



# Develop, Learn & Explore!

## Our 5 top tips to build confidence and self-esteem for our children in the pool

Confidence comes from feelings of well-being, inner self esteem and belief in our abilities and skills. Confidence isn't static, we often see it wax and wane in the pool. This can be for lots of reasons like; if the experience is new, or even just how they are feeling that day. We mustn't forget to see the pool from their eye, their brain is developing at a fast rate and their body is changing too.

We often link confidence and self-esteem, but they are different. Confidence is how we feel about performing skills in the pool. Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves, it's also about the way we think or feel and if we feel valued. Although you may feel these are 'soft' skills to develop, they can have deep emotional positive impacts. Here are just a few easy booster tips.

### 1. Praise them for trying

Comment on the action so they know what was good, rather than simply praising the child. *"That was wonderful kicking you are getting faster kicks!"*

### 2. Show them your love

When experiences are new, we all feel nervous. In the pool you might find your child is a little clingy. Show them your love, hug them in a heart to heart hold. Allow them to regulate their systems, which could be on high alert. When they feel safe, they will be ready to share the water world with you. At the end of class, show them your love and affection, these little happy interactions will make them feel valued and will create positive imprints forever. The water will transmit your feelings of love faster.

### 3. Let them take risks

It's natural to want to protect your child, but the water will act as a cushion. Give them a running commentary of other children trying new skills in the pool, if their try doesn't go as well, that's ok... reassure them. They will come on leaps and bounds if you let go just a little.



### 4. Give them a choice

Who wants just one toy or this pool noodle? Offer them a choice, even if it's in size, colour or shape. But not offer them too much choice as this can be confusing to a small child.

### 5. Have fun together

Learning to swim is so rewarding and what better way than to do it with the person they love – you! Laugh, get splashed, play chase, swim on a noodle yourself ... whatever it takes ....have fun together and grow their confidence.

