



Infant Swimming Resource Frequently Asked Questions

ISR Methodology

Why Infant Swimming Resource?

“This is an easy question with an easy answer - ISR is the safest provider of swimming lessons for babies and toddlers between six months and six years old and the only national swimming method of its kind that emphasizes developmentally-appropriate instruction focused on self-rescue skills. Any method of instruction where an infant or young child is involved must be safe, period. The safety record is hands down the most important factor any parent should consider when choosing a program.”

- David Carr, M.D. Board Certified Pediatrician

“As a speech-language pathologist, I understand how the brain and body work together. ISR’s technique teaches your child how to problem-solve and trains the brain and body how to react in the water. This is an important skill for your child to have, especially in an emergency situation where a child will be able to save his/her own life.

ISR is also the only swimming method with a perfect safety record, which makes me feel very comfortable and confident as a parent. Plus ISR has more than 40 years of research behind its unique and proven methodology. ISR has given six million lessons – and has trained more than 160,000 students with a 100% success rate and several hundred documented cases of a baby’s self-rescue. This continually amazes me, plus – what I like is that ISR combines the joys of swimming with practical skills for teaching young children water self-rescue. I know for a fact that I am among the thousands of parents nationwide who trust only Infant Swimming Resource to provide safe swimming lessons to their children.”

- Tiffany Kay MA, CCC-SLP

Do you have any outside research on this program?

“Yes - Dr. David Carr – who is a respected pediatrician in Orlando Florida, conducted an extensive study on ISR’s methodology. As a result of his in-depth knowledge of ISR’s swimming instruction program, he not only sent his five children through ISR training, Dr. Carr is also an active proponent of ISR’s proven method for preventing infant drownings. ISR posted his study at www.infantswim.com/ndps06. We encourage anyone with questions to contact us directly.”

- Dr. Harvey Barnett, Founder of ISR

Your survival numbers are impressive. I would like to read some of the letters and contact the parents directly. How can I do that?

“While privacy issues somewhat restrict our ability to share parent contact information, many parents have written letters we deem as ‘Class 1,’ meaning their child saved their own life during a water encounter that followed their self-rescue training with ISR. Our parents are also very vocal on message boards across the web, and we have made these available for your review on the ISR website, www.infantswim.com.

- JoAnn Barnet, President of ISR

	<p><i>What is the difference between a class I and a class II survival?</i> “This is a good question and one we get from parents quite often. A Class I survival involves a child saving himself when he is alone and faced with a definite drowning situation. For instance, when the child is found floating on his back, or holding onto the side or exiting the pool and no one witnessed him falling into the water. A Class II survival is when a parent or another individual is there when the child falls into the water – and may or may not see the child fall in – and the adult observes the child performing his or her skills as they were trained by ISR to do. We have 784 Class 1 and more than 1,700 Class II survivals to date.” - JoAnn Barnett, President of ISR</p> <p><i>Can ISR provide details of its swimming lesson technique? Did ISR or Dr. Barnett invent teaching babies to swim?</i> “I set out in 1966 to pioneer 100% dependable way of teaching very young babies effective survival techniques. These techniques have been through more than 40 years of revising and testing, and because they are based on extensive research - are too complex, and proprietary, to detail in a public ISR training manual. It takes years for our instructors to master the ISR training process, and they must have a great deal of supervised, hands on training and dedication to saving young lives to effectively learn and implement the ISR method.” - Dr. Harvey Barnett, Founder of ISR</p> <p><i>ISR requires extensive registration forms, updates, BUDS sheets and sometimes needs medical releases to allow a child to participate in this program. Why? Who looks at all this information?</i> “ISR always emphasizes safety over convenience and we tend to find that the parents feel much more comfortable about this as well. While it is a fair amount of paperwork, any program that involves the safety and well being of young children needs to be conscientious and very thorough. We review every Registration Form and our Pediatric nurses also review certain forms where the student might have an issue or circumstance of concern. We also have David Carr, M.D. as our Board Certified Pediatrician and he too assists in the evaluations of selected ISR materials.” - Jan Orwick, Certified Master Instructor</p> <p><i>Please describe the age range that the ISR methodology was designed to teach.</i> “Children under the age of 6 months are not neurologically mature enough to benefit from ISR instruction so we do not instruct children this young. However, when working with older students, we as ISR instructors honor the individuality of each student and have found that children up to the age of about 6 years can successfully participate in ISR lessons. Overall however, we typically teach young children between six months and six years old.” - Kate Eckert, Certified Master Instructor</p>
<p>Infant Students</p>	<p><i>Have any children ever been hurt during ISR lessons?</i> “Never, and we make sure that children’s safety is always first and foremost. Our instructors continually monitor the child’s behavior in the water, and they adjust lessons as needed to make completely sure that the infant is always safe. We are very proud of our perfect safety record and that more than 160,000 children have participated in more than six million safe lessons – with no injuries or accidents.” - Dr. Harvey Barnett, Founder of ISR</p>

	<p><i>Babies do not know what is dangerous and what is not, how can you expect them to respond to the danger that water presents when they fall in?</i></p> <p>“A baby does not need to perceive danger or be afraid in order to respond appropriately to being underwater. If a baby has learned to roll over and float when he needs air, he does not need to perceive danger in order to respond in this manner. He needs skill, practice and confidence to calmly deal with the situation.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Dr. Harvey Barnett, Founder of ISR</p> <p><i>ISR has mentioned that many children drown while under the supervision of a parent. How is this possible?</i></p> <p>“This is an all-too common tragedy that can be prevented with the right techniques. Research proves that the highly repetitive and simple play of young children is difficult to participate in or observe let alone supervise without the attending adult getting “bored.” When that happens, supervision breaks down. We know this is true from our hundreds of interviews with parents whose young child drowned or nearly drowned. We hear all kinds of quotes, such as ‘We had already been out there for 45 minutes, I left him playing on the top step for just a second, he never, never goes off of that step and besides I knew I would hear him if he fell in..’ or the parent fell asleep... ‘I must have dozed off for just a second’. ISR lessons not only teach the baby critical self-rescue skills, they also educate the parent on water safety, using our comprehensive Parent Resource Book. Our data shows that the parents of ISR students watch them more effectively in and around the water, following ISR swimming lessons. No former student has ever drowned and 1.5% experience an accidental fall in to the water. Children matched for the same factors are 3.86 times more likely to fall in.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Dr. Harvey Barnett, Founder of ISR</p>
<p>The Lessons</p>	<p><i>How do you teach a baby to swim?</i></p> <p>“ISR instructors teach infants to swim by honoring each child's individual strengths and experiences. Instructors understand the fundamentals of the behavioral sciences, child development and of sensorimotor learning as it relates to the acquisition of water survival skills. ISR instructors use this education to guide each child through the sequence of learning to swim and float.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- David Carr, M.D. Board Certified Pediatrician</p> <p><i>What other benefits do ISR swimming lessons provide the child?</i></p> <p>“Every child is different. However, many parents report that once their young children have mastered learning to swim, the resulting confidence in their abilities engenders a positive self-concept that is often demonstrated in other aspects of their personalities.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Dianne Curti, Certified Master Instructor</p> <p><i>Why do your students need refresher lessons?</i></p> <p>“Based on our research, we know that refresher lessons are important because children change so much both cognitively and physically during the first 2-3 years of life. It is important that their water self-rescue skills grow with them.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Jan Orwick, Certified Master Instructor</p>

	<p><i>Why are lessons five days a week and for only ten minutes per training over a 4-6 week timeframe? Wouldn't 2 or 3 times a week for 20-30 minutes be more convenient?</i></p> <p>"We've conducted extensive research on the detailed requirements that would give us the safest possible swimming instruction method. The results of this research revealed that this particular schedule is the most effective both for a child's ability to successfully master ISR swimming skills and to retain information given during the lessons."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Dr. Harvey Barnett, Founder of ISR</p> <p><i>What is the biggest difference between lessons for a 6 month old and lessons for an 18 month old?</i></p> <p>"We have different requirements, based on physical development of the infant, for training a child based on his or her age. The goal for a 6 month old is to learn to roll over and float on his back. An 18 month old ISR student will learn to swim to the wall, to roll over and float, to flip back over and actively swim for and reach the side of the pool by combining swimming and floating skills."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Kate Eckert, Certified Master Instructor</p> <p><i>How long do your students retain their skills once your Instructors have taught them?</i></p> <p>"We've found that if a sensorimotor skill is properly presented the first time the student is exposed to the curriculum the retention is very high. For ISR students, the retention for boys is 94 to 100 % and for girls between 96 and 100% assessed after one year since the last lesson. Advancing from learning to mastery is also a factor in skill retention and ISR students learn 90% of their skills with time left to practice in front of their Instructor during lessons. Also important, ISR students practice their skills encumbered in clothing, which is vital as most children are clothed when in a dangerous water situation."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- JoAnn Barnett, President of ISR</p>
<p>The Competition</p>	<p><i>How does this program differ from the Red Cross or the YMCA?</i></p> <p>"We feel strongly that it's not appropriate to compare Infant Swimming Resource lessons with other programs as the goals and scope of the program is completely different. You can see the differences – even basic ones – just in the presentation of materials and the overarching program goals, or by visiting their websites to compare their programs with ISR's. One of the big contrasts you'll notice relates to the goals -- ISR is the only method teaching children to become aquatic problem solvers. However, in Central-Florida, Miami and a few other cities, there is a program offered in partnership between ISR and the YMCA, Safe Start, which is the non-profit branch of ISR and directly supports our programs methodology."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Dr Harvey Barnett, Founder of ISR</p> <p><i>Is ISR growing?</i></p> <p>"Yes, we are fast becoming a trusted and recognized provider of the safest swimming lessons for babies and toddlers. Our growth has been steady and our brand name controlled because we prefer to grow slowly with high quality control. Parents who take the time to investigate the programs that are available for their children find that ISR and the program continues to grow by word of mouth of thousands of educated, satisfied parents."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- JoAnn Barnett, President of ISR</p>

<p>Parent Responses</p>	<p><i>Have your children been through ISR training?</i> “Yes, I was thrilled with ISR. The thought that my baby could learn something like this at such an early age made me realize his potential and to know that he would have a chance if he ever did fall in while I was not there, or my babysitter wasn’t.” - Julie Russell, RN, Intensive Care Nurse</p> <p><i>Some of the parents I’ve spoken with say it is difficult to watch their child in the water? How do you feel about that?</i> “I did not realize just how vulnerable my baby was to our backyard pool before I saw her in ISR’s lessons. It’s important for other parents to realize that water poses a threat to their child, and a considerable one at that. In a study published in 2004 by the Safe Kids Campaign, they reported that 80% of the children who drown did so during some form of supervision. There is no way I would leave my child unsupervised by the water. And now, I’ll also never stop sharing with every parent I meet the critical need for all children to be equipped with ISR’s self-rescue skills.” - Noel Peters, ISR Parent</p>
<p>American Association of Pediatrics Position</p>	<p><i>Why does the AAP have concerns about infant swimming lessons in children under four years old?</i> “AAP’s formal statement warns of the health and safety hazards of teaching infants and toddlers under the age of four years old to swim. And ISR fully supports the major tenet of the AAP’s statement. Because the infant swimming instruction industry is not regulated, too many instructors are able to provide swimming lessons to children without formal training, advanced education or research to support the method. The result of such industry regulation oversight has resulted in injuries each year to children during swimming lessons. I believe strongly that the gap left by this industry issue requires significant focus by the AAP, as there exists only one proprietary and proven swimming lesson methodology – developed by Dr. Harvey Barnett at ISR – that has a 100 percent effectiveness rate, zero injuries or deaths, six million lessons delivered over a forty year span and more than 784 documented cases of a child using ISR techniques for self-rescue.” - David Carr, M.D. Board Certified Pediatrician</p>
<p>Health & Safety Information</p>	<p><i>What about life jackets?</i> “Life jackets must be worn in a boat or around the water when there is the potential for an accidental submersion. But they are not a substitute for the ability to swim or for adult supervision. It’s also more likely that if a life jacket will float your child face down, thereby increasing their drowning risk. I thank God that is a risk that ISR has significantly reduced for my precious children.” - Jordan Eyrick, ISR Parent</p> <p><i>How do children typically feel after lessons?</i> “The lessons are only 10 minutes long each day. The children work hard at learning to swim so we teach them to lie down on their towel and rest for a few minutes after each lesson. They are temperature fatigued, but not physically fatigued and they just need to readjust to gravity.” - Kate Eckert, Certified Master Instructor</p>

Why not just require fences around all pools...then the baby wouldn't have to go through the lessons?

"Of course, ISR emphasizes that fences should be required around all pools. But this is just a first line of defense – plus, it's impossible to fence every body of water, or to predict where and when supervision will break down and the child will end up alone in some body of water. Many children drown in pools that have very good fences. But gates get left open unintentionally. I read a quote years ago that the average three year old can climb a pool fence in 34 seconds – that brings chills to me, and is another reason why parents need to give their young children the self-rescue skills that only ISR provides."

- Jennifer Diaz, ISR Parent

What risks exist to the child in ISR lessons?

"With over six million safe lessons involving more than 160,000 students and never having an accident in ISR lessons, I can confidently say that the risks are extremely minimal."

- David Carr, M.D. Board Certified Pediatrician

How do you know the rates at which untrained vs. trained children fall into the water, and what is important about this data, specifically to ISR's training?

"We collect this type of information on our National Registration Form and our Update Form. We believe ISR students fall into water less often because they are more cautious around the water. They have not been taught to enter the water to retrieve toys or look for mommy. They know that the water can be fun but that it holds a great deal of responsibility. We also go to great lengths to educate the parents of our students about family aquatic safety and segmented supervision. We teach the baby water survival skills and the parents about family water safety. Those two complement each other very well."

- Dianne Curti, Certified Master Instructor

I've read that chlorine can have an adverse affect on the long-term health of infants and young children. Do you agree?

"The connection drawn between chlorine levels in an indoor swimming pool and respiratory health in later childhood has no one indefinable cause. A Belgium study that is the basis for this concern has received a great deal of attention, but there are inherent and substantial flaws within the methodology of the study, which led to a gross overstatement of the study's conclusions. With too many extraneous variables and questionable data collection methods, it is impossible to determine causation with any certainty.

Additionally, the study focused only on indoor swimming pools (not outside swimming), where pool conditions can be affected by many other variables such as humidity controls, fans, etc. A properly maintained pool causes NO respiratory threat to a young child with limited exposure to the pool, as is the case in ISR lessons where lessons are limited to 10 minutes per day. ISR is 100% confident in the safety of its methodology, and its approach to protecting children's respiratory health."

- David Carr, M.D. Board Certified Pediatrician

	<p><i>How safe is it for a young child to swim in a chlorinated pool?</i> “We can only speak to ISR’s complete safety – and overall, parents must be aware of their child’s sensitivity to chlorine and the impact of chlorine on respiratory health. ISR makes sure children are safe. Because we continually monitor and evaluate our program’s safety, we have collected data on each of our 160,000 students since 1966, including follow up reports and input from medical experts. There has been no observation of an ill effect or respiratory problem among any of ISR’s current or former students. ISR’s comprehensive health screening process, conducted by trained medical professionals, begins by assessing the child’s overall health. If it is determined that a child has a condition that could be adversely impacted by exposure to chlorine, the child is not accepted into the program until the health concern has been resolved.” - Dr. Harvey Barnett, Founder of ISR</p>
<p>Instructors</p>	<p><i>Where can someone find an ISR instructor?</i> “You can find a list of all instructors on our web site at www.infantswim.com.” - JoAnn Barnett, President of ISR</p> <p><i>What is a Master Instructor?</i> “A Master Instructor is someone who has a great deal of experience within ISR, who has been through extensive additional training and can train other qualified individuals to become an ISR Instructor. They also serve as mentors for a small group of current Instructors.” - Debbie Hammerberg,, Executive Director of Expansion for ISR</p> <p><i>What is a Senior Master Instructor?</i> “A Senior Master Instructor (SMI) is currently the highest level of accreditation in ISR. A SMI among other duties trains Master Instructors and guides the growth of the organization.” Debbie Hammerberg, Executive Director of Expansion for ISR</p> <p><i>How many ISR Instructors have been trained?</i> “We have trained over 485 highly qualified instructors across the U.S. to teach the ISR method.” -Debbie Hammerberg, Executive Director of Expansion for ISR</p>