



# Big Oak Swim Program



Most of the Big Oak Day Camp groups (and Expressions) swim 2 to 3 times each week. We are fortunate to have access to an indoor pool, which is a refreshing and cool break from the summer sun. Whereas we know how much campers love pool time with their friends, we also have a healthy respect for the dangers that surround this, or any, activity.

**Aquatics Team:** The Aquatics Activity Directors are current certified lifeguards through the **American Red Cross**. Lori Sullivan is a lifeguard instructor and has been teaching American Red Cross classes for more than 30 years. She is an experienced aquatics teacher, swim instructor, and lifeguard trainer. She, along with her team, supervises and instruct campers at the pool each day.

In addition to Lori, there are also additional certified lifeguards on watch at each pool. We also have other camp staff (counselors, CITs, JCs, and ACs) on watch and many of whom are in the pool with the campers to help them become stronger swimmers, overcome any fears, and/or help with swim strokes.

**Swim Test Assessment:** All campers are evaluated to determine their competency in the water. Based on the swim instructor's assessment, campers are either permitted in all areas of the pool or they are relegated to the shallow end only. Campers are given a wrist band to indicate their level. Red band indicates shallow end only and they must keep on a life jacket. Yellow band indicates that they are required to stay in the shallow end but don't require the life vest. A Green band indicates they are cleared for the entire pool and have taken the deep-water test. Campers who may want to be able to swim in the deep end (anything over 5 feet) must take, and pass, the deep-water swim test administered by the Aquatics Team. This test includes swimming freestyle (American Crawl)-1 length, Backstroke-1 length, tread water 30-seconds, and demonstrate the ability to swim under water for a length of about 10 feet. Multiple camp staff are in the water the entire time during the testing.

It is at the comfort choice of the swimmer or at the discretion of the aquatics directors when it is determined they do not require a life jacket. All swimmers wear life jackets until the aquatic directors feel confident with their swim safety ability. Campers who want to gain additional swim stroke improvement may request time with Aquatics staff and they will be happy to assist. Swimmers are constantly being evaluated by the Aquatics staff and their level may change throughout the summer.

**Shall I get my child swimming lessons before camp begins?** This is totally up to you. We have experience with all types of swimmers: phobic to swim team members. We are confident that our staff can effectively and safely manage all levels of swimmers. We teach all campers to have a healthy respect for the dangers that can happen, and we carefully monitor the levels of play in and around the pool area. Although not mandatory, if your child has never had water instruction, it is certainly helpful for them to have some comfort in shallow and deep water in advance of camp. The local YMCA or other swim instruction programs can be a very good start to helping them adjust to the water.

**Will we get swim status updates?** We do not provide any written evaluation of swim level or stroke progression, but our Aquatics team is happy to speak with and answer any questions about your child's progress throughout the summer. Simply call or email Steve and he can set up a phone call with Lori or Erik.

**May I go watch my child at the pool?** No. Due to the safety and security of all campers, we do not permit parents to be on the pool deck during camper swims.

**May I pick my child up early at the pool?** No. Campers may only be picked up from the main office at camp either prior to, or after, swim.

**Can I require my child to wear a swim vest at the pool?** Yes. Whereas the Aquatics team does evaluate each swimmer, any parent may instruct that their child be in a flotation vest while at the pool. Please have your child bring their flotation vest (clearly put their name on it) and our staff will ensure that they wear it while at the pool. Please have the conversation with your child that it is your demand that they wear it and keep it on at all times, even when on the pool deck. These requests should be sent to Steve Haines - [CampConcepts@comcast.net](mailto:CampConcepts@comcast.net).

**What pool will my child swim in?** Carl Sandburg Middle School.