

Why do Some Students Repeat Levels?



“We were here last session and my child flunked swimming!”, a mother, eager to have her child move up to the next level of swimming told our front office. What she meant was that her child was asked to repeat the same level. Why is it, that although all our students make dramatic progress in lessons, we do ask some children not to move on to the next level?

There are several reasons why an Emler teacher may ask a student to repeat a class level.

1. The student may be too young for the instruction given at the next higher skill level. If the instruction given at the next level up is too detailed for a child, they become frustrated and discontent with swim lessons. A further aggravation is when the fellow students in the class are older, stronger, and more mature than the younger swimmer. The class needs to be a good fit for each child to allow maximum learning in a comfortable setting.

2. The student may have just barely mastered the skills in the previous class. To immediately push forward through the next higher level may intimidate the swimmer. Once again, a child who is uncomfortable in swim lessons will not learn as well.

3. The student may have performed all the skills physically correct, but is obviously emotionally uncomfortable in the water. To expose this type of swimmer to a more demanding level of swimming will exacerbate his/her emotional discomfort.



When a child repeats a class, he is identified as a STAR swimmer. With the STAR identification the teacher will know that this child has covered the skills in this class before and needs to be challenged more than the rest of the class. This child may swim longer distances or perform higher skills than the rest of the class. Our goal with the STAR students is to push for higher skills while still allowing them the emotional comfort of a non-intimidating class setting.

So if your child is asked to repeat a swim class next session, please don't think of it as “flunking” swimming. Three years from now, you won't even remember that he repeated a swim class. All you'll know is that your child is a safe and comfortable swimmer who loves the wa-

