

# Early-years swimming

## Newsletter

August 2012

The project is now in its final year and has been progressing extraordinarily well. We have been buoyed by the great support from friendly swimming school and the willingness of swim families who have quite enthusiastically participated in the research.

The focus areas of investigation over the last few months have been in the parent survey and the child assessments. Here is a brief update:

### Parent Survey

Well into its third and final year, parents have been surveyed about how their swimming children have been performing against a wide range of physical, cognitive, linguistic and social milestones. Respondent numbers were dwindling before the ACSTA Conference. Since April, we are happy to report that there has been a massive input. Now, for the 2011-2012 year, we have received over 3000 parent responses.

We would like to thank everyone for supporting this initiative and as you will be able to see from the Leader Board, there has been some phenomenal support from a wide range of schools.

As we discussed at the Annual Conference, the data from last year is showing some very strong trends where parents have indicated many areas where their children are ahead of international benchmarks of child development. This year's data will be analysed by the statistician in the coming months. This analysis will be shared at a later date.

### Child Assessments

To ensure the validity of parental claims of child performance, we have embarked upon an exhaustive – and exhausting – program of individual child assessments. Drawing on a comprehensive range of internationally-accepted instruments, our team have completed around a third of the planned assessments. Most volunteers have been drawn directly from the survey. Parents were asked in this final year if they were willing to participate in this round of assessment.

Each child is paced through a series of supervised activities to independently gauge their performance across the cognitive, linguistic and physical domains. Each assessment takes approximately 90 minutes – half of which is “bookwork” (pencil and paper activities), the other half is the physical assessment – running, jumping, hopping and skipping.

Many of the assessments have been conducted on the university campus but we have enjoyed greater success where swim schools have volunteered to host assessments.

Being on-site has certainly been a good strategy. Parents are finding swim schools far more accessible and the environment offers greater familiarity for children.

We would love to hear from more swim schools, particularly those in southeast Queensland, who would be willing to host further child assessments. Our team does not require a great deal of space – just a quiet room and an area to run and jump... preferably away from the pool deck!

Please contact our research assistant, Patricia Funnell on (07) 3735-5854 to discuss the possibility of using your school as a venue.

### Thank you

Big thanks go to our sponsors – swim schools, industry groups and corporate entities – for providing financial support to the research team. Thanks too to all participant swim schools. Many schools have actively participated through promoting and administering the parent survey and others have allowed us access to their sites for lesson observations and to interview staff and parents. Special thanks now go also to swim school personnel who have facilitated child assessments and offered their facilities for our use.

### 2011-2012 Leader Board Parent Responses by Swim School

No	Swim School	Location	Surveys
1	Carlisle Swimming	Lane Cove	296
2	Swim Kids USA	USA	191
3	Carlisle Swimming	Castle Cove	172
4	Carlisle Swimming	Five Dock	169
5	North Wyong Aqua Centre	North Wyong	138
6	Carlisle Swimming	Ryde	135
7	Hills Swimming	Kenthurst	131
8	Carlisle Swimming	Norwest	106
9	Hampton Swim School	Morningside	95
10	Billabong Swim School	Tweed Heads	88
11	Carlisle Swimming	Carlingford	79
12	McMahons Swim Factory	Ipswich	77
13	Just Like Fish	Rutherford	73
14	Carlisle Swimming	Altona	71
15	Westside Swimming	Jindalee	59
16	Academy Swim Club	Valencia	56
17	Laurie Lawrence Swim School	Underwood/Banora	54
18	Aquatic Achievers	Aspley	53
19	Leisure World Thornlie	Thornlie	51
20	Swim1	Coolum	47

## Contact us

Email: [earlyyearsswimming@griffith.edu.au](mailto:earlyyearsswimming@griffith.edu.au)

Phone: 07 3735 5854

Fax: 07 3735 6992

[griffith.edu.au/education/early-years-swimming](http://griffith.edu.au/education/early-years-swimming)

