Parent and Child Aquatics Level 2 Skills

Holding and Support Techniques

Face-to-Face Positions

Hip support on front
Use this position for back float and back glide readiness and for kicking on the back.

1. The parent positions him- or herself so the water comes to shoulder level and the child’s chest.
2. The parent supports the child in a horizontal position at the hips and abdomen with both hands.

Back-to-Chest Positions

Use these positions to introduce participants to skills on their back.

Hip support on back
Use this position for back float and back glide readiness and for kicking on the back.

1. The parent positions him- or herself so the water comes to neck level and the child’s ears. The back of the child’s head rests on the parent’s shoulder, with the child’s cheek or side of the head touching the parent’s cheek.
2. The parent holds the child with both hands on the back to bring the child’s body horizontal. The parent’s exact hand position on the child’s back depends on the child’s ability to relax.
   - Placing the hands on the child’s lower back lends the most support; placing the hands on the upper back give less support but more freedom of movement.
   - As the child becomes more comfortable, his or her legs will relax, and the child will lay his or her head back and let the ears submerge.
3. Once the child relaxes, the parent may reach down to the child’s legs and manipulate the kick.

Back support
Use this position when the child is comfortable on his or her back and maximum freedom of movement is desired, yet support is still necessary.

1. The parent positions him- or herself so that his or her shoulders and the child’s ears are in the water. The parent is positioned behind the child.
2. The parent supports the base of the child’s head near the neck with one hand, placing the other hand in the middle of the child’s back to lift and stabilize the child in a horizontal position, and tilts the child’s head back.
3. The parent extends his or her arms to hold the child perpendicular to and away from his or her body, smoothly moving backward to help the child float to a horizontal position.
If the child is having trouble relaxing and lifting his or her head, have the parent pull the child close and position the child’s head on his or her chest or shoulder for more support. The parent places one hand in the middle of the child’s back and the other hand around the child’s chin or lower jaw, then gently tilts the child’s head back.

Have the parent resume the back support position when the child relaxes.

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**Safety Note:** Remind parents that they should not push on the fleshy part of the child’s throat.

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**Arm stroke position**

Use this position to help the child explore arm movements in the water.

1. The parent braces his or her back against the side of the pool and sits on the steps or kneels on one knee in shallow water. The water comes up to shoulder level on the parent and the upper chest or armpits of the child.

2. The child sits on the parent’s knee, facing away from the parent. The parent uses one arm to circle the child’s chest to keep him or her upright.

3. With the other hand, the parent holds the child’s wrist from underneath, with his or her hand on top of the child’s hand.

4. The parent moves the child’s arm in a paddling motion and encourages the child to imitate the motion with his or her other arm.
   - If necessary, the parent switches the arm he or she is using to support the child and moves the child’s other arm in the paddling motion.
   - The parent can balance a more secure child on his or her knee and guide both arms in an alternating or simultaneous paddling motion.