



Registration Evaluation Team  
Parent Information Sheet  
2011-25 Crying

[infantswim.com](http://infantswim.com)

## BASIC OVERVIEW

### Infant and Toddler Communication

As babies grow into toddlers, their mastery of physical skills (walking, running, swimming) develops much more rapidly than their ability to express themselves verbally and be completely understood. During this time their social development is focused on the security and attachment of the family. New situations can be stressful and most young children take some time to feel comfortable around new people.

Even preschoolers, who seem much more verbal and socially confident, can be overwhelmed by coming into a new environment where they are not sure what might be expected of them.

Because an ISR lesson is most definitely a new environment and the skills our young students are learning are completely new to them, we frequently see our students cry during the first few lessons as they try to communicate their concerns over this new environment to this person they are unfamiliar with. Crying is by far the biggest concern for the ISR parent and something that the ISR instructor is well trained to monitor and interpret.

As lessons progress and the baby develops a trusting relationship with the instructor and as the child learns the skills necessary to solve problems in the water, crying is diminished as insecurity becomes replaced with confidence.

### Fear and Trauma

Many parents express concern that their child's crying is an indicator of emotional distress or that it will lead to fear of the water environment. As parents, no one is comfortable hearing a baby cry ... nature has intended the baby's cry to alert the adult to something that needs attention, and indeed a child in the water is something that needs the undivided attention of an adult. However, this is not an indication of trauma or fear, just normal communication for a non-verbal child learning new skills in a new environment. Much like the first day of school, learning to ride a bike or the first sleepover, nervous anxiety is soon replaced with proud confidence in the presence of a skilled, supportive teacher. The ISR Instructor is trained to provide that level of support to ensure that the learning experience is directed by the child, at the child's pace and that the child will have the skills at hand that they will need to be successful.

There are a small number of children, who due to a near-drowning experience, may exhibit true fear of the water. ISR instructors are also trained to identify these circumstances and plan the lesson accordingly. Children who have or currently are experiencing trauma will lose their ability to communicate effectively, often become quiet and withdrawn.

That being said, there are some children who simply prefer not to be in the water. Aquatic self-rescue is also an important life skill for these children as a safety issue. They may continue to be unhappy in the water, even if they are completely skilled.



Registration Evaluation Team  
Parent Information Sheet  
2011-25 Crying

[infantswim.com](http://infantswim.com)

### Behavior

All children are sensory learners. They receive input from their environment and adjust their actions to achieve the changes they desire in their world. The non-verbal child has one principal tool at their disposal to accomplish these changes, the cry. A child's cry can mean almost anything... as the Moms and Dads know from pure experience, a crying child can mean tired, hungry, hurt, sick, frustrated, scared, mad, hot, cold or almost anything in between. ISR instructors work closely with every parent through the BUDS sheet and poolside interviews and the child in the water through precise behavioral observation and clear, consistent communication to interpret these signals and provide for the safety and comfort of the child while they are learning these life-saving skills.

All children bring with them their own temperament, life circumstances and social experience to each lesson. The child, who never cries at home, may see another child cry at the poolside and try it out to see what happens. The child who has experienced that a mad cry will get him to be held by mom will amplify that effort when the lesson presents him with a new experience that makes him feel uncomfortable. The child who is tired may cry today because they are tired and wants us to know that the lesson may need to be shorter today. The ISR Instructor will work with the parent to eliminate circumstances that create unnecessary crying in the lesson and promote confidence and skill as quickly as possible for every student.

Children who, despite the intervention and support of both the parent and instructor, exhibit behavior that is physically disruptive and unsafe ie: vomiting, biting, hitting may be asked to not participate further in the lesson that day. ISR is firmly committed to a positive learning environment and does not condone the use of punishment as a part of the lesson experience. If these circumstances occur, the instructor and parent will work together to develop a modified lesson plan that allows for a safe and productive lesson.

### HOW THIS CONDITION MAY AFFECT LESSONS

#### BUDS Information:

**B** Any changes to BUDS information may increase crying, please review with the  
**U** instructor/ parent prior to the lesson

**D**

**S**

#### Medications

#### Emotional

#### Before the lesson-

- Bring your child to the lesson well-rested and having eaten an appropriate meal at an appropriate time.
- Adjust lesson time to accommodate school schedules, naps and medications.
- Monitor closely for the onset of illness and discuss anything new with your instructor.
- Limit time on the pool deck around other children that may be upset.



Registration Evaluation Team  
Parent Information Sheet  
2011-25 Crying

[infantswim.com](http://infantswim.com)

- Be a great cheerleader. Express that you are expecting your child to learn something valuable at the lesson and are proud of their efforts. Reward accomplishment with praise- do not coerce attendance with treats.
- Arrive on time, ready to go.

**During the lesson-**

- Smile!
- Support the instructor as they offer verbal and physical praise to your child. Look for cues from the instructor as to when this will be helpful based on what specific skills your child is working on at that lesson.
- Your instructor will monitor lesson pace and presentation to balance productive work (limited time to exhibit non-productive behaviors) with fatigue which indicates legitimate frustration.

**After the lesson-**

- You are encouraged to discuss any concern you have with the instructor AWAY from the poolside and the child (or other children who may be present).
- Offer verbal praise for skills learned or effort during the lesson or the opportunity to “show off” at home when appropriate.
- Support growing independence in the water... definitely do not revert to using any type of flotation device, such as “arm bands” while at home. Encourage skill practice at home (ask your instructor how) and require skill use when in the pool at home as a new and permanent part of your families water activities.
- Use refresher or maintenance lessons to retain or refine previously learned skills on a regular basis.
- Keep accurate BUDS information as requested by your instructor.

**Parent Education-**

- Lesson may proceed at a slower (or quicker) pace.
- Lessons may be shorter.  
The student may benefit from a day off if there is an illness suspected or BUDS information has changed sufficiently.
- Parental attitude is the single most influential factor in regard to crying.  
Sleep and activity patterns may be influenced by lessons. This is normal processing behavior for small children and is not cause for concern.

**Notify the RET if:**

- Crying is uncontrolled after the first 2 weeks of lessons, is accompanied by unsafe behavior that does not diminish with an appropriate lesson plan or there is concern about a medical or developmental condition that is contributing to the crying behavior.