

## Progression vs Level Succession

Swimming is a lifelong skill. Swim school staff are frequently asked questions such as 'when will my child be ready for the next level' or 'my child hasn't moved up in ... terms', 'why aren't they improving or progressing?' These are all valid questions as the primary goal for swim school is to assist skill progression and in turn level succession. However, there are specific aspects to each class, and various reasons why a child may not make their way through the levels as quickly as expected.

### Progression description

Student progression is the main focus. It is very rewarding for students and their teachers to see swimming techniques improve over time. Within each level, a new skill is introduced to build on existing skills. For example, a child moving into a Sea Dragon class will be competent in the foundations of freestyle and backstroke (being a high and stable body position, fast extended kicking action, as well as an effective freestyle arm stroke). Then, throughout the Sea Dragon level, students will be introduced to the next step in stroke progression; they will begin to develop freestyle breathing and backstroke arms. Within the, seemingly, small introduction of freestyle breathing technique the swimmer must master the low head position breathing action, the timing of the head turn and the timing of their inhalation and exhalation, all while maintaining their body position and kicking action. A swimmer will master these skills with time and correct practice. Like with all skills, students will progress at their own rate.

### Why the focus is on technique

Teaching students the correct technique is important, as it is much harder for swimmers to break bad habits once they have formed. The aim is to create an efficient swimmer from the beginning. The ability to maintain an effective stroke, creates a more energy efficient swimmer, therefore helping them to build on skills and swim further distances with ease.

Each student has specific techniques they need to focus on, before progressing to the next level. Ensuring the foundation of a stroke and technique is of a high standard, makes the next step in the swimming journey more manageable. Taking the previous example; if a student moves into the Sea Dragon class before they have the correct kicking technique, with a high body position in the water, it will have a significant impact on the introduction of the new skill. Turning to breathe may result in an exaggerated body roll in an attempt to catch the breath and compensate for the low body position, which will then affect the efficiency and co-ordination of their entire stroke.

Ways parents can help progression and in time, level succession.

Did you know that if you are enrolled into seasonal swimming terms and the swimmer only swims during their lesson, then over a 1 year period they would have swum for 9.5 hours in total; that's less than 2 days of school!

The more opportunity for correct practice a swimmer gets, the quicker they will master a skill. Swimmers enrolled in both terms 4 and 1 of swimming lessons have free access to the pool for that entire season (normal entry fees apply for anyone else attending on non-swimming lesson days).

Giving swimmers greater exposure to the water provides more chance to explore what they are learning in their lessons. Also remember, they are still experimenting with their body positions and buoyancy in the water even during 'play' swimming.

Holiday programs during the summer holidays are a great way to have an intensive burst of lessons and build on existing skills. There is a 1 week block in December and 1 week in January, enrolling in both will give your swimmer an extra 5 hours of swimming time.

If you would like further information on what your swimmer needs to work on, please feel free to speak to an on-deck instructor, we're here to help!

Burnside Swim School