

Aquatic Adaptations

AUSTSWIM Conference 2007

Introduction:

The aim of this presentation is to open your mind to the wonderful power of observation of those with a special need in water; and how your existing knowledge will be used to your advantage.

We look at classes where children may integrate or participate in a special scheduled class.

The Adaptive Programme – for those with a physical need unable to be mainstreamed into a regular scheduled class.

These classes are either run as a group situation with a caregiver or as a separate scheduled class of similar needs. E.g. a teenage class for those with autism, where skills of very basic fundamental swimming strokes may be learnt.

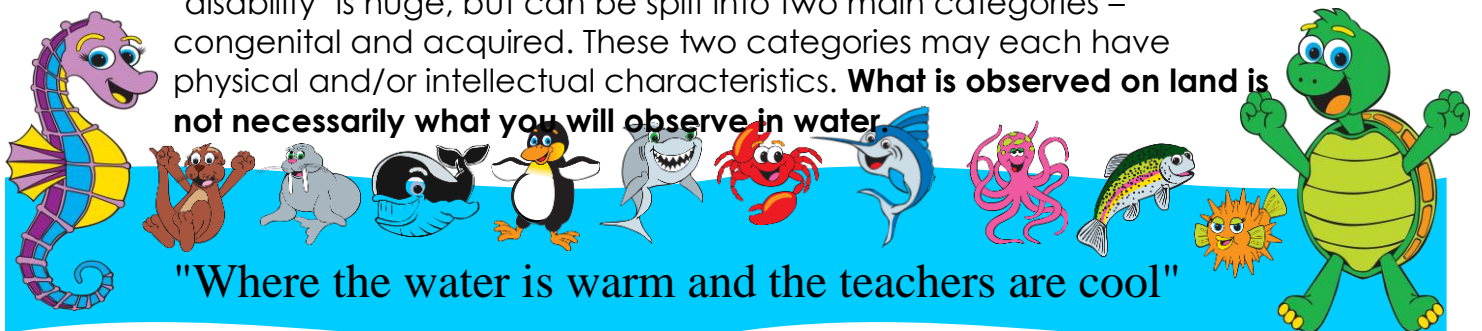
In the early stages of aquatic readiness, it is important water is cleared from the mouth to avoid swallowing or gagging. This is frequently required for cerebral palsy children. (A great skill when brushing their teeth!)

Teach orientation skills so it is an autonomous action such as recovery (standing up), surfacing, getting a breath or turning to back to the side. These simple foundational water safety skills give the child and teacher the confidence to extend the 'swimmer.'

Work the group as a whole. If additional assistance is required allow them to observe the others, whilst assisting the child from a stationary position; re-introduce to the circuit after the skill has been practiced. Never underestimate the power of observation and visualization. This applies for both types of classes.

Integration into scheduled classes

Understanding **the disability** allows the teacher to meet the child's aquatic needs with accurate preparation and planning. The term 'disability' is huge, but can be split into two main categories – congenital and acquired. These two categories may each have physical and/or intellectual characteristics. **What is observed on land is not necessarily what you will observe in water.**



"Where the water is warm and the teachers are cool"



12 Queenwood Ave,
Queenwood Village,
Hamilton.

Phone: 07 855 8666

Fax: 07 855 55 85

SueMayoSwimSchool@learn2swim.co.nz

Buoyancy and balance are foundational skills for all students. The body must feel the sensation of floatation without aids in order for the brain to accurately respond, store and repeat the skill. We call this the 'less is more principal.' The water is a mirror.

Observe, analyse and extend. With totally free movement the teacher may observe reflexive actions and anxiety. Walking in water can say much about the child.

Be confident in their ability. The emotional need of the child is frequently the key turning point. This may be the first time the child has been able to participate in a physical activity as an equal.

Be confident in your ability. Their 'radar' can sense any doubt. To the experienced teacher this is nothing new.

