



Kirby Swim Presents: **Bill Kirby's Swim Tips #5**

Some Levels take longer..

During your journey through our Kirby Swim learn-to-swim levels, expect your child to take more time to complete some levels than others.

This is a result of both the rate of your child's development, and the difficulty of achieving certain skills.

The beginning swimmer: Sea Horse

Some swimmers stay in the Sea Horse level for up to a year.

The first hurdle is water confidence; some children take a long time to become water confident and comfortable in a class situation.

While it takes some up to a year to become comfortable in the water, and others no time at all, there is very little to suggest that a timid swimmer now, will be a weak swimmer later. Kirby Swim has seen many hesitant swimmers grow to become water lovers and very strong swimmers as they develop in physical and emotional maturity. The key is persistence and nurturing.

The Squid Swimmer:

Most swimmers spend a year or more in Squid Advanced.

In the Squid Advanced level coordination of kicking, arm circles and breathing to the side must be mastered over 6-7m as well as 5m of backstroke. These are tough asks for those under 5 years of age. I would expect a swimmer to remain in this level for at least 3 terms, to well over a year,

especially if they had progressed to this level quickly at a young age.

The Snapper swimmer:

Most swimmers will spend quite some time in Snappers or Snapper Advanced.

For most the breaststroke kick becomes the major hurdle. To progress from Snappers to Minimarlins this needs to be *perfect*. Flexibility as well as coordination is what makes breaststroke kick hard for some. When some swimmers perform the breaststroke kick properly, they will initially swim slower than when they perform the skill incorrectly. Those swimmers that find the breaststroke kick easy and powerful, usually struggle with their free and backstroke skills.

Snapper advanced swimmers;

The Snapper Advanced level is where swimmers must perfect their freestyle, backstroke and breaststroke to a level they can competently swim in a larger group doing squad type swimming. Any little stroke inefficiency is best remedied in this level before they go into to a squad type program, where they will feel the need to keep up and repeat the bad habits lap after lap. The aim of perfecting the style as well as technique endurance can take more than a few terms.

Marlins Squads:

When it comes our Marlins program, swimmers should expect to be in each squad for 12-18 months before progressing. (Depending on age and how many times per week, perhaps longer). We have 8 Learn to Swim levels but only a few Marlin levels. Squad level progress takes into account fitness, technique, listening and application and speed.

Physical and mental maturity do play a major role in the progress through the Marlin Squad programs.

When you feel your child has plateaued, or even regressed, it is important to let the deck supervisor know so that they can talk to the coach to discuss any reasons this maybe happening outside the normal expectations of natural learning and progression.

Bill Kirby

