for parents review these rules with their children prior to the start of their swim lesson experience. All children must be made aware and become familiar with all rules before entering the pool area.

LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING

The YMCA is a place that nurtures a healthy, safe, and successful development of children. YMCAs are also places where families can enjoy programs and activities together. Because of this, the YMCA of Eastern Union County has put policies in effect for locker room usage focusing on the safety and comfort for all. Our policy states that children under the age of five years can use the same locker room as their parent (Ex. daughter with father in Men's locker room, son with mother in Women's locker room). Due to health codes and safety standards, there will be no changing of diapers on the pool deck.

SECTION VI- QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

For questions or concerns about individual progress of participants, please see the instructor for the class. For questions or concerns about program policies or individual classes, please see the Head Instructor. If there is anything the Head Instructor cannot answer, he or she will contact the Aquatic Director/Coordinator for support. For any additional questions or concerns related to the aquatic department, please contact the Aquatic Director/Coordinator.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The YMCA will conduct evaluations of its aquatic programs. Evaluations will be distributed to all parents and adult program participants prior to the completion of each session. Completed evaluations are to be given to any representative of the aquatic staff. All information received will assist and help the YMCA continually improve its programs

STAFF TRAININGS

The YMCA of Eastern Union County has a commitment to having the most qualified staff instructing and guarding swim lessons. To this end, all aquatic staff will participate in yearly required trainings and certifications in CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer and Oxygen Administration for the Professional Rescuer. Monthly staff meetings and in-service trainings are also provided and mandatory. This ensures all staff is performing their duties at one hundred percent. Aquatic staff will also be required to renew their Lifeguard and First Aid certifications every two to three years. Additional trainings to further aquatic knowledge and instructorship are conducted in-house, through YMCA Program Schools, or in conjunction with other YMCAs. If you are interested in knowing the qualifications and training levels of any staff, please speak with the Head Instructor or Aquatic Director/Coordinator.

YMCA of Eastern Union County

CREDIT/REFUND POLICY

CREDIT LETTER POLICY

CREDITS:

- A. Request for credit will be considered when four (4) more classes within a program session have been missed due to illness. Credit request must be in writing and accompanied by a dated doctor's note covering the date of the absence.

- B. Credits will not be issued for classes missed due to vacation, other planned activities or schedule conflicts.

LATE REGISTRATION:

- A. Fees will not be pro-rated for late registration.

YMCA of Eastern Union County

Member Code of Conduct

The YMCA is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all members and guests. To promote safety and comfort for all, we ask individuals to act appropriately at all times when they are in our facility or participating in our programs.

We expect persons using the YMCA to behave in a mature and responsible way, and to respect the rights and dignity of others. Our Code of Conduct does not permit language or any action that can hurt or frighten another person, or that falls below a generally accepted standard of conduct.

Prohibited actions specifically include:

- Inappropriate attire. Appropriate attire must be worn at all times.
- Angry or vulgar language, including swearing, name-calling or shouting.
- Physical contact with another person in any angry or threatening way.
- Any demonstration of sexual activity or sexual contact with another person.
- Harassment or intimidation by words, gestures, body language or any menacing behavior.
- Theft or behavior that results in the destruction of property.
- Carrying or concealing any weapons or devices or objects that may be used as weapons.
- Using or possessing illegal chemicals or alcohol on YMCA property, in YMCA vehicles, or at YMCA sponsored programs.
- Any other conduct of an inappropriate, threatening or offensive nature.
- Loitering is not permitted in or outside the YMCA.
- Smoking is not permitted in or outside the YMCA. The YMCA and its property is a smoke-free environment.

Members and guests are encouraged to be responsible for their personal comfort and safety, and to ask any person whose behavior threatens their comfort to refrain. If a member or guest feels uncomfortable in confronting the person directly, they should report the behavior to a staff person or the Building Supervisor on duty.

YMCA staff members are eager to be of assistance. Members and guests should not hesitate to notify a staff member if assistance is needed.

In order to be able to carry out these policies, we ask that members and guests identify themselves to staff when asked.

The Branch Executive will investigate all reported incidents. Suspension or termination of YMCA membership privileges may result from a determination by the Branch Executive if in his/her discretion a violation of the YMCA Member Code of Conduct has occurred.

