

How to Teach Children to Swim



How to Teach

By the same author:

WITH PATRICIA FARRELL

IF YOU LIVE WITH LITTLE CHILDREN

Children to Swim

by **CAROLYN KAUFFMAN**

Preface

IT occurred to me one hot spring day that the children—the four- to five-year-olds at the nursery school—would enjoy cooling off in our family back-yard pool. They certainly did, and because many of them were receptive to instruction, and there was no pool available to them (they were too young for Red Cross lessons at the high school), and because I had watched my own children in their swimming lessons, I was inspired to teach very small children swimming. Many of the techniques used in the book to help children overcome their reluctance about, or fear of, the water are equally effective in teaching small children of a nursery school. The songs and games are the same songs and games the children enjoyed at school; the experience with swings and balancing boards, tricycles and sand piles, develops knowledge and confidence—both physical and psychological—in some of the same ways that swimming does.

From the very first, I was encouraged by the advice and the very practical help I received from Frank Blair. Certain basic principles and the plan for putting these principles into practice were developed by Frank after a wide and diversified

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experience as a competitive swimmer and as a teacher of swimming. He was a certified aquatic director for both the YMCA and the Red Cross in San Francisco for a number of years; he left this work to start his own swimming school. What he impressed upon me is the importance of a step-by-step method of learning about the water, and the exercise of the utmost patience in executing this method. As I proceeded, right up through the preparation of this manuscript, his ideas and help continued to be invaluable.

The photographs for the book were taken by Bill Foote. Unbelievably devoted to what for him is an avocation, his concern for exactness and perfection produced some amazing results. Since what we wanted to photograph in the water presented a variety of problems, extraordinary ingenuity was called for. For several shots Bill had to climb an oak tree and hang over the pool, holding on with one hand while he worked the camera with the other.

The children, Barbara Hort, Bonnie Boone, Denise Durand, Barbara Durand, Paul Callaghan and Elizabeth Kauffman, were extremely co-operative in going through the paces on a rather chilly day. You will see by their faces and their strong, graceful bodies what good children and what real water bugs they are.

Joe and Addie Axelrod checked the material lesson by lesson for ease and clarity in reading. Their consistent encouragement kept the book moving in the direction of completion. Since Joe learned to swim in our pool at age thirty-five with this exact lesson plan, and Addie likes water in a bathtub only, they made an invaluable combination. If Addie, a non-swimmer, but possessor of a sharp inner eye, could visualize and feel what I was talking about, I felt that I had conveyed my idea.

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Part One

Better Swimming for Smaller Children

EVERYONE has heard it said that children take to the water like ducks. But the fact remains that children aren't ducks, and without planned and imaginative instruction, they will show a healthy talent for doing many other things in the water than swimming. They may keep their feet glued to the bottom as if they were wearing cement boots. They may walk cautiously about as if they were in a mine field or on a terrain of poison ivy. In short, they may act as if the idea of the game were to maintain a vertical position and to keep as much of themselves as dry as possible. On the other hand, children also like to splash, clobber, and churn water. This, of course, is fun. But your aim is to train them for the best fun—the skill of swimming in water.

Parents want, or should want, their children to swim because it is one of the few sports in which the whole family can participate and have fun. There are lots of sports. There's boxing, wrestling, hiking, handball, squash, track and field, horseshoes, marching, and Indian clubs. But *these* are the reasons why swimming always tops the lists of "preferred sports." You may have a son playing Pop Warner football, and another son playing Little League baseball, and your

husband bowls, and you really prefer golf—but you also have a five-year-old. Suddenly you realize that the family is going off in seventy-six directions, and most of the things you do together are passive (such as watching television or listening to records) because you can't all go out and play football—You do?—or baseball or tennis, but you can all have fun in the water. The most heated family fight will dissolve in the water, temporarily at least. Swimming is more than good exercise and healthful. It is a kind of spiritual revival—and besides, it gets you clean!

Keeping in mind the array of propensities and resistances in children, you will find some means more effective than others in making a child feel at home in the water. If you know what procedures and techniques are best suited to children generally, and to each stage of their swimming development in particular, you will not only avoid getting them off to a false start, but you will enjoy the time spent in the water with them more. It is the object of this book to give in detail the procedures and techniques which will make your children take to the water with pleasure, grace, and ease.

The ten lessons described in this series present procedures and techniques for teaching children about five years of age. But with slight maneuvering and a little imagination, the same teaching methods apply to *any* person who can't swim, though the adult may want to skip London Bridge Is Falling Down! On the other hand, anyone who has the courage to start to learn to swim at forty is probably enthusiastic enough to play Ring-around-a-rosy in the water, just as the five-year-olds do.

It often happens that when the five-year-old learns to swim, the thirty-five-year-old mother or father decides she or he, too, would like to learn. The confidence that children gain from learning to swim is unbelievable, but for adults this confidence is immeasurable. In fact, it may be a little surprising in its effects. You may know full-grown adults who, having learned

to swim at age thirty-nine, decided to take up mountain climbing or spoke in grandiose terms about trying out for the Olympics. All because they never thought they could learn to swim, and found to their amazement that they did.

The lessons described in this book may be used as a supplement to your child's lessons at the Red Cross, YMCA, YWCA, or to any other public or private swimming lessons he may be having. Usually, children do not want to take more than two weeks of instruction during a summer; and usually parents either cannot afford more lessons, or feel that no more are necessary. After two weeks of lessons the child reports he can swim, and the parents are happy and relieved. He is free then to go to a public pool on his own; and does so, perhaps, two or three times a week. Young children are not given to practicing what they have learned unless urged, and you cannot expect someone at the local pool to urge a small boy or girl to improve his or her form; so, very often, children spend fifteen minutes finding their friends, fifteen minutes doing cannon balls (jumping from the side or off a board with knees doubled up under the chin, hitting the water with an explosion), fifteen minutes dodging the other 250 swimmers, fifteen minutes getting dressed, and an hour to get home. Goodness knows that this is all fine; it is fun and has unquestionable value. But just don't deceive yourself that the youngster is down there swimming all afternoon. You may be in for a shock when you take him on your two-week fishing trip and find he falls somewhat short of the polished performer you were expecting.

So where to start? From the beginning. Not from the point where he seems to have gotten to. Novice swimmers benefit tremendously from rehearsing what is slightly familiar to them.

This book is also designed to help parents who have occasion to be in the water with their children every day for about two weeks. If you are one of these, you probably assume

that it is appropriate to start off by saying to your child who has never been in the water before, "Now this is the way you swim," and to demonstrate by beginning with the arms and legs and with the proper mode of breathing—"free style." The truth is, this *is* the way you swim; but there are many, many preliminary steps necessary before coming up to this big step.

The following ten lessons in no way run contrary to the swimming methods currently used by swimming teachers. Have no fear that you will confuse your child. The lessons given here are in direct opposition, however, to the "sink-or-swim" method. It is rare that anyone who was forced to swim by being tossed into deep water enjoys the water. If you hear someone brag that this is the way he was taught, cast a critical eye on his swimming. He is usually a poor swimmer. Being tossed into deep water is one "sink-or-swim" method, but another method which makes for just as harmful results is the sudden release of a child in shallow water. He experiences the same discomforts. There is still another poor method of teaching youngsters to swim, and that is by playing a game with them, suddenly pushing their heads under, then concluding the game with a cheery "Did you see any fish down there?" This might work with some children, but by and large, it is ill-advised and ought to be shunned. In this series of lessons while games are employed as a gradual introduction to the water, they are not of a deceptive nature. The earlier games—as you will find out as you proceed—are rather preparatory to the later games, and each game is designed to develop a particular skill. If you have observed children playing games such as Wood Tag, or London Bridge, or Farmer in the Dell, you will have noticed that both a hesitant and a brash child are important to the game. Games teach children with differing temperaments important things. This principle applies as well to games used in learning to swim.

Why Teach More Than One Child?

These lessons assume that you will have three to five learners. It is best to limit your group to six as a maximum; five is fine, but four is even better. The difficulty in teaching just one child is that he becomes too self-conscious, and that the one-to-one ratio provides too concentrated a situation for a very young beginner; besides, who can go under the bridge (while playing London Bridge) when there are only the two of you? If you take on a group of four children, you are often faced with the problem of what to do when one child is a kind of "natural," and finds all of this easy and progresses rapidly, while the others are still refusing to get their faces in the water or their feet off the bottom. This child serves an important function to the rest of the group, because he shows that what you ask and demonstrate can be done by one of them. Once the rest of the group is afloat, one or more may not only catch up with the speedy one but may even outdo him when breathing techniques or the back stroke are introduced. Be glad for the speedy ones; work patiently with the slower ones.

The Importance of Planning a Lesson in Detail

Your chances of teaching your children to swim are much better if you plan carefully the steps to be taken. A casual attitude toward your children's initiation to the water can bring about troublesome consequences. A parent who expects to test his four-year-old's gifts in the water on a Saturday afternoon outing can do a great deal of harm. Thus, the book stresses how important it is for parents to understand that they must adhere to a step-by-step plan in teaching a child to swim. In order to keep you from overlooking an important skill—for

the next skill taught will depend on the preceding one—this book provides a summary at the end of each lesson. It is a good idea to remove these summaries from the book and attach them to a clip board. Your clip board should be within easy reach, so that you may have a quick reminder when in doubt. For example, the purpose of a cork float is to teach children how, from a face-down float, to get their feet back onto the bottom of the pool. It is necessary, therefore, that they learn the cork float before they learn the face-down float. Naturally, once you become familiar with the step-by-step method, you can elaborate and embroider the method to your heart's content.

At What Age Should Your Child Be Learning to Swim?

You, of course, are aware that even with a wonderful teacher who has worked out a perfect plan and Who has infinite patience, some people—especially little people of three or four years—do not feel easy in the water. Others hardly need a teacher; they plunge right in and are soon learning by imitating others. But for those who have an unexplainable fear, something can be done to overcome this fear. What this something is will become clear in the following pages. When these fearful ones begin to feel buoyant and confident, the transformation from misery to joy is a pleasure to behold.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that excessive cautiousness or fear in the child should be respected. Water is a mysterious medium at first. Try to remember back to when you were learning to swim—the feeling of floundering helplessness when you did not find the bottom at the moment you expected it and gulped water instead of air.

One parent may feel that his four-year-old is experiencing difficulties because he did not get him started earlier, before

the child became so conscious of his fears. Another parent may think that a four-year-old is too young and that the solution is just to wait until he "grows out" of these fears. How, then, do you determine when your child is ready to learn to swim? In one fairly typical group of four-year-old children just starting their lessons, here are the individual reactions which were observed:

One child walked into the pool and you could tell by the way his face lit up that he was going to enjoy the water. He walked confidently back and forth holding on to the railing, eager to find out what he should do first.

The second child approached the water in a manner similar to that of the first child, only the minute he tried to walk into water up to his waist, his expression changed and he looked as though he wished he hadn't come. He needed quick reassurance that walking in water is different from walking on land. He needed the teacher to take his hand for *more* than bodily support.

The third child immersed his foot and that was enough. It was wet! The pool looked too big, the teacher too new, his companions too brave. "It's cold," he yelled and retreated. The teacher would have been wasting her words yelling back, "The water's warm." Instead, she suggested that he sit on the side and watch.

The fourth child didn't even try the step. He hadn't wanted to take swimming lessons in the first place. It was his mother's idea.

Now, what happened to these children? The first child listened to, and imitated, the teacher. He got to the point in the first lesson where his whole face was immersed; although he had not wanted to do this, it was not difficult to persuade him. The teacher assured him he would soon be a fish, and he was proud of himself. The next day, putting his head under water seemed less difficult, and the third day he was

submerged almost all of the time. He followed the lesson plans, and at the end of ten lessons, he was swimming and diving in the deep end of the pool.

The second child finally put his head under the water at the end of the third lesson, and though he did learn to immerse his face without making terrible faces and wiping the water off as vigorously as if it were poison, at the end of his fourth lesson he had not yet learned to float, nor get more than one of his feet off the bottom of the pool. He was enthusiastic about coming for lessons and each day the teacher thought, Surely, he will get afloat today. He loved to play, laugh, splash, tease the teacher, jump from the deck into the shallow end, and would often glide a little without knowing that he was doing so. But during the first stages the matter of learning to swim took more perseverance than he could muster, and he found it something of a nuisance. He was having enough fun, he thought, without actually learning to swim.

The third child sat on the side of the pool watching what the others were doing and dangling his feet as far as his knees. He cringed at splashing, though he would occasionally walk back and forth in the water along the railing (at the teacher's invitation). He always faced the side, with his back to the expanse of water between him and the opposite side. The teacher would occasionally pry his hands loose from the railing and take him for a little ride in a glide position. He would let her pull him through the water, his head way back, his chin way up. No water on *his* face! And he never stopped pleading: "Don't take me out too deep, don't take me out too deep"; and she never convinced him that she would not, even though she stopped to let him feel the bottom with his own two feet, his head well above water level.

During the early lessons, the fourth child never even got *into* the pool. He would ease over to the pool, lie down on his

stomach, and feel the water with his fingers when he was sure no one was watching him.

In the process of describing the beginning problems of teaching small children to swim, you may have the impression that the majority of children do not like the water. This is not true. But the fact remains that some children are fearful, and they need to be given careful attention. This description just given of the four children is not meant to imply that these children will not learn to swim. It is even possible that the fourth child could become an Olympic champion. But *not* if he's pushed, forced, or rushed at the age of four. The point of the description is that not many children under four willingly learn to swim. Lucky you, if you have a group made up of children like the first one. Things will go swimmingly!

It is hard to predict what a child's abilities will be in the water, but the parent is faced there with some of the same problems with his child as he is on dry land, and he will see a relationship between the two, if he is perceptive of the child's feelings. If he clings to you, is shy with strangers and baby sitters, afraid of the dark, cautious about experimenting with new activities (such as trying out roller skates), or has any one of a number of fears small children have, he will not shed all of these at once and take a deep dive (or even a small jump) into a large body of water.

Probably such free-floating fears account to a larger extent for children's reluctance to take to swimming than any actual incident attached to water. But such incidents are not to be lost sight of, either. Perhaps the child is fearful because he was pushed, or fell, into deep water and had a real struggle—choked, gasped, and swallowed much water. If this ever happened to you, you know how real the terror can be. Do not underestimate it. Or it may be that *he* wasn't frightened when he was pulled out of the water, but that the excitement and

hysteria of the adults around him gave him reasons for his fear. Perhaps there were times in his bathinette when he got soap or water in his eyes, or a frightening experience may have occurred in his bathinette that neither of you remembers, which created a fear that may remain in his subconscious mind.

It is also interesting to note that a number of very aggressive children have a great fear of the water. Overly aggressive children are often very scared children, and parents are surprised to see their very tough little boy shying away from water.

It does not follow, however, that because your child has had a traumatic experience in water, or because he has certain personality problems, he will not be able to learn to swim. It means, simply, that you must take these factors into consideration *before* and *while* you are teaching him to swim. And oh, a word of warning. Do take these matters into consideration *silently*—without such remarks as: "I'm scared- to death of water myself," or "I almost drowned once," or "I never *could* learn to swim," or "I hate water on my face." These sound innocent enough, but such confessions of fear reinforce his own, and words like "drowned," "scared," etc., tend to discourage a new swimmer.

It is understandable that parents are eager that their children learn to swim because it's going to be a long hot summer, and swimming and summers just naturally go together. Besides, parents in this generation are eager to give their child every opportunity, and swimming is one of these—and it *wasn't* in their generation. But unless you are a pool owner, or are going to sea in a Chinese junk, or live next door to a large body of water, you really should not care too much if your four-year-old learns to swim in two weeks or in two summers. In short, it is important to recognize when children are *not* ready to learn to swim. Whether you are doing the teach-

ing or whether your child is being taught by someone else, do not be firmly determined that your child become a swimmer that *very* summer if he is only four years old. Or even five years old. If your child enjoys the lessons and is making some progress, even though he is not yet even afloat by the end of the summer, you should think of this kind of water play as a necessary foundation for the next summer when you hope he will get afloat. If your child does not enjoy learning even the very early simplest skills, you may hear yourself starting to get cross with him because he will not "co-operate." After you have given the lesson plan a fair try (three lessons would be considered fair), and you meet with continued undue resistance, it might be wisest to say, "Let's play in the plastic wading pool, turn on the sprinklers, fill the bathtub to the brim, and have some fun in the water this summer. Maybe next summer you'll want to learn to swim."

**Are You Qualified to Teach Others
to Swim—Even With the Help of
These Lessons?**

You do not have to be an expert swimmer and diver to be a good teacher. Conversely, some excellent swimmers make poor teachers. It is important, however, that you have a fair amount of energy and a maximum amount of patience. Often little girls will not listen to a thing their mothers say, but will do anything for their fathers. (The same is true of little boys and their mothers.) Some children will not respond very well to either parent, and especially as tempers get shorter and shorter, it is best to give up the idea of teaching them for a while and to help them enjoy the water. A friend, a neighbor, or a total stranger may have more success teaching your child to swim. Don't feel badly. It happens to many parents.

If you are a beginning swimmer yourself and feel that your

demonstrations would only demonstrate how difficult the skill is, you can still teach the lessons. It would be important, however, that you have a demonstrator (maybe that Little Leaguer), and if you don't tell anyone you can't do these things correctly, or that you do them very badly, the children will think your demonstrator a good show, and part of your system. Of course, you would not risk going into deep water with even one child if you yourself did not feel secure in deep water. It would be wiser for you to use a bamboo pole and instruct from the deck. This technique is described in Lesson VIII.

Even if you are teaching only one child, it is comforting to have someone within yelling distance—someone to bring a towel, to hand you the kick board from behind the door; and someone for the child to show off his newly learned skills to. Then, too, it is always reassuring to know that someone is there in case of an emergency. But if you are going to worry about the things that *could* happen, don't attempt to teach swimming.

Specific Pointers About Entering the Pool, Pool Temperature, and the Weather

If you know in advance that your child answers "No" to everything you ask him, don't ask him if he'd like to walk down the steps with you for a little dip. Just take his hand naturally and talk about how good the water feels. If he draws back, pick him up and walk with him slowly through the water, letting only his toes get wet. If he cries softly, talk soothingly to him. If he screams, take him out!

Children are likely to enjoy the water more if the temperature of the pool is between 80 and 84 degrees. If you are a swimmer, you of course prefer a lower temperature, but

remember that nonswimmers are not usually very active in the water, and they get chilled even on a warm day. Also, remember you are not going to be swimming while you are teaching, and you, too, will prefer warm water. If the pool temperature is warm and comfortable do not cancel a lesson because the outside temperature is not perfectly suitable for swimming. You will use your common sense, of course, but do not quickly let a cloudy or windy day spoil or postpone the lesson. The children will stay down under the water where it's warm, and they won't be as tempted to climb out for no particular reason, and you can have a good lesson in twenty-five minutes. No one will suffer from chills or overexposure in such a short time; on the contrary, you will all feel invigorated. It helps, by the way, to wear a cap to keep your head warm if the air is colder than the water temperature. But you'll probably never convince a little boy (even a very little boy) that wearing a cap is a good idea, so suggest it to the girls, and wear one yourself.

If a child has a cold, but the weather is excellent and the water temperature fine, you will just have to use your own judgment about whether thirty minutes in the swimming pool would be advisable. Given excellent weather conditions, the major disadvantage is that the child will experience some difficulty in breathing because of his stuffed nose.

Recommendations for Conducting the Lessons

Teaching from the side of the pool by giving directions is quite possible under certain conditions, but it should not be attempted with children five years of age (or younger). For one thing standing at the poolside, you might be tempted to use your foot; but pushing someone's head with your foot is strictly taboo. You need to be in the water with these young

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children all of the time, demonstrating and giving them moral and physical support. A child seven or eight years old who is *very* eager to learn would probably be able to understand your directions from the deck, but even he would benefit by your being in the water with him. Not until Lesson VII of this series does the child become independent of the teacher.

Do not attempt to teach a child to swim in water that is over his head until you reach the point in the lessons calling for deep-water exercises. Children are born with the fear of falling and of loss of support. If you are using your back-yard pool, let some of the water out (if your filter system will allow this) so that the shallow end is no more than waist-deep for the child.

Even if the shallow end of your pool is roped off, and you are assured of the children's safety, you should keep your group together; during most of each lesson, you will have them do the same things at the same time. When you are working with one child, either have the other children watch or have them practice their bobbing, kicking, or whatever is in order. This is the rule, but it is not without exception. With your third eye you may see one of the children experimenting only because he is "unwatched." It would be a mistake to draw attention to his activity or to insist that he do what the group is doing. Your time spent with a single child should be for a short period, and then you should go on to the next child; you cannot expect young children to practice by themselves. But whatever you are doing, the old rule still holds: "Do not turn your back on a child who can't swim."

Encourage the children at every opportunity and herald the smallest successes. The most wonderful thing about teaching beginning swimmers is the vast number of accomplishments often attained in a short time. These are glory days for the novice swimmer. When he becomes an intermediate swimmer, there is not so much to learn, and there is more

drill in perfecting strokes and not as many satisfactions; so it is not unnatural for children to lose interest in swimming at this stage. But in the beginning, they are progressing when they get water on their faces, and even more progress is made when they are able to put their faces down in the water; there is also a growing sense of satisfaction with each lesson as they improve themselves in the art of holding their breath. There is something in each lesson that the child learns which you can note as worthy and successful. Do not take even the smallest accomplishment for granted; do not hesitate to let each child know that he is doing magnificently.

The review at the beginning of each lesson will serve partly for warm-up, partly for practice, and largely to demonstrate what has already been learned. It is psychologically more astute to comment on the child's strength before you attempt to correct a weakness. For example: "Tommy, your kick is strong and steady, but you need to pull your arms one-at-a-time toward your stomach instead of together."

But it would be a mistake, then, to explain to four-year-old Tom *why*, according to the laws of physics, this is so. In general, limit the number and length of your little lectures, especially at the beginning of the lessons. You may be intimately familiar with bone and muscle structure or with advanced techniques of basic strokes and would enjoy having an audience. But with small children, the password is: "Use few words and make them meaningful." Children will imitate and do as you do, or do as your demonstrator does. You may find a dwindling of interest in your group if you begin to reason with them, and you'll lose their attention even faster if you start land drills—which you may have heard was a good idea. Of course you will verbalize principles occasionally, but they should be of the simplest nature, and the examples you use (such as "Blow yourselves up like a balloon") should be on the level of the children's understanding. As a

general rule, make the principle known to them *after* they have accomplished the skill. It is more meaningful to them then.

At the beginning of each lesson, it is important for you to make sure that each child gets wet all over immediately. If he is completely wet, he will not mind the splashes. Don't be too sympathetic with a child who complains of being splashed. "You wouldn't notice it at all if you were wet. Let's wash our arms and face and neck." Or simply, "It's just water."

If a child gets a big mouthful of water and looks a little panicky, you can usually count on a big smile if you say, "Are you trying to swallow the *whole* pool?" or "Are any of you as thirsty as Tom?" and gently chide him out of his misery. If a child gets a noseful, try this: "Well, *blow* it out. I know it doesn't feel good, but noses are to blow, not drink." By the way, children (adults, too) instinctively sniff *in* water which is on or around the nose. In Lesson I the child practices blowing air *out* of his nose.

For the child who complains of water in his ears, say, "If you don't like water in your ears, knock it out," and show him by leaning your head sideways and banging your palm against it. And there are those who do not like water in their eyes. "Well, squeeze it out," and demonstrate. Most of these complaints of discomfort and pain occur during the first two or three lessons. In many cases it is the child's way of trying to justify his reasons for not taking to the water like a duck. When a child who has previously resisted finally puts his head under for the first time, you might say: "That wasn't as bad as you thought. Now do it again while your face is still wet, and see what happens. Now you can learn to swim and that's when the fun begins!"

Even when progress is slow, and you can't for the life of you see why they are making such a hard thing out of some-

thing so simple, resist calling attention to Paul who does it so well, especially if it is Paul who always does it so well. Also avoid calling a child uncharming names like "Sissy" or "Fraidy-cat." And don't offer bribes for accomplishments. If the child can do a cork float alone without the support of the teacher, don't cheat him out of what he really wants, which is simply recognition and your enthusiastic approval; offering a beach ball after an accomplished performance could be disappointing and embarrassing to the child. Withholding the beach ball until some feat is mastered (or even attempted) confuses the issue. And for heaven's sake, don't start pleading, "Do it for *me*, just once, please? Come on, do it for *Mommy!*" Your motives are good. You think that if he does it once for you, or for any reason, he will find that he likes it, and that then your mission will be accomplished. The important thing to bear in mind is this: If he could, he would.

Children like to be called fish, or given the names of certain kinds of fish or water creatures familiar to them, such as ducks, seals, sharks, whales, even goldfish. Few small children know what a mermaid is, or an eel, so calling them one has little meaning. In this series of lessons the children are called ducks until they become afloat, then corks or floaters (in doing the floats and glides), steamboats (when they are using the whole stroke, i.e., arms and legs); back swimmers (when they are using the back kick and finning) and deep-water bugs (when they can swim across the width of the pool in deep water). What they are called does not make so much difference, but the idea that these names represent a graduation, from one step to the next, is comprehensible and satisfying to them.

Before children enter a pool it is a good idea to remind them to please deposit their gum. And it is also a good idea to have the children blow their noses before they get into the water. And it never fails for some that the minute they

are wet, up to their chins, they need to use the toilet. By the way, children would not think of urinating in a swimming pool; they are too recently well-schooled in the art of keeping dry.

Girls with great mops of flowing hair, pony tails, and braids should wear caps. Hair is a menace to the filter system, but more important, the idea of getting all that hair wet stands in the way of their wanting to put their heads under. Barrettes, bobby pins, and ribbons usually fall right out . . . so, make all hair ornaments taboo.

Preparations Away From the Pool

Before your child starts his swimming lessons there are some preliminary steps to take away from the pool that will speed the process along. First, have him hold his breath to the count of five, and then exhale. This may sound very elementary, but if he's never done this before, it may take some practice. You can practice this any time, even while going in the car to get the groceries. The other steps listed below are to be done in the bathtub, before soap, bubble bath, etc., have been added.

1. Have the child wash his own face—cheeks, ears, forehead, chin, nose, etc. With each new part to be washed, he should dip his hand into the tub for more water. (The idea is to get him used to water on his face.)
2. Have the child lie on his tummy in the tub, take a big breath, then blow bubbles in the water with his mouth only—like a motorboat.
3. Have the child blow his nose out of the water ("blow out") and then blow bubbles in the water with his nose only.
4. Combine these two skills now by taking a big breath, blow bubbles with nose *and* mouth.

5. Take a big breath, put face in water, hold breath to the count of five. (Water should come to the hairline.)

If you have only a shower, or if there are times when you want to practice but do not want to fill a tub, try the same things with a dishpan full of water on the kitchen table, or in the child's outdoor wading pool. However, it does not necessarily follow that the child who performs so beautifully in the kitchen or in the bathtub will perform in the same fashion in the pool. He may "freeze" and act as though he had never had a drop of water on his face, when only the night before you began to act alarmed because he kept his face immersed so long. Neither does it necessarily follow that a child who will not do these tricks in the bathtub will not learn to swim this summer.

Some Final Reminders Before Beginning

The summary at the end of each lesson is to be removed from the book and attached to a clip board for the convenience of the teacher. The lesson plan, plus a clock or timer, is standard equipment. A timer is more fun, actually, because when the bell rings, school is out. There will be great shouts of joy as the children soon become conditioned to the sound of the buzzer and learn to recognize that this means the end of instruction and the beginning of playtime.

Perhaps you have had an unsatisfactory lesson and felt that not much was accomplished. You may be tempted to use the five minutes of playtime to make up for lost time. Don't. On the other hand, if everything has gone unusually well you may hate to stop, and be tempted to continue the work on into the next lesson. Don't. Even if you have your own pool, and all the time in the world, you will all benefit more from doing only one lesson a day, with no more than twenty-five minutes of formal instruction.

Another thing to check on the summary sheet is what special aids are needed for the lesson. Any kind of bag or carrying case, large enough to carry a few good-sized rocks, will also be large enough for the rest of the aids which are smaller, like ping-pong balls, plastic toys and a piepan. Some of these are used during the lesson and some during playtime. It is important that the bag be handy, as it disrupts the lesson unduly to have to search for what you need. This can be called your Bag of Tricks, and there is an element of suspense as the children wonder what you will pull out each day; so this is fun.

Most beginners believe that if they do not kick their legs and pull their arms most vigorously, they will sink. Because of this it is important that your demonstrations of the floats be effortless, and that you be able to hold your breath for a good long time. Use slow motion for all demonstrations in the water. When you bob, take an exaggerated breath, go down slowly, blow air out slowly, and come up slowly. When you show them the kick, it is much more effective to barely break the water.

In teaching the new swimmer, you are almost sure to come across some of the following situations. When the child does put his head under water, he is likely to hold it high up and outstretched, rather than with his chin down on his chest. Or even though you remind him a number of times not to do so, he will swim with his eyes shut tight. Then, in learning the kick, some children will keep their knees well under their stomachs and will be bunched up, looking like small crabs instead of people. Also, they may kick and pull their arms so strenuously that it exhausts you to watch them. These things are all the earmarks of the beginner and you must be somewhat tolerant of them. Don't harp too much on these faults, because nothing but time and confidence will eliminate them, no matter what you say. It's much wiser to

comment *after* a child has overcome one of these awkward habits: "Do you remember when you used to hit the water as if you were mad at it? Now your stroke is so nice and smooth." Or, "It's lots more fun to *see* where you are going, don't you think so?"

Watch the newspapers to see what water events are scheduled. It is often helpful for a child to witness an aquatic show, a long-distance swim, or a good amateur swimming meet. Look for competitive swimming events that include young swimmers. This will often spur your child to greater heights in his own achievement.

What will be your feelings after you have completed the ten lessons? You may feel that you are the most accomplished teacher this side of the Rio Grande, and your own self-confidence may be sky-high. But if you should not feel that you are the greatest teacher, it may be because you have not taken a close look at what you have accomplished.

What you have accomplished certainly was stimulating. It stimulated everyone's appetite and everyone slept better.

It certainly was educational. You learned a lot about the children and they learned a lot about you—in addition to what you all learned about swimming.

It certainly was a body builder. "Look, have you noticed how Tom's chest has expanded? . . . Oh, do you think he's bursting with pride?"

It certainly has physiological benefits. "Swimming is the best exercise known to man. Don't you think I look a little thinner?"

It certainly was social. All of your little group are now "best friends."

It surely gave ego-satisfaction. You are being quoted at breakfast, lunch, and dinner because you taught them to swim. The children also have enjoyed the satisfaction of showing what they learned to do in water.

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It was the foundation of lifesaving—his own or others. Now that the child ca*n swim, he can save his own life; and when he gets older, he can learn to save another person's life.

And it certainly was recreational. Everyone had fun!

Could you find any other activity where so much could happen in such a short time?

Part Two

Ten Lesson Plans

LESSON I

Setting:

Pool or water with very shallow end
Teacher
Four children
Warm water (82 degrees, if possible)
Warm sun

Objective:

Adjustment to the water; to get the child's face under water.

Play follow the leader (teacher going first) down the steps, and walk across the width of the pool holding on to the gutter or railing with one hand. Turn at the end and return to the steps, holding to the side with the other hand. "Doesn't the water feel good?" "Walking in water is different than walking on the ground, isn't it?"

Repeat this process, only this time let one of the children be the leader, and the game is "No Hands on the Railing." Since this little procession resembles a train, suggest the

names of the cars on a freight train. Or suggest that the leader hold his hands on his hips, or over his head, and that the others follow suit.

Teacher and children all hold hands to form a circle and slowly walk around in a circle, then hop on one foot, then jump. The water in the shallow end of the pool should come somewhere between the children's waist and shoulders. It is important that the teacher place herself in the pool so that she can work part of the time at the children's height level. In that way, the children will be able to see the teacher's face and hear her more easily. Furthermore, the teacher is in a better position to help the children in the water as the lessons progress.

Here are the directions for five games. (They'll suggest other similar ones. But remember that the children haven't yet gotten their faces wet, so the appropriate game at this stage will call for head *out* of water.)

a) *Poison*. Form a circle, holding hands. In the center of the circle is a piepan or anything that floats. (A decoy duck is fun, if you have one.) The piepan is poison, so you must not let it touch you. It is fair to blow on it, or to pull another person toward it. But no fair using hands to fan the water, for it's against the rules to break the circle!

b) *London Bridge*. Two people form the bridge and the others walk underneath it, singing, "London Bridge is falling down, Falling down, falling down. London Bridge is falling down, My fair lady." On "lady" the bridge catches a victim, and it is then his turn to be half of the bridge.

c) *Small or Tall*. One child stands in the middle of the circle with his eyes shut tight. The others stand around him singing, "I'm very very small" (put hands on knees and bend knees so water is at the chin level), "I'm very very tall" (stretch high on tiptoe with arms way over the head), "Sometimes small" (down again), "Sometimes tall" (up high),

"Guess what we are now?" The teacher takes the lead here and either stretches up high or bends down low, and the children mimic her. The child in the middle, who still has his eyes shut tight, then guesses. If he guesses "tall" and is correct, everyone claps. If he guesses "small" and everyone is "tall," tell him to guess again, *then* everyone claps. Each child will want a chance to be in the center.

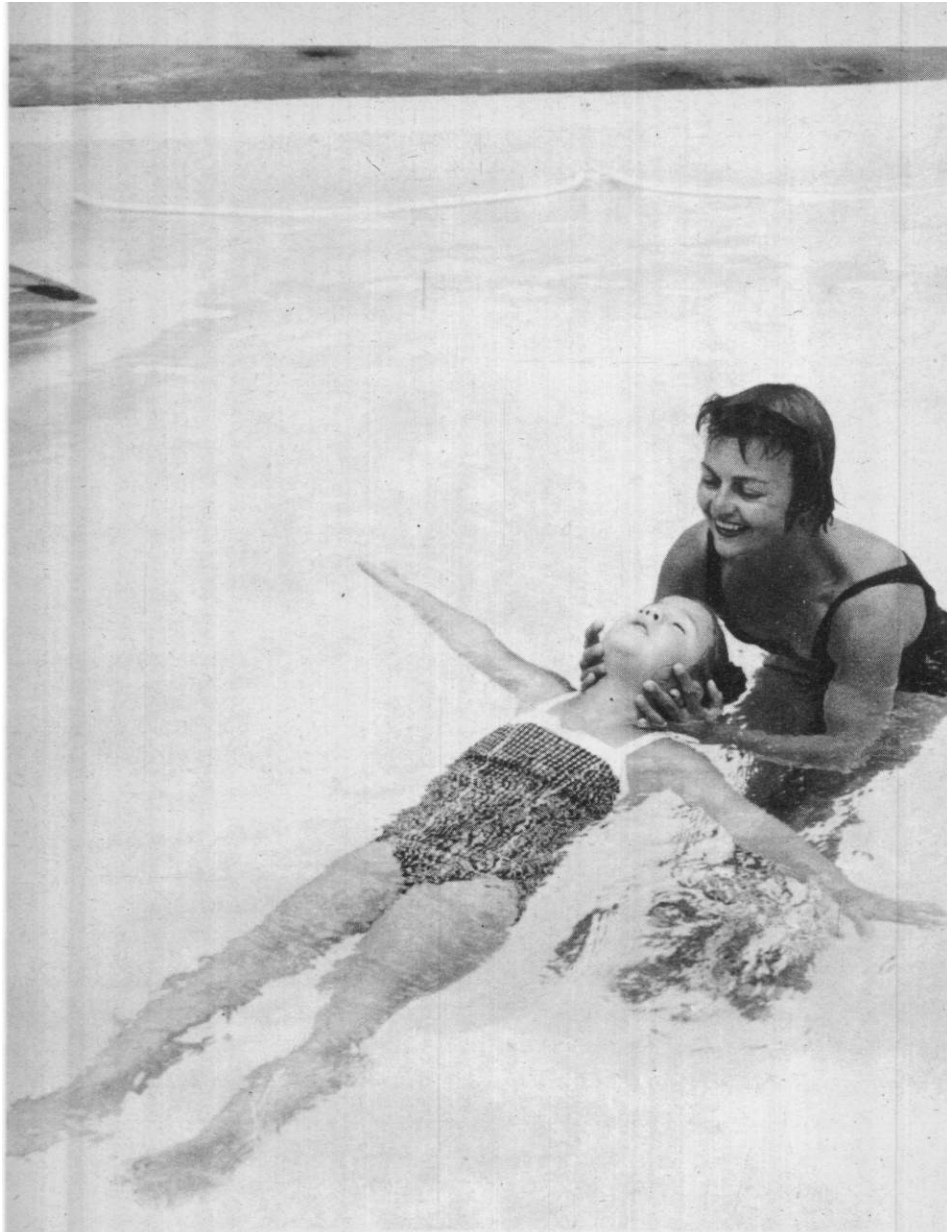
d) *The Farmer in the Dell*. Walk in a circle with hands joined, singing, "The farmer in the dell, The farmer in the dell, Heigh-ho the derry-o, The farmer in the dell." Choose a farmer to stand in the center of the circle, and repeat verse with "The farmer takes a wife," etc. Now there will be two children standing in the center. Naturally, if there are only five of you playing this game, you can no longer hold hands after the wife takes the child, and the child takes the nurse, and the nurse takes the dog.

e) *Pop Goes the Weasel*. "All around the shoemaker's bench, The monkey chased the weasel, The monkey stopped to pull up his sock [gesture], Pop goes the weasel." On the word "Pop" all jump up as high as possible.

Children enjoy playing these familiar games anywhere, but find new delight playing them in the water. In the excitement of the game, they forget themselves and begin to feel at ease. They are getting accustomed and adjusted to the water by bending and stretching, walking and jumping.

None of the games listed in the special section "Water Games" should be attempted here, as those are all for swimmers. But many games for nonswimmers can easily be invented. You might even suggest to the children that one of them think of a game. How about a water version of Drop the Handkerchief? They could drop the piepan!

After playing games of this kind, you will be ready to attempt front and back glides. These are to be done individually. The purpose of the glides is to give the child the



The Back Glide—Better to start a beginner by holding your hands over her ears.

TEN LESSON PLANS • I

feel of the water as he is being pulled through it. You will already know which child seems to enjoy the water the most, so choose him first. If the others see that he finds the glide enjoyable and comes back unharmed, they are more likely to follow suit.

Front Glide: Take the child by the wrists or elbows and slowly pull him through the water. Children will tend to do one of two things; either they will pull their knees under their stomachs or immediately start kicking. Tell the child that his legs are trying to come to the surface, and that he is *soooo* easy to pull when his legs are up high. Say simply, "No kicking, just easy and slow."

You may find that he is as stiff as a board. Tell him that you want to see how *long* his body is in the water, to stretch as far as he can. Sing to him: "Chug, chug, chug, I'm a little tug, I pull the big boats, Chug, chug, chug." If you don't like to sing, you can chant it. But children are not a bit critical of an adult's singing voice, so here's your chance.

What will the others be doing while you are giving rides? Give them a ping-pong ball out of your Bag of Tricks and have them sit on the steps of the pool blowing the ball back and forth to each other. No hands, just blowing.

Back Glide: Hold the child's head firmly in both your hands, covering his ears. Pull him through the water on his back. If he is relaxed, his feet will automatically come to the surface. You can tell him to hold his arms out at his sides, but since he instinctively will grab your wrists, you might as well tell him to hold on to your wrists if he wishes.

An apprehensive child will really turn to stone on this one, since most children feel more helpless and fearful on their backs. Your words and tone of voice should be very reassuring. If you hold him under his arms he will jut his head way up in a stiff and awkward position. (The normal back position is with the ears *in* the water.) As he relaxes, tell him to

look up at the sky and make an airplane out of his body by holding one arm out, then the other. Make certain you do not let his head go under. He is easy to get back on his feet. Simply pull him to an upright position, never releasing your hands from his ears until you are sure he is standing.

During the time you are giving these rides to each child, the chances are that the rest of the group are pretty suspicious, waiting to see if you are going to do anything in particular with them. You will find that while you are walking backward through the water, pulling one child, you can be conscious of the children on the step, watching them with your third eye, and still give instructions to the glider. From your glides you can proceed to face-wetting and the first breathing exercises.

Face Wetting: If you have the children form a circle, you will find it much easier to keep your group together, doing the same thing at the same time and learning from each other. If children have gone through kindergarten, when you say "Get in a circle" they automatically take hands. For preschool children you need to be more specific. "Paul, take Anne's hand, Anne take Barbara's," and so on until your circle is formed.

"Now, we have all just gotten out of bed from a long sleep and we're not quite awake yet, so let's stretch [demonstrate and they will mimic] and wash up for breakfast. First let's wash our cheeks, then our chins. Tom, have you washed your ears today? How about your eyebrows? Whoever heard of washing eyebrows? Shall we wash our hair? Here's some shampoo." Pretend to pour shampoo over each child's head (even with caps on it's fun) and scrub vigorously. Also pretend to pass the soap if you like, and wash all the sensitive parts of the face. Dip into the pool for more water with each new area to be washed. "Now are we wet all over?"

Holding Breath: Tell the children to watch you take a big breath and hold it while they count—out loud—to five. Exaggerate the inhaling and exhaling process by opening the mouth very wide, pursing the lips tight to hold the air in and letting out the air slowly after the count of five. Go around the circle having each child do it alone, and then the whole group all together. As each child performs alone, have the rest of the group chant in chorus "One-two-three-four-five. Blow it out!" When the whole group does it together, the teacher does the counting. Remind the children to hold hands; remind them, also, to keep themselves lowered with shoulders covered by the water.

Blow Bubbles with Mouth: Everyone should squat with chin at water level. Demonstrate how you can blow bubbles in the water with your mouth and sound like a motorboat. Now it's their turn, and some will need to be reminded to bubble the water, not just blow the air. Hold your hands together, fill them with water, and bubble the water in your hands. (This last is for the hesitant child or the one who doesn't have the courage to submerge his face just yet.)

Blow Bubbles with Nose: Demonstrate blowing air through nose with mouth closed. Tell the children to do it exactly as if they were blowing their nose. Have them all try blowing air through their nose a few times before you try it in the water. This is important because it is almost instinctive to sniff *in* any water that is around the nose. If they sniff in a noseful, it is not only frightening but painful. So they need to learn to consciously blow *out*. Teacher does it first, group follows.

What you *want* is for the children all to lean over, submerge nose, and blow bubbles with nose.

Count on several

who won't. If they were able to mouth-bubble water in their hands, perhaps they will blow bubbles through their nose in water in their hands. It's worth a try. Some will not do this

the first day. Do not despair. The first lesson continues in some aspects over the next two or three lessons.

Blow Bubbles at Same Time with Nose and Mouth: This would naturally follow. Take a big breath, make motorboat sounds, and stress making bubbles through nose. (Later, in the description of the bobbing exercise, the importance of breathing out through nose and mouth is explained.)

Face-Down: Hold breath to the count of five, again with head out of water. Then tell the children to count to five while you hold your face down under the water. The children will watch to see what happens to you. So when you do come up, emerge with a look which shows that this is the most pleasant and natural phenomenon in the world. When their faces are in the water, the children should be bending from the waist, their faces parallel to the bottom of the pool. (Later, in learning bobbing, they will submerge in a different way as the whole head goes down in a fashion similar to a jack-in-a-box.) Since this is the first time they put their whole face under, don't complicate it by telling them to keep their eyes open.

Now "Face-Down" is a big step. Don't be discouraged and don't let the children feel like failures if they couldn't do it, or if they could do it but didn't enjoy it one bit. Children have not been conditioned in any way in their young lives to having their heads under the water. They do not even enjoy washing their faces with the small amount of water a washcloth will hold.

They may react to "Face-Down" in a number of ways. Some may wipe off the water as if it were poison. Some may look at you as if you were the greatest deceiver of all time. You said swimming was going to be fun, and if this is fun, I'll have no part of it. Some may look as if they'd like to try to do what you did, but simply can't bring themselves to this heroic act. Some may get water in their nose or mouth, and

you may have a crying child to cope with. Do not be too sympathetic with excuses or complaints. Tell the crying child lots of really good swimmers often get mouthfuls of water, but they just spit it out like this—and demonstrate by getting a mouthful of water and spitting it out. If you look ridiculous enough, he may stop crying. Tell the child who-just-can't that you know it's not as simple as you make it look, but just to keep on trying. Tell the child who is still wiping the water off his face that every time he puts his face down it will be easier for him. It is at this point that your group would like to break up. Insist they keep holding hands, and proceed.

Eyes Open: You can bet your bottom dollar all eyes were shut tight on that last trick. Your instruction now is "Big breath, hold it, face down, eyes open." Tell the children that the water may sting a little the first time they open their eyes under water. (The reason for this is that all water contains irritants and eyes are supersensitive. Chlorine is not usually the cause of the irritation. Chlorine keeps the water clean and keeps them healthy. After having killed the bacteria during the night, chlorine is dispersed as gas when the sun hits the water.) "Well, you don't have to open them *sooooo* wide; just take a peek. Just a squint. Now let's all take a big breath and look in each other's eyes to see what color they are."

It is important that children learn to enjoy swimming with their eyes open. It is for their own safety as well as for the safety of others that they see where they are going. If they will open their eyes, they will eliminate or relieve some fear of the water. However, do not make an issue of this in the first lesson.



Just coming up from a successful game of Ring-around-a-rosy.

Face-Down Games:

a) *Ring-around-a-rosy, Pocket full of posy, Ashes, ashes, All fall down.* On the "All fall down," everyone is to go clear under. Don't be surprised if you come up to find four dry faces staring down at you.

b) *What Color Suit?* Suggest that Barbara go under the water and see what color suit Anne is wearing. (Big breath, face down, eyes open, up, blow out air.)

c) *What Color Eyes?* Suggest Kathy go down and see what color Paul's eyes are.

d) *How Many Fingers?* Teacher holds her fist clenched under the water, and as soon as the child's face is down she extends one, two, three, four or five fingers. Child counts fingers, makes a report on his return to the surface.

Play only one of these games the first lesson, and save the others for other lessons.

Playtime: It's playtime. Tell the children the pool is theirs. If you swim, take a swim to enjoy yourself, and to show the children that you enjoy swimming. This is assuming that there is another adult in attendance to keep an eye on the nonswimmers. Stay away from the children, because you will not be able to resist teaching them some more. Getting *out* of the water may be what some want. If any of them do, let them—the lesson is over.

For playtime, any inexpensive slide is a marvelous device for fun and for helping children forget themselves. It is possible for the child to hold the sides and ease down into the water, or go kersplash. Unless the child asks you *not* to catch him, stand ready to catch.

Unless the child asks you not to catch, be ready to catch.



SUMMARY OF LESSON I

Take to the water:

Instruction sheet

Clock or timer

Piepan or anything that floats

1. Walk the width of the pool and back again, holding on to the railing or curb with one hand.
2. Walk the width of the pool and back again, *without* holding* on to the railing.
3. Join hands to form a circle and walk, hop, and jump around the circle.
4. Play a game: Poison, London Bridge, Small or Tall, Fanner in the Dell, Pop Goes the Weasel. All of these games allow the head to remain out of the water.
5. Front Glide: Take each child individually. Hold his hands, pull him through the water with his head out and his legs to the surface, but not kicking.
6. Back Glide: Hold the child's head firmly in both your hands covering his ears. Pull him through the water.
The width of the pool and back again is sufficient for both front and back glide.
7. Face Wetting: Dip both hands into the water and "wash" cheeks, forehead, neck, chin, hair, ears, all parts of the face. With each new area to "wash," dip into the pool for more water.
8. Hold breath to the count of five out of the water.
9. Blow bubbles with mouth.
10. Blow bubbles with nose.

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11. Blow bubbles with nose and mouth at the same time.
12. Face-Down: Teacher demonstrates first (taking a big breath, hold breath, face down to the count of five, then lift face). Each child individually, then the whole group together.
13. Face-Down, Eyes Open. Play count-the-fingers game with those who will put their faces in the water.
14. Play a face-in-the-water game: Ring-around-a-rosey, What Color Suit? What Color Eyes? Or play one of the games listed in Number 4 if the group has not progressed this far.
15. Playtime.

NOTE: Numbers 8-14 are to be performed in a circle.

LESSON II

Objective:

To teach children how to float.

Review from Lesson I:

1. Walk along shallow end of pool without holding on to the railing.
2. Walk in a circle holding hands. This is to get those rail clingers away from the railing, and to venture out slightly farther in the water.
3. Drop hands and walk in a circle. Jump, hop, or skip in a circle.
4. "Wash" shoulders, neck, ears, cheeks until everyone is wet all over.
5. Join hands again and jump together in a circle. If you like to sing, make up a tune to this jumping song. "I'm jumping, I'm jumping, I'm jumping up and down. I'm jumping, I'm jumping, and then I fall down." On "I fall down" take a big breath and sit on the bottom of the pool.
6. With head above the water, take a big breath and hold it to the count of five.' Blow out air.
7. Take a big breath and submerge face down in the water. The whole group counts loudly for the person who has his face down. This is a good time to remark, "Do you remember yesterday that you could hold your face down to the count of three and now you can do it to seven?"
8. Bubble with mouth only, then nose only, and then nose and mouth together.

9. Pull each child on a front and back glide. While you are doing this, tell your group to have a bubbling contest on the steps or at the edge. Or another good way to occupy them is to sink a rock on the bottom step and have each child reach for it. This is so simple they can do it without putting their faces in the water. *Then* sink the rock on the bottom of the pool right next to the step. This is harder. Some can still reach it without putting their heads in the water, but tell them that they should take a big breath, enter the water face down, open their eyes and bring up the rock. Any sinkable object is good—except those which can be picked up with the toes. *Your* objective is to have them get used to getting their heads under the water. *Their* objective is to get the rock by means available to them.
10. Play a game. If they are putting their faces in the water by this time, play a face-down game. If they aren't, play one of the other games with face out of the water. Both types are described in Lesson I.

Introduce:

Various Forms of Floating: The monstrous adult swimmers you see everywhere today who are thrashing, splashing, bobbing their heads out of water from side to side, never took the principles of floating seriously. The easy, graceful, relaxed swimmer knows that his body will keep on the surface of the water with a minimum of arm and leg movement. There should be no tremendous hurry to swim anyway, so don't hurry the stage of learning how to float. After all, swimming is nothing more than kicking the legs and pulling the arms through the water at the same time. Do not try to teach a child to swim until he has learned to float.



A Cork Float with the aid of the railing and teacher.

Cork Float: Bring out of your Bag of Tricks two or three corks and let them bob around on the top of the water. Corks have air in them just like the children, and this is not so technical that a child will not understand the comparison. Tell the children that up to now they have been ducks, but as soon as they can float like a cork and do a face-down float, they will graduate to "corks" or "floaters." Let them vote which of these they would rather be called. The cork float is also known as the jellyfish float; some may like to be called that.

"Now watch my back and see if I can look like that cork." Take a deep breath, face down, knees to chest, wrap both arms around your knees, bob for five seconds, and stand. While both arms are wrapped around your knees you are as much the shape of a ball as you will ever be, and you *do* resemble a bobbing cork.

The whole purpose of the cork float is to teach children how to get back on their feet once they are afloat. This is very important, as once a child has his face submerged and his feet on the surface of the water, he can flounder and kick and still not be able to stand. Pulling the knees up to the chest *at the same time* makes easy work of getting the feet back on the bottom of the pool.

The first time they try the cork float, have them line up at the railing of the shallow end with one hand on the railing, all facing the same direction. They are to take a big breath, put their face down, wrap the other arm around both knees (while you hold them under the armpit), let go of the knees and stand. (By careful observation you may notice that one foot is planted firmly on the bottom of the pool, and they are clutching only one knee.) You have one arm free, so use it under their knees to tip and bob them a little so they get the feeling of floating, like a cork. You can say, "You know when you take a big breath and hold it, you are blowing yourself up just like



A Cork Float without Teacher.



A Cork Float with Teacher away from the railing.

a balloon, and the air in your body keeps you afloat. There is no air in the water, just in you."

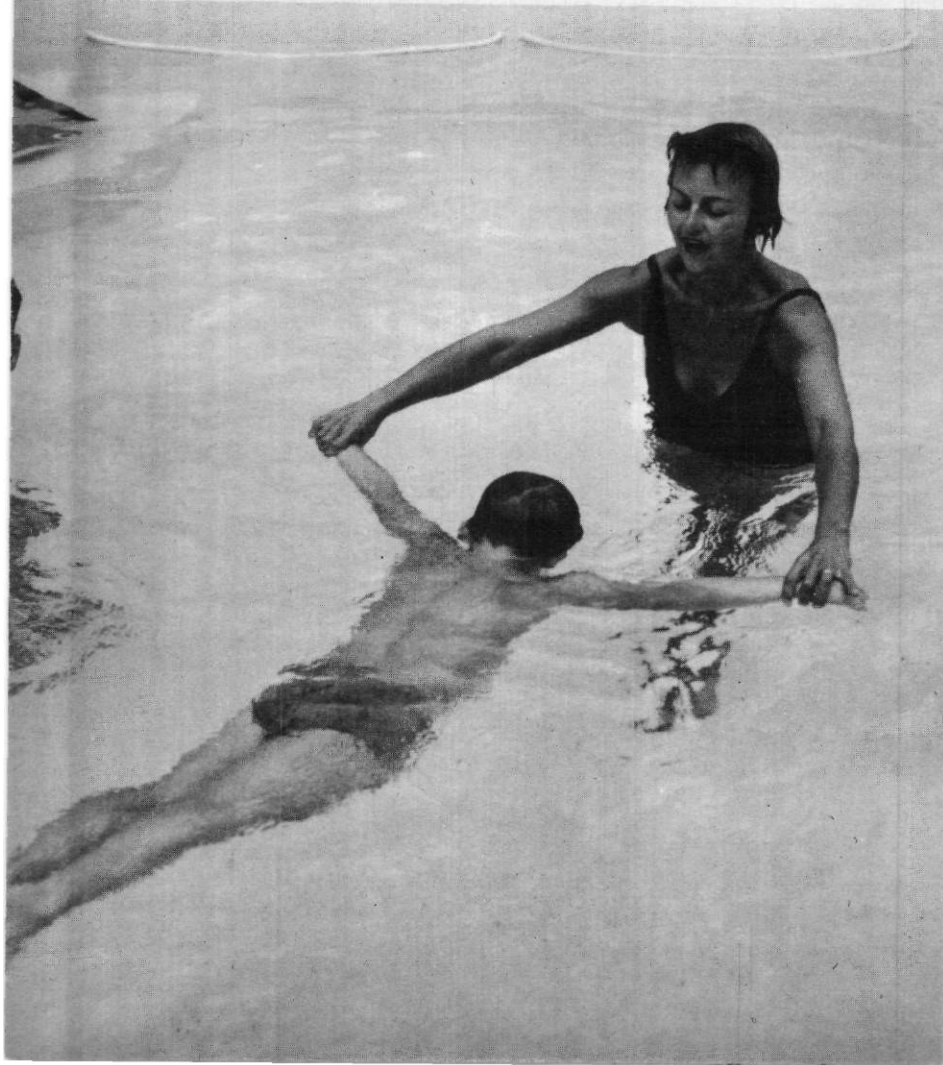
As you help each child individually, tell the others to try it without your help, with just the aid of the railing. Then take each child away from the railing and giving support under one arm, have them use both their arms to hold their knees to their chest. If they stand up so fast that they really never have a chance to float, tell them you will count to five—the same as when they held their breath under water in the circle—and when you say "five" they are to put their feet down.

Ask your group if anyone is ready to try it alone now without the railing, without the teacher. "No? Well, maybe tomorrow."

Play a new game called "Beware the Dogfish." The teacher swims out about fifteen feet from the shallow end of the pool. The children hold hands and walk out to the roped-off area, or if you are not using a rope, to where the water level is at their shoulders. The rules are: When the teacher yells "Beware the dogfish" they are to get back to the shallow end before she can grab their feet, and no fair climbing out of the pool. The teacher then surface-dives and swims along the bottom of the pool, grabbing ankles. This game delights them and it is fun for the teacher, too. Sometimes she manages to catch one before he gets back to safe base, but most of the time the children win. When they become swimmers, it will be even more fun, because then they can take turns being the dogfish.

Face-down Float: Also known as prone float, airplane float, or dead man's float. For children, airplane float or face-down float is easily understood. Demonstrate by taking a deep breath. Bending forward, put face down in the water, let your legs go to the surface behind you, stay in this position five seconds, and then bring your knees to your chest, and stand. Take each child, one at a time, hold his hands and call out

A Face-down Float with help.



the instructions: "Deep breath, face down, legs up." After he has floated for three to five seconds and is ready to come up, say, "Knees to chest, stand." Make no effort at this stage to have the child float alone. As soon as each has had a turn, have all the children line up at the railing for another variety of float.

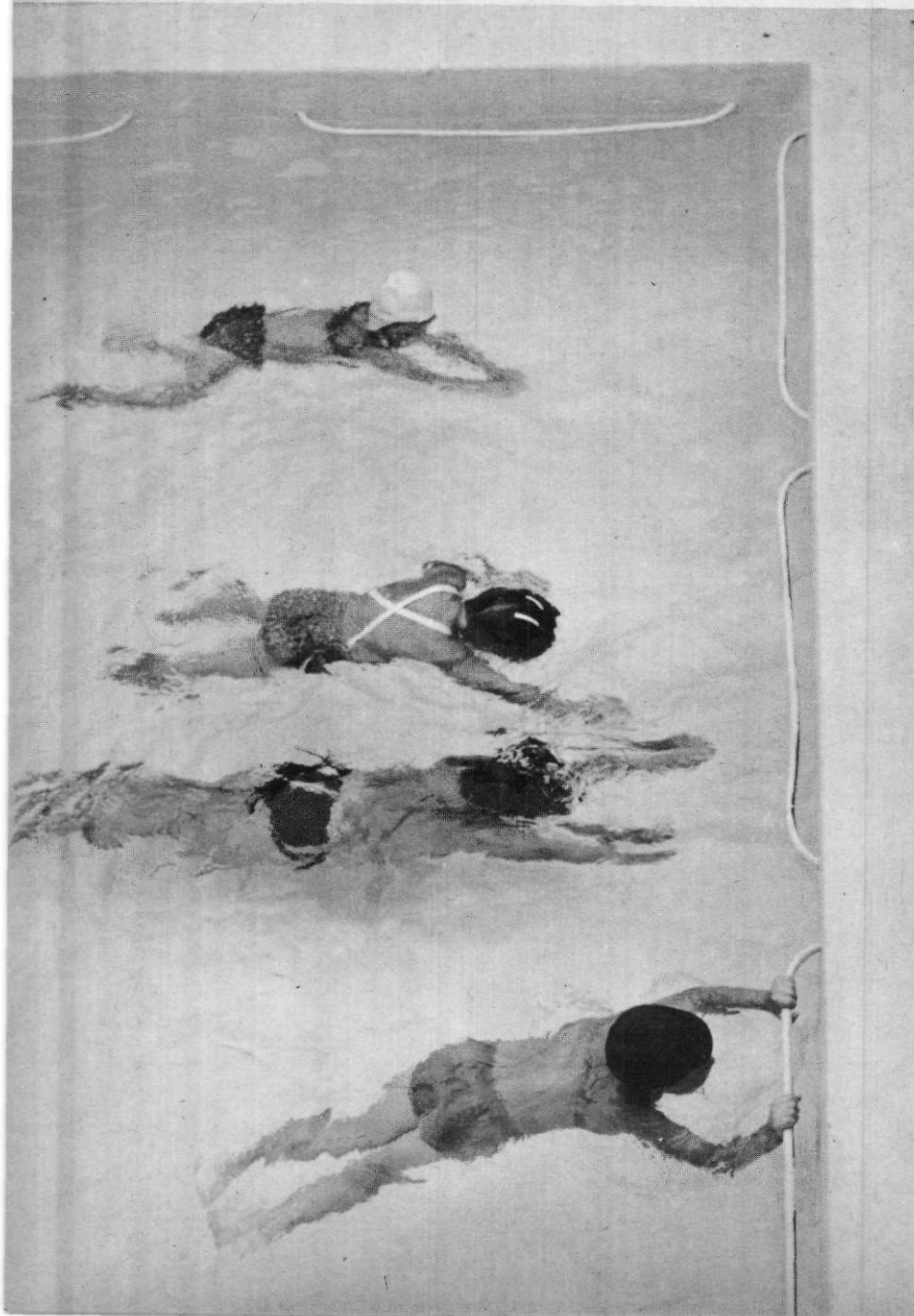
Release-from-railing Float: Demonstrate by holding on to the railing with both hands. Then extend legs so you—the demonstrator—are prone on the surface and holding the side. Take a big breath, face down, let loose of the railing, float five seconds, knees to chest, and stand. When the children attempt this, they may be reluctant to let loose of the railing once the face is submerged. They will release one hand but not both. They will pull their knees up very nicely, and stand without having ever let go of the railing. It will help if you stand to one side of the child and hold him gently under the armpits as he goes through this routine. As soon as his face is down call out, "Let go of railing, one, two, three, four, five, knees to chest, and stand."

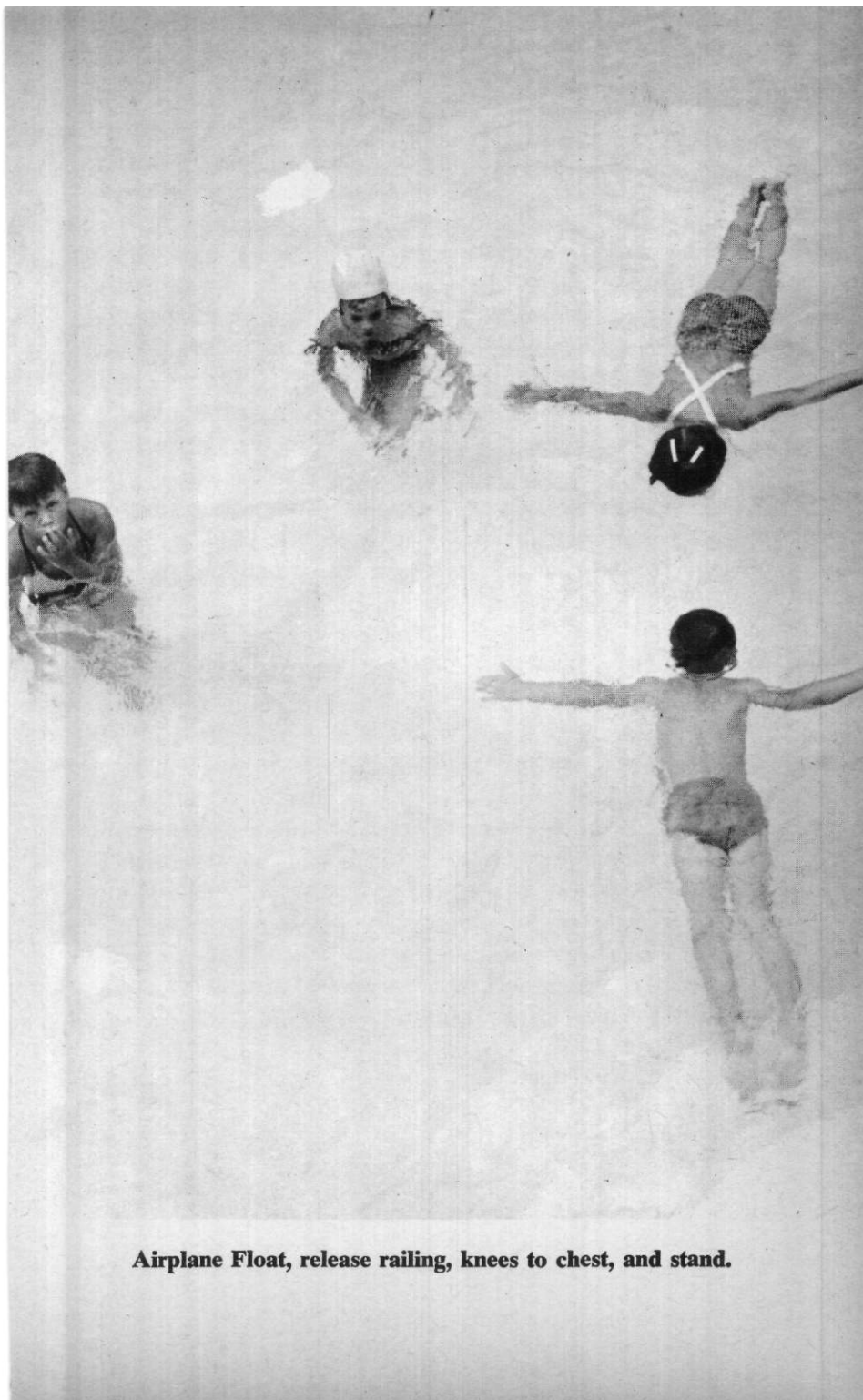
Another way: Have them do an airplane float by holding one hand on the railing, the other hand extended out in the water. Same call: "Arm out, big breath, face down, legs to the surface, let go of railing, knees to the chest, stand."

Still another (if your pool has steps): Have the group line up by the steps with their hands on the second step, their face down near the next step. Tell them to push off backwards a little (or at least let their hands leave the step), knees to chest, and stand. Instead of walking back to the step to try it again, tell them to take a big breath, face down, and reach for the step. It is important always to repeat "take a big breath" as it is not automatic behavior for them yet.

You will discover the following: They will put their faces down, but pull them out of the water *before* they are afloat. They will keep their faces down, but won't let go of the rail-

Beginning stages of a face-down float—trusting themselves to release the railing.





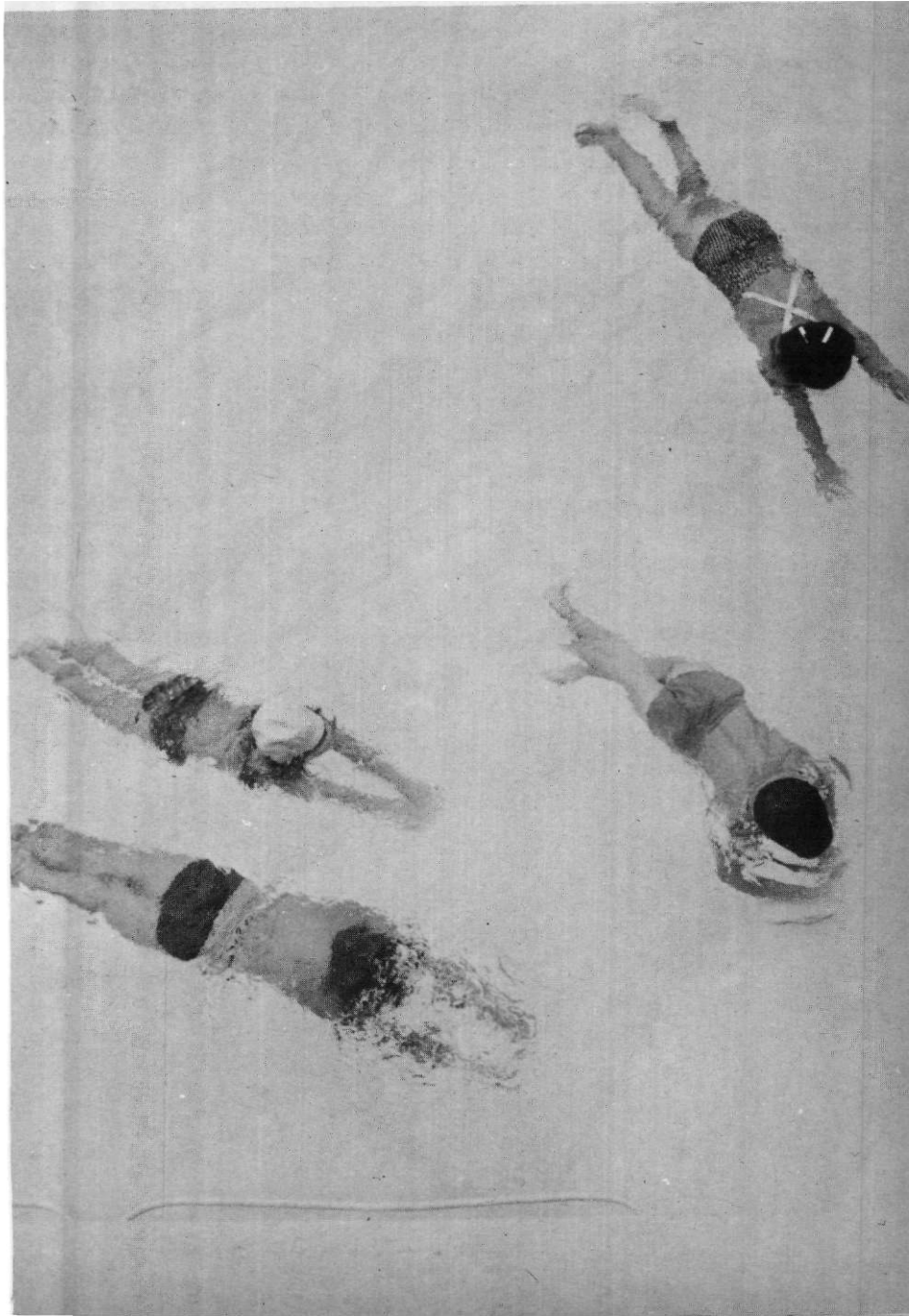
Airplane Float, release railing, knees to chest, and stand.

ing or the steps with both hands. They will put their faces down and let their legs come up to the surface, but not at the same time. They will pull their faces out of the water before they bring their knees up to their chest. Never mind any of this. Just keep working them gently with such suggestions as "I notice you like to work on the step, Tom," and to Anne, "If you can float holding on with one hand today, perhaps tomorrow 'no hands,' do you think?" Because, after all, holding on with one hand is better than using two.

The children will come afloat by one of the rail methods or on the step sooner than by standing out in the water where there is no nearby means of support. Trying each of these variations is important because it makes the idea of floating not so tedious or discouraging. So work on one method, then try another, then another, back to the first one, and so on. You will find that some are floating a half a second or two without knowing that they are doing so. And you may find that to everyone's surprise, one or two children are afloat and they *know* they have accomplished what is expected of them. But it is a tough lesson. With some, you may stay on this lesson for days.

Playtime: From your Bag of Tricks produce a soft, round rubber ball about eight inches in diameter. Call the name of the child for whom it is intended and throw it, and have him throw it back to you. The fun of the game is in throwing it way over the teacher's head so that she has to swim out to get it. As soon as you have done a couple of rounds with each child, turn the ball over to them to play with it as they choose.

Push off backwards from step, float, knees to chest, and stand.



SUMMARY OF LESSON II

Take to the water:

Clock or timer
Rock or sinkable object
Two or three corks
Rubber ball

Review from Lesson I:

1. Walk width of pool, without holding on to the railing.
2. Walk in a circle, holding hands.
3. Drop hands, and walk, jump, hop or skip in a circle.
4. "Wash" face.
5. Sing jumping song in a circle, holding hands.
6. Take big breath, hold it to the count of five, let out air.
7. Take big breath, hold it to the count of five while face is submerged, bring face out of water, blow out air.
8. Bubble with mouth only, nose only, then nose and mouth together.
9. Pull each child on a front glide, then a back glide. Other children reach for rock.
10. Play a game. See Lesson I for selection of games.

Introduce Floats:

1. Demonstrate cork float, after children have seen real corks float.
2. Have children do a cork float with one hand on the railing, while you support them under the armpit.

3. Have children do a cork float *away* from the railing, using both arms to hold knees under their chest, while you support them by holding them under the armpits.
4. Play Beware the Dogfish.
5. Demonstrate a face-down float. Big breath, arms extended, face in water, legs to the surface, float five seconds, bring knees to chest, and stand.
6. Take each child individually: Facing the child, you hold his hands and have him do a face-down float. You call the signals.
7. Demonstrate a float, holding on to the railing with both hands; then, releasing the railing, float a few seconds, then stand by pulling knees to the chest, feet straight down. Children's turn.
8. Demonstrate an airplane float holding on to the railing or gutter with one hand, the other arm extended toward the length of the pool. Encourage release of the railing while child has face down and legs extended.
9. (If you have steps.) Float away from the steps. Reach for the steps. Again, demonstrator first, children follow.

Playtime: Use rubber ball for games.

LESSON III

Objective:

To teach children how to breathe.
To teach children the back float.

Review:

1. If one of the children in your group gets in the water and plunges his face right in, remark, "Well, that's a good way to get wet all over. Shall we all do it? Big breath, face down." Some will, some won't. The "won'ts" will get wet in the way familiar to them by now.
2. Big breath and hold it. Blow out the air. If the count of air held is to ten or fifteen, remark on how tremendous an achievement this is.
3. Big breath and hold face under water. "If we can hold our breath out of water to the count of ten, don't you think we can hold our breath *under* water to the count of ten?" Children all submerge faces at the same time and the teacher counts loudly.

CHILD: Last night in the bathtub I held my breath to a hundred.

TEACHER : With your head *in* the water?

CHILD: Uh uh! With my head *out* of the water.

TEACHER: If you can hold it to a hundred with your head out, how about holding it to only ten with your face down?

CHILD: Because I don't like water on my face.

TEACHER: You're not used to having so much water on your face. When you get used to it, you won't mind it any longer. The only way to get used to it is to keep doing it. Let's go. Big breath everybody. Face down; one, two, three, four. . . . Well, four is more than three, and you did three yesterday.

CHILD: I'll do a hundred tomorrow, but I'm not used to it any more today.

4. Blow bubbles with mouth, then nose, then mouth and nose together with the face down, eyes looking at the bottom of the pool. Some will bubble fine with their mouth, but will be hesitant about doing this with the nose, and will refuse outright to put the whole face down clear to the hairline. Tell them that if their face is *straight down* they reduce the chances of getting water up their noses.
5. "Now let's all take a big breath and go down and see what color eyes we all have." Technically speaking, you can't really see the color of eyes very well under water. But the point is, it's fun to get under water and press your nose against the child's nose and open your eyes right next to his eyes, and make faces. For those who are wide-eyed, fine, tell them you sure saw their pretty blue eyes, for those who popped up so fast you didn't get a chance to see their faces, do it with them individually; for those whose eyes are shut tight, tell them to take just a peek to see what color your eyes are. If you do this while holding hands in a circle, often their feet will come to the surface, and as they have the support of a child on either side of them, they will be floating a little, with help. Later, in Lesson V, they will enjoy doing a flower float.
6. "Who can do a cork float?" For any who can, goody; for those who can't, offer your assistance at the railing by hold-



Success—emphasis, now, is on the length of time the child can stay afloat.

ing them under one arm. (The steps to be taken in achieving a cork float are described in the previous lesson.)

7. "Who can do a face-down float?" If the child can do a cork float he can probably do a face-down float. Have one child work on the airplane float, holding on to the railing with one hand; have one child work on the steps (pushing off and then reaching for that step), and have one child work on the railing, at first holding on with both hands, then releasing them. All of these floats are described in the previous lesson. The child who can float without support of railing or steps should practice both floats away from the edge of the pool a foot or two, and the emphasis should be on the length of time he can stay afloat. Remind them all of the proper way to get on their feet. The child doing the airplane float needs some room for his feet, so make certain he does not push them in someone's face.
8. Take the child who did the face-down float for a motorboat ride. This is the same as a front glide described in Lesson I, but this time he blows bubbles with his mouth and nose. As you pull him through the water say, "Take a breath; blow. Take a breath; blow," and then shorten this to a rhythmic, "Breathe, blow, breathe, blow." Make sure the child's legs are near the surface of the water, but instruct him *not* to kick. Remember to pull him slowly and to call your signals slowly. After his ride tell him to work on his cork float and face-down floats and that when you get back from taking the others for motorboat rides, you will want him to report to you on how long he can stay afloat.

It is a better idea to give each child a front glide and then start over with the first child on the back glides, because children get restless; you cannot expect children five years old to practice a skill by themselves for more than two or three minutes. Discourage any horseplay, however,

and never allow another child to duck or push one of his playmates. Give the offender to understand that you will not tolerate this one minute. Pushing and ducking is a rare problem, however, because children this young do not enjoy having this happen to them, and they ordinarily have not been around water enough to see older children indulging in this "fun." It would be foolish at the beginning of the lessons to say *not* to do something that would never occur to them anyway, so just be prepared to put on your biggest frown and your most forbidding voice if it does happen.

Your problem is to keep them busy and interested and to bring out their desire to learn some things they do not know about, and some other things they do not think important at all or necessary. The trick is to make the process of learning these necessary skills very great fun. At the same time, as I have remarked, you should not let the splashers and experimenters take over. If you mean what you say—that is, if you are really enthusiastic about an accomplishment and tickled by what is funny, you can also be firm effectively. Back to the lesson. You are now ready to do something new, called bobbing.

Introduce:

Bobbing: Gather the children in a circle and tell them that instead of putting their face down to bubble like this (and demonstrate what is familiar to them), this time they are going to put their whole head under, like this: Take a big breath and blow air out of the mouth and out of the nose, just like a face-down bubble, only this time do not bend over, go straight down with your head erect and your whole head under water. Come up, get a breath (continue to exaggerate this) and bob up and down three or four times before you ask your group to imitate you.

Before they are given a chance to try, ask them if they noticed that when you came up *out* of the water you were still blowing out air. "You blow all the way down and all the way up." Again, exaggerate blowing out the air as you come out of the water. Don't hesitate to tell them how important this is, and that if *they* do this they will not get any water in their noses or in their mouths.

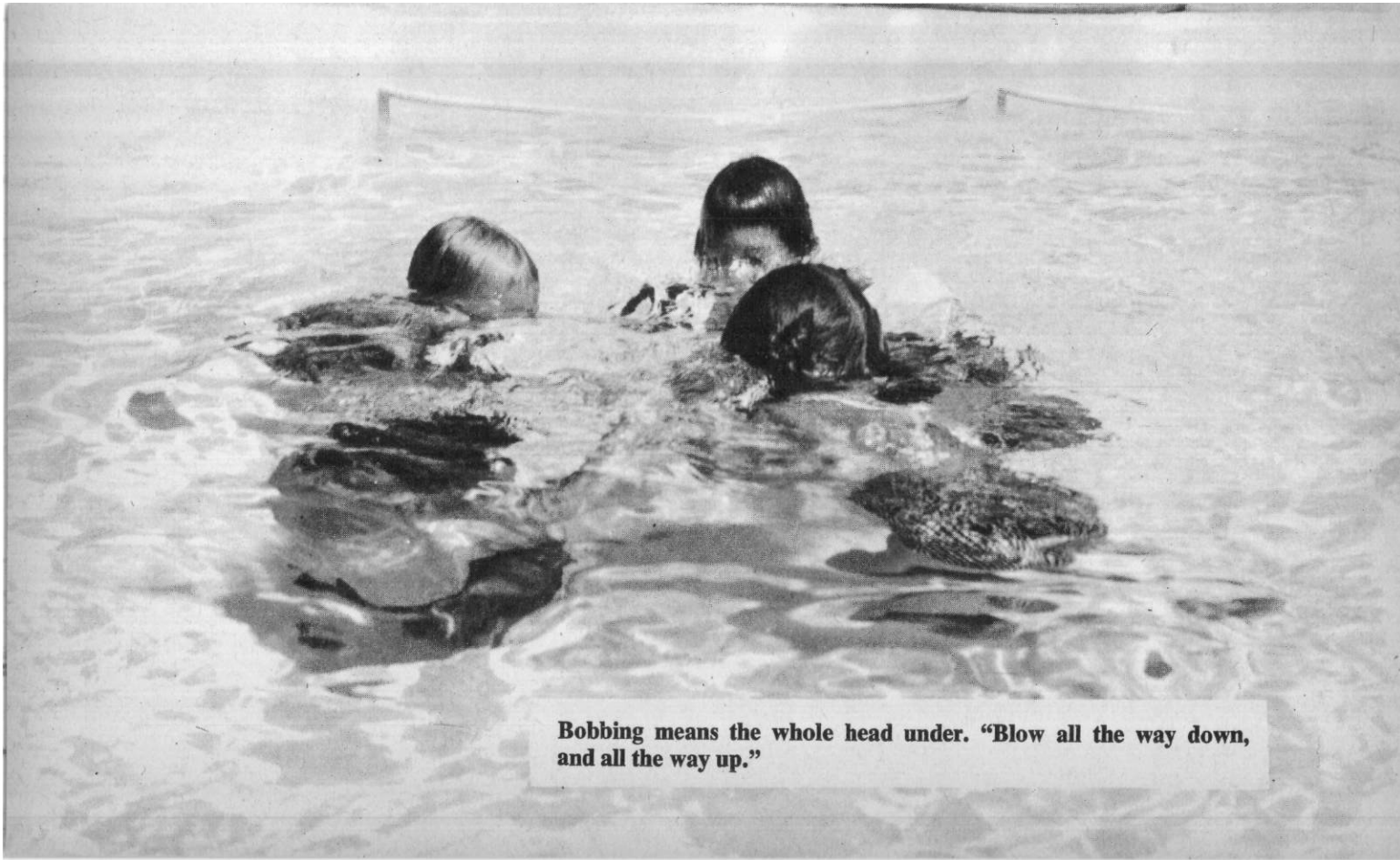
When they practice, remind them *not* to hold their breath, but to blow the air out under the water, and say that if they do it properly you will see some bubbles as proof. Remind them that they must bubble out of their mouths too, not just out of their noses, because they cannot possibly exhale through the nose all the air they took in through their mouths.

Bobbing is the very best way to teach children rhythmic breathing. Have the children bob slowly. The rhythm is determined by your counting or your demonstrating.

Tea Party (a bobbing game): "I'm having a tea party under water and I am inviting all of you to my party. Take a big breath, come on down, I'm going to pass the napkins first." This is the first bob. With each successive bob, quickly announce what you are serving. Such as: "Here are the cups," everybody down; "Oh, we have cake too," everybody down again. This can go on for seven or eight bobs, depending on how elaborate the party is.

Play a new game (see Lesson I) or ask them if they would like to play Dogfish again. They usually do.

Back Float: Now they have all had back glides since the first lesson. You have been pulling them through the water on their backs, holding their heads between your hands, and you know that some almost turn to stone and that their grip on your wrists is unmerciful. This reaction is not limited to children. If you are teaching an adult, the results are often the same, and perhaps worse. Because they are so frightened



**Bobbing means the whole head under. "Blow all the way down,
and all the way up."**

and feel so helpless, there is all the more reason to teach them quickly the proper way to get their feet back on the bottom of the pool.

What follows describes the method for regaining an up-right position *from* the back float; then, you start the back float. This method is difficult to *explain* in writing, and it is difficult to *explain* to the child; that is why the teacher needs to be in the water all of the time. To *show* them, say, "It's just like pulling up a chair at the breakfast table. Let's all get in a circle and try it even though we are standing." Squat with your shoulders covered, extend your arms behind you and pull them hard through the water at your sides, your hands cupped. "You see if you fall a little and start to sink backwards, if you pull your chair under you, you are up again. Do not pull your arms above the surface of the water." Walk backwards hind each child in the circle and help him pull his arms through the water.

"Now I'm going to try the back float." (You lie back easily.) "Are my shoulders covered? Is my head back? Are my ears in the water? Are my eyes open? Tom, can you do the back float? Well, you'd best watch. Where's my fat stomach? Ah, here it is. See my arms out like an airplane? That balances me. Now, I'll stand up. I'll pull my arms behind me, and beside me, tuck my chin down, pull my knees up to my chest just like an upside-down cork float, and whoops, here I am; feet went straight down. Did my face go under the water? No, it's not supposed to. Not while you are floating or when you are beginning to stand. It looks easy, doesn't it? Well, it wasn't easy for me, or for anyone the first time they tried it, so don't worry if you can't do it perfectly the first time. No, Tom, it's not playtime yet."

Take the child who is most likely to perform with the least strain and tension. You will know by now who he is. On second thought, better take Tom. (The trouble with demonstra-

tions for children is that they don't like to stand and watch.) Have him squat until his shoulders are covered, hold your hands over his ears, hold his ears back in the water. Do not walk with him, just-stand. "That's a funny-looking airplane with folded wings. Spread your wings, airplane. There's one wing, there's the other, now don't fly away. O.K., now pull your arms behind you and through the water, the same way you reach back for a chair and pull it under you; bring your knees up; chin down on your chest and look! You're standing!" All of this time you are holding his head in your hands, and giving plenty of reassurance that you will not let go.

Some will force their head right out of your hands and look frantically around as though they wanted to see if the rest of them were still there. Some will shut their eyes so tight it must hurt. At least they don't have to *watch* this terrible fate. They should be reminded to take a big breath because to do so helps to keep them afloat and to relax.

Comments shall always be aimed at encouraging and soothing them. Don't overuse the word "relax," because they are not certain what this means. Tell them, "Be nice and lazy." "Go to sleep, Tommy, take a little nap; doesn't that feel as if you are floating on a cloud?" "Shhhh, Tommy's sleeping; everyone be quiet. Listen to him snore!"

About five seconds on the back is long enough. A good plan is to jump the gun on them and help them to stand before *they* get the notion. As soon as you have given each child a turn, start over, and give each one a short back glide, calling out all of the suggestions they need to remember, and reminding each child each time about the correct and easy way to get his feet back on the bottom of the pool. If he is relaxed, his hips will come to the surface of the water and his legs will dangle. Don't worry about his feet coming to the top, but suggest he lie as flat as he can on top of the water. "Get that tummy up high!" "You don't need to kick your feet up, they

will come up all by themselves." It is important that the other children do not splash water on the child who is floating on his back. He won't like it.

The fact that children do not like the back float at first does not mean that you should give up the idea of working at it. There is no other way to learn it than to keep trying it; and learning it is liking it. It is terribly important for children to know that when they tire of using the free-style stroke, they can turn over on their backs and rest. The arm stroke (finning) and the back kick are taken up in Lesson VI. The whole movement is a resting stroke when it is learned correctly. Breathing on the back will also be discussed in Lesson VI.

Playtime: Surprise them at playtime today. Reach in your basket and bring out cellophane-wrapped candies and scatter them around the shallow end of the pool and have the children reach for them. Maybe the lesson was terrible, they will report to father, but the candy was good.

NOTE : At the risk of sounding pessimistic, but in the desire to be realistic, it must be said that you may find even by this time that perhaps two children out of your group of four are still not afloat. Perhaps one of these two will barely put his face in the water, and the other won't get his feet off the bottom of the pool. The advice here is: Go ahead and work on the back float (all the more reason for it under these circumstances) but continue to go over the first two lessons with patience.

SUMMARY OF LESSON III

Take to the water:

Lesson plan
Clock
Cellophane-wrapped candies

Review in a circle:

1. Get wet all over.
2. Big breath and hold it above water. Blow out air.
3. Big breath and hold face under water. Emphasis is on greater length of time face can be held down.
4. Blow bubbles with mouth only, nose only, then nose and mouth* together, face and eyes looking straight down at the bottom of the pool.
5. Big breath, face down, *eyes open*. Play "What Color Eyes."
6. "Who can do a cork float?"
7. "Who can do a face-down float?"
Move group over to the railing to practice floats as described in Lesson II.
8. Give front glide to each child. He is to breathe and blow rhythmically as you pull him through the water—no kicking.
9. Give back glide to each child.

Introduce Bobbing:

1. Demonstrate bobbing.
2. Have children bob up and down, slowly, rhythmically. Head ^N erect, whole head submerged.

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3. Have a tea party under the water.
4. Play a game, either Dogfish (Lesson II) or any game described in Lesson I. The group may enjoy a head-out-of-the-water game, even though they will all put their faces in the water.
5. Demonstrate the back float.
6. Hold each child's head and have him float on his back and get back on his feet properly.
7. Hold each child's head and pull him slowly through the water on a back glide, then regain footing.

Playtime: Scatter cellophane-wrapped candies in the shallow end of the pool and have children reach or dive for them. (If the children don't reach for them and grab them, the candies will sink to the bottom; and if they do, get the children to dive for them.)

LESSON IV

Objective:

To teach glide
To teach kick
To teach rotary breathing

Ask your group: "Anyone want to jump in? I'll catch you
As soon as everyone is wet by one method or another,
the group form a circle.

Review:

1. Big breath (face out of water), hold breath, blow out the air.
2. Big breath (face in the water), hold breath to the count of ten, face¹ out of water, blow out air. Sometimes the children do better if they are given the chance to perform one at a time, with the whole group watching and counting loudly. They try to outdo one another. At the end of each one's performance, say "Good," and proceed quickly to the *next* child in the circle.
3. "Who keeps his eyes open?" Give them the finger test (described in Lesson I).
4. "Who remembers what bobbing means?" Some, or all, will demonstrate their interpretation of bobbing. Keep your group in a circle and explain the Indian game. The song is "Ten Little Indians," familiar to all. "One little, Two little, Three little Indians, Four little, Five little, Six little

Indians, Seven little, Eight little, Nine little Indians, Ten little Indian boys." The child on your right is One Little, and the child next to him is Two Little, and so on around the circle, and don't forget to include yourself. The children all sing out, and when you nod to each one as his turn comes, he is to take a big breath, put head under (as learned in the bob in Lesson III), blow air out of nose and mouth and continue to blow as he comes out of the water. Don't stop the game to comment or correct—it will spoil the rhythm. If you have suggestions, wait until the end of the song. It should end enthusiastically with everyone doing a big war whoop. If there are four children and yourself in the group, each has a chance to bob two times. *Then*, exclude yourself from the game and become the singer; the children are all to bob up and down rhythmically throughout the whole song. Insist they all keep in time. "One little" (all go under); as soon as they are up and have got a big breath, "Two little" (all go under again); and so on.

5. Review the cork float (described in Lesson II).
6. Review the face-down float (described in Lesson II).
7. Review the back float (described in Lesson III).

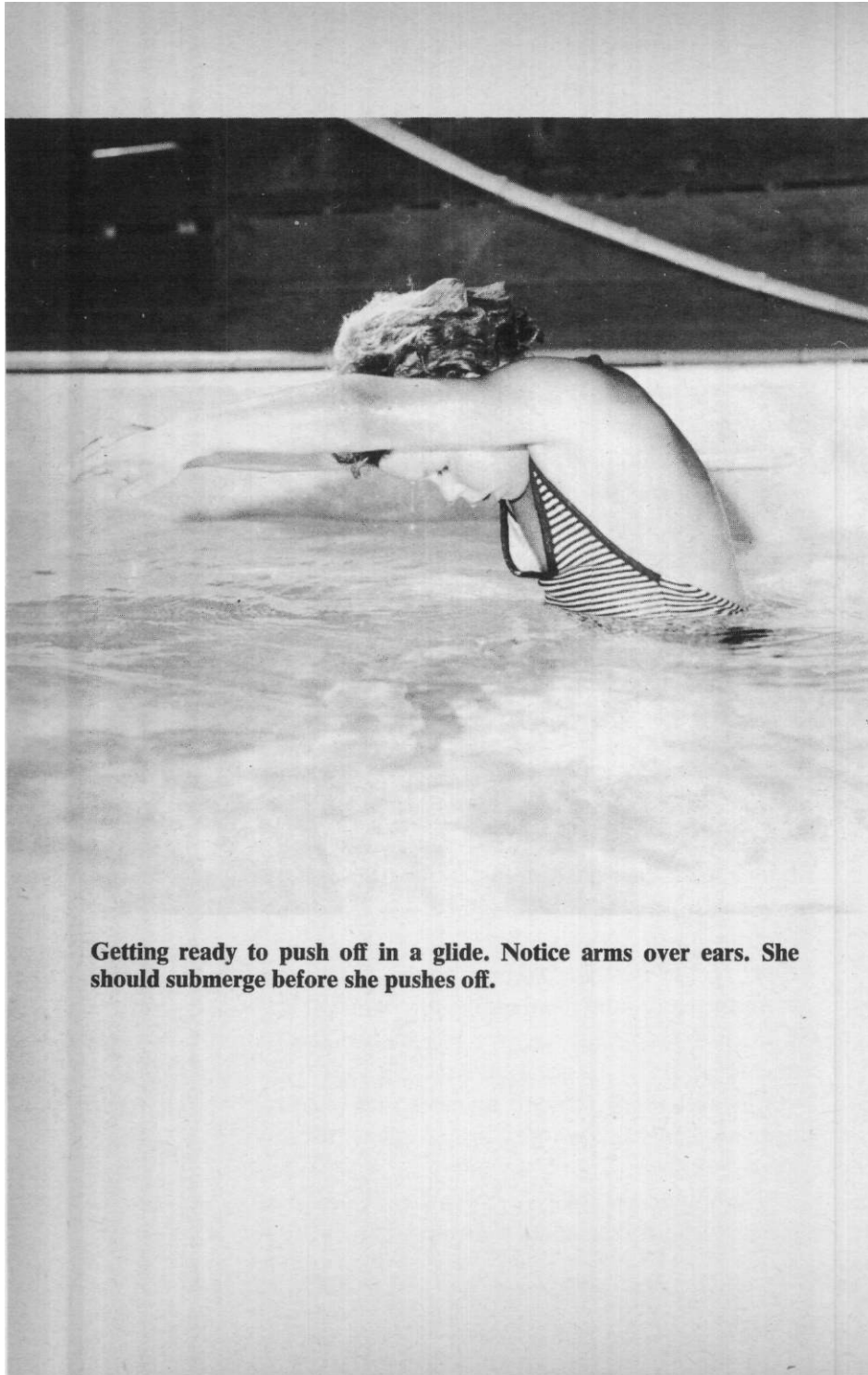
Introduce:

Progressive Bobbing: This is done in follow-the-leader fashion, starting from the steps and walking with hands on the knees, with just head and shoulders out of the water. Walk back and forth across the width of the pool and bob at least ten times. "Take a big breath, head under, blow, come up for air, head down, blow." Shorten this to "Breathe, blow, breathe, blow." Remember to do all of the motions slowly and effortlessly.

Front Glide and Regain Feet: Line up the children on one *side* of the pool. (Not the end, where they have been working on cork floats and face-down floats). If you are using a pool which has steps, line up the children on the side opposite the steps, so they can work toward the steps. They are about ready to push off, and to push off from the shallow end of the pool toward the deep end would be inhibiting. So they push off from one side and work to the other side. Remember to put the smallest child closest to the end (or corner) of the pool. Tell the children to squat until their shoulders are covered, and keeping one foot on the bottom of the pool, to bend the knee of the other leg and put the foot of that leg on the side of the pool. It is a little difficult for them to maintain their balance at first. "Now hold your arms over your ears, and hook your thumbs together." Tell the children that this is called the glide position, and that tomorrow when you say "Get in the glide position," this is what you will mean. As soon as all have attempted the position, have them relax, but stay in their places. Then you glide toward them from the opposite side so they can see your take-off and recovery.

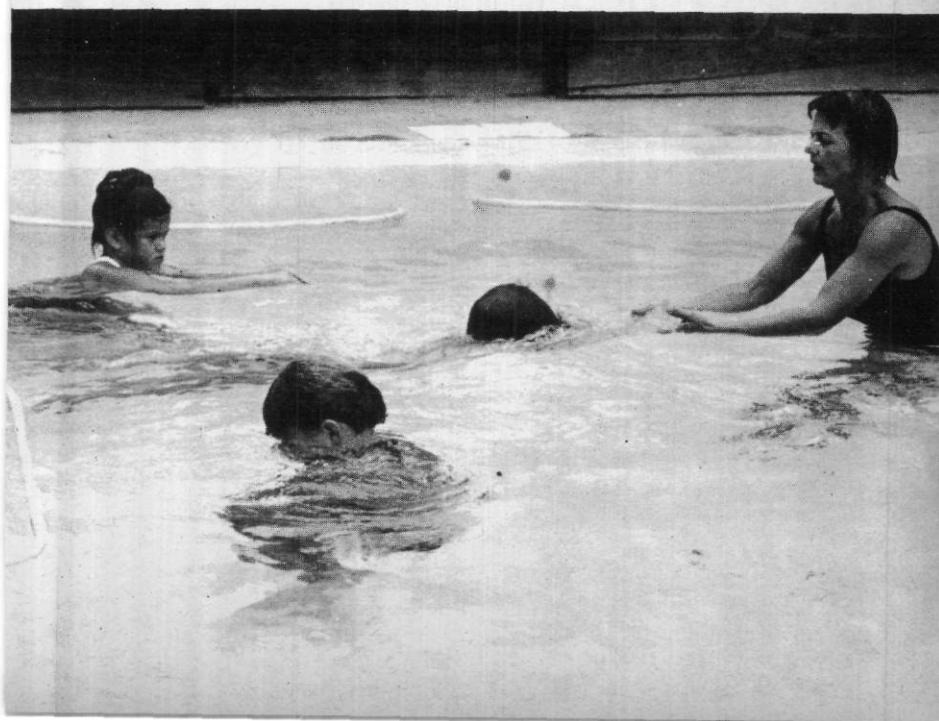
Before the children take off, tell them there is much to remember. Keep shoulders covered, get a big breath, put head under first, then push with the foot that is on the side of the pool. Also, remind them about the correct way to regain their footing—pull both knees under the chest, and the feet will go right to the bottom. Station yourself no more than six feet from the child, and have each child demonstrate, one at a time. The child is to glide to you. Tell the other children to watch, and to be ready to go. You will find that with some children you need to step forward to meet them, with others you will need to step back, if they are to take full advantage of their glide.

The important thing is to get them to push off and glide for a short distance under their own power. Each time they do this,



Getting ready to push off in a glide. Notice arms over ears. She should submerge before she pushes off.

A short glide to teacher on the first round later means a long glide alone. Note: Child in front is experimenting "unwatched."



they will get a little farther with their glide, and it is conceivable that in a week or so they will go the full width of the pool, or around twenty feet, on one glide (one breath). But the first time they glide, it is anything but aesthetic. There is *too* much to remember, and they are not used to so much independence. So arms are flailing; legs are kicking (or walking on the bottom) and they often come up sputtering or coughing.

After a first glide, no matter how rough, you should exclaim, "Oh, you are no longer ducks, you are really floaters now. You will not be people any more pretty soon, just fishes." Your response to them on the first try should give them the courage and desire to try it again. Say, "Now today in your circle, you held your breath to ten, and you to twelve, and you to seven, and you to seven. Let's see how long you can hold your breath in a glide. Don't be in a hurry, we have lots of time." Count for each child. And this time review the things he did not do correctly. "You certainly did stand nicely, but do you know that you pushed off and *then* put your head down? Remember to put your head in the water first. We want nice smooth gliders, not ploppers." "Can you keep your thumbs hooked this time?" "No kicking; see how *long* you can stretch out your body in the water before you start to stand." "If you pull your head up before you pull your knees up in order to stand, you might get water in your nose. You did? Well, I'll bet you won't do that again." If there is a child who is not afloat yet (that is, who has not been able to execute a face-down float or cork float without some means of support), do not expect him to be able to push off in a glide. Line him up with the others, however, and when it is his turn, offer your hand and pull him a short distance. Direct him so he can get back to a standing position. The next time around, offer this hesitant child one end of a kick board* while you hold the other end. Pull him a short distance.

* A kick board is a device used for supporting the head, arms, and upper body while practicing any of the kicks. Any pool equipment company offers several types.

On the third time around, he should be able to execute the glide with the kick board without your holding on to it. He will feel some sense of accomplishment, even though he is using this crutch, and this may give him the confidence he needs to get afloat in the next lesson.

Under the Bridge (a game): By this time, the children have become accustomed to having their heads down. Some, in fact, are submerged so much of the time, you can hardly find them to tell them what to do next. This is great.

They need a change now, after this drill in gliding. Stand with your legs spread wide and have each child dive between your legs and come up on the other side. Some do not need any instruction—they will dive right down, use your legs as a ladder, and come up on the other side. Some have not learned enough body control to be able to pull their body down that far. But once they are submerged, a gentle push on the head or back will help. Most will find this lots of fun, and will want to play it over and over. After a few more lessons, they will ask you to please not help them any more—they can do it all by themselves. This is a volunteer game, however; do not insist that anyone try it who is not willing to do so.

The Wall Position for the Kick: Line up the children at the railing (on the end of the pool, again) and demonstrate the kick at a point where all can see. The kick is the skill they learn next, but for the moment, draw their attention to your position on the railing. Show them how you hold one hand on the railing (or gutter), the other hand on the wall of the pool with the arm turned so that the fingers point toward the bottom of the pool. Tell the children that this position will keep their legs from sinking and, therefore, will make the kick easier to execute. If they were to clutch the railing or gutter with both hands and with their heads out of water, the rest of their body would sink. Show them how you extend your arms way out, not doubled up. As the children get into this position, there will be



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The "Wall Position" is one hand on the railing, one on the wall of the pool, fingers point toward the bottom of the pool. In the kick, heels just break the water.

much fumbling. Each child will need some help. As soon as each child has the correct wall position, tell him to take a big breath and kick.

The Kick: Many young children have a natural relaxed leg movement such as is used in a bicycle or peddling kick, and this is fortunate because this is what you want them to use. If you are teaching an adult, you will find that he will keep his legs very stiff, and your problem with him will be to get him to unbend. The motion is largely from the hips with legs and feet relaxed. In general, children will get the proper motion easily.

At first they will be persuaded they're not kicking properly unless they are creating wild havoc by splashing and kicking out of the water. They will think you pretty much of a square for suggesting that this may be fun, but that it's not the right way for swimmers. In the initial stages you will see many types of kicks. One child will be kicking his seat with each leg, repeatedly. When the kick show is over, illustrate to him what you just saw. He has enough confidence in himself now so that your making *mild* fun of his kick is not going to be detrimental. Tell him that his legs up in the air do not do any good at all. It is what they do *under* the water that counts. Ask him to try it again, and have just his heels break the surface.

Another type of kick you will see is that of the little guy who is kicking away with his knees under his chest and very much resembles a crab. He does not have enough confidence yet to stretch himself out in the water as you would like him to do; but you know already that with each passing day this will take care of itself, so don't make too much of an issue of it. Say, "Get yourself as *long* as you can in the water, stretch way out and then kick." He wants to be sure that his feet are close to the bottom of the pool, and with his legs stretched way out, he's a little insecure. Time and experience is the cure for this.

Counting Game: Tell the children you are going to count—first, to six very slowly, then to six more rapidly, and then

slowly again, and that they are to kick slowly, then faster, then to slow the kick down again. You have to tell them this ahead of time because the noise gets so thunderous, they can't hear you counting. Check the wall position of each child before you start to count. Their heads are *out* of the water. After this splashy affair, have them remain at the railing and take each child's legs in your hands and peddle them. For the violent kicker: "You're going to wear yourself out if you kick that fast all of the time, slow it down a little . . . that's better." For the child whose feet are at a 90-degree angle: "Hey feet, stay together; don't run away from each other." And to all: "Do you feel the force of the water on the top of your foot when you pull down, and on the bottom of your foot when you lift it up?"

Front Glide and Kick: "O.K., everybody, turn around." (They have been facing the wall.) "Let's travel over to the side of the pool and get into our glide position. One foot on bottom, one foot on wall, arms over ears, thumbs hooked, big breath, head down, push off and kick." There will be a lot of splashing, arms and legs spread like eagles' wings, while you are standing there about six feet from them to see it all. Have them perform individually, and move back or forward depending on differences in individual achievement. If you can restrain yourself, do not comment on performance; the finer points will come with experience.

Rotary Breathing: Assume a wall position (as explained earlier) and have the children get into such a position that all can see the side of your face which you will turn up when you breathe. Demonstrate rotary breathing for them by placing your cheek on the water, taking a big breath with your eyes open, face down in the water, blow bubbles, cheek back on the surface and repeat. When you demonstrate, continue to blow air out as you come up for a breath, and point this out to the children.

Practicing Rotary Breathing in the "wall position," without the kick.



Now the children take over the position on the wall. "No, no kicking, Tommy, just leave your feet on the bottom." As you take each child's head in your hands and gently turn it from cheek position to face-down position, you can chant, "Cheek on the water, face in the water," or "Roll it in and roll it out," or "Cheek on the water, blow," or just plain "Breathe, blow, breathe, blow. Nice and easy, breathe, blow."

The child's tendency will be to raise his head forward after he has had it in the water, instead of rolling it out to the side. Remind him that one ear should never leave the water. Also, he may think you want him to breathe on one side, put him face down, and bring it up on the other side for another breath. This misconception can be corrected easily. On the beginner's level, let each one choose which side he would like to take his breath on, and he should continue to use that side only.

In doing this exercise, you need to check the wall position. Whichever side of his face a child is using for his breathing, the hand on the same side should be the one against the wall, so that it in no way interferes with the face movement.

Rotary Breathing with the Kick: Now they can try rotary breathing in the wall position with legs kicking. An advanced swimmer synchronizes his breathing cycle with his kicking but, of course, this refinement is not desirable or even possible at the elementary stages.

Playtime: When you announce "Playtime" today, there will be loud cheers because this has been a long hard lesson. Pull out of your Bag of Tricks some polyethylene (soft plastic) toys. These are fun because some are hollow and will float a minute or two before they sink. They are also recommended because they are light and will not mark the pool's surface, or hurt your feet if you step on them.

SUMMARY OF LESSON IV

Take to the Water:

Lesson plan
Clock or timer
Kick board
Polyethylene toys

Give each child an opportunity to jump in the water as you catch him. Those who refuse to jump in will get wet all over by one means or another.

Review in a Circle:

1. Big breath, hold breath with face out of water, blow out air.
2. Big breath, face in the water, count to ten, face out, let out air. (One at a time, or all together with you counting for them.)
3. "Who keeps his eyes open?" Give them the finger test as described in Lesson I.
4. "Who remembers what 'bobbing' means?" Play Ten Little Indian Boys. First, bob in a circle, then the whole group bobs together to this song as you sing it.
5. "Who can do a cork float?"
6. "Who can do a face-down float?"
7. "Who can do a back float?"

Introduce:

1. Progressive bobbing. Walk slowly in a large circle with hands on knees, shoulders covered; breathe and blow; whole head submerged when you bob down.

2. Front glide and regain footing. Line children on the *side* of the pool in a correct glide position—i.e., face the center of the pool, arms over ears, thumbs hooked, one foot on the wall, one on the bottom, big breath, head down, push off, glide, pull knees to chest and stand. You demonstrate first by gliding from opposite side of pool to the children. When the children perform, station yourself a short distance from them and they will glide to you.
3. Play Under the Bridge.
4. Demonstrate the wall position for the kick. Face the side, one hand on the railing, one hand on wall with hand turned so fingers point toward the bottom of the pool. Children's turn.
5. Demonstrate the kick using the wall position. Now the children.
6. Play counting game to the child's kick. Count to six slowly, increase speed, then slowly again.
7. Front glide and kick.
8. Rotary breathing. Demonstrate, using the wall position. Start with eyes open, cheek on the water, big breath, face in the water, blow, cheek back on the water; repeat. Check wall position for each child so his arm does not interfere with his breathing. (If he breathes on his left side, his left hand is on the wall, his right hand is on the railing.) Then children practice rotary breathing.
9. Now rotary breathing with the kick.

Playtime: With polyethylene toys.

LESSON V

Objective:

To pass the Swimming Skill Test.
To learn the arm stroke.

When the children arrive for their lesson today, they will find you looking very official in a swimming suit and sweat shirt, with pencil and clip board under your arm. As a good review for your swimmers, as a way of showing *them* how many things they have already learned to do in the water, and as a way of showing you which children need the most help where, as well as to add a little variety to the program, check their accomplishments by giving them a little test:

"Yes, we are going to have a little test. It's fun and the reason I'm not in the water is that I want to see how you look from up here." (They are used to having you in the water and are not sure they like the idea of your being so far away.) "Take hands in a circle."

"Now the test says, 'With your head out of water, hold your breath to the count of five.' See, isn't this easy?"

"With your face down and eyes closed, hold your breath to the count of five. I know you can hold your breath to ten, but the test says 'five.'"

"Same thing this time, only eyes open. Big breath, face down, eyes open, one, two, three, four, five; head up, blow out air. Did you all open your eyes? Of course!"

"Cork float to the count of five. Now, I want to see four corks bobbing in the water, so let's all do it together. Big breath, face down, hold those knees under your chest, one, two, three, four, five; pull your feet together. Stand."

"Face-down float next. Yes, it's the same thing as the air-plane float. Well, that's lovely but such a short one. *Long* air-plane floats. I'm not going to begin counting until you are floating, and you should float to the count of ten before you stand up; but you pass the test if you stay afloat to the count of five. If you pulled *both* knees under your chest at the same time you wouldn't lose your balance, Barbara. Once more, to five.

"Glide position to this side of the pool. You are all too high in the water. Squat until your shoulders are covered. Good. Is one leg against the wall? Now remember, head under first, then push off. Let's go one at a time. Big breath, Barbara, head down, push, float, and stand properly. Perfect. Ready, Tom? Who's ready? O.K., go, Paul, and Tom, will you get ready to go next? Don't worry if you can't do the glide today, Anne; we'll work on it later.

"Now, glide with the kick for ten feet, and regain your footing the correct way. Wowee, you'll get all the way across the pool by tomorrow. You really have a strong kick. Let's see your strong kick, Barbara. Good.

"Now, one more thing. Dive for a rock. I'll sink it right here, and you can all reach for it. [Sink it at waist-deep level.] Whoever gets it, please sink it for the rest of the group. After you have once gotten the rock, you are out of the game and may play while the rest get it. I know you can reach it from the step, Tom, so please sink the rock out a little farther."

After giving this test and checking off accomplishments, you will discover several good reasons why it is desirable for the teacher to stay in the water during the lessons rather than on the edge of the pool. During the test, you noticed, for example, that the glides were short. So you know that your practice of having them glide to you, even though you do not touch them, encourages them to glide for a longer distance. You know now that only one girl is not yet afloat, and you will want to give her

some special help again today. She can do a cork float holding on to the railing, an airplane float, holding on to the railing, she can glide holding on to the kick board, but she cannot float alone. Look at it this way. She's had only two hours of instruction in the water, and the first day she didn't even get her nose wet. Remember, too, that she is shy and quiet, and because the others are more demanding of your attention, perhaps they have received more. Resolve to get Anne afloat today, using every device known to you.

You have also discovered that giving directions from the deck is much more of a strain on you. In the middle of your directions for one part of the test, one child completely submerged himself, one took off on a glide, and the other two started a conversation with each other. It may be warmer up there, and you enjoy viewing them from this new perspective, but it is easier to hold their attention at close range. These last comments assume that no one in your group is over six years old.

In entering the pool today, jump in holding an inner tube behind you. Swim the length of the pool under water and grab the children's ankles. This is for your own pleasure and to let the children know how much fun they will have in the water when they are skillful enough to use the whole pool.

Review:

1. Rotary breathing, holding on to the railing in the correct wall position. No kick. (For wall position, see Lesson IV.)
2. Rotary breathing, holding on to the railing in the wall position, with the kick. (Remind them today to kick under the water with just their heels breaking the surface.)
3. Bobbing. Have each child hold a partner with both hands, one facing the other. Sing a chant to "Paul goes down, Barbara stays up, Barbara goes down, Paul comes up."

**For your own pleasure and to let the children know how much fun
can be had.**



Have the children do this slowly with the head completely under water. Remind them to blow air out as they come up out of the water. As soon as each pair of children has seen-sawed ten times, ask them to stop.

4. Front glide. Tell the children before they push off from their glide position that while you were standing on the deck and giving them the test you noticed a few things about their glides that were not good: Some were kicking, some were using their arms in various fashions, some were still not putting their heads down under the water before they pushed off, and they were all going too short a distance; tell them now that you want them to concentrate very hard on these things because they are important.

"Think: 'Take a big breath, head under, *then* push off from the side with my foot, keep my thumbs hooked over my ears, float for five counts or longer, pull both knees up to my chest, and stand.' Now I'm going to stand right here, which is farther than you have glided before. I don't want you to stand up until you bump into my stomach. You can make it, Tom, it's still only halfway across the pool. O.K., one at a time, and the others be ready."

When it comes to Anne's turn, tell her you want her to knock you flat! Stand so close to her that one plunge will do it. At the barest touch, you are to collapse and sink out of sight to everyone's delight, especially Anne's.

On the second round of glides, suggest they glide *back* from where you are standing (which is about halfway or ten feet) to the side of the pool. They *should* reach the railing.

5. *Glide Under the Bridge*: To increase the length of the glide, set up a goal for the child. With the assistance of another child, form a bridge with your arms; then have the child push off from the wall and glide under the bridge. Adjust the span of the bridge for each child, i.e., move forward for some and back for others, but in each case, expect the child to better his previous effort just a little.



If there's a bridge to go under, the glide will be longer. Note that the glider's cap is above the water. She should lower her head.

In Lesson I, London Bridge was played with the head out of water. In Lesson III Under the Bridge was played (an underwater game in which the child dives between the teacher's legs). So in this lesson, too, we have another Bridge game. It's natural that water and bridges should go together!

6. *Glide with the Kick:* This is beginning to sound monotonous, but you still need to remind each child about the proper way to push off for a glide and though you find yourself repeating the same things over and over, it is better to tell them *before* the push-off. If you let them go without direction, you will have no choice but to correct all of the things they did wrong.

They push off in a glide position and then begin to kick. They *should* get farther with the kick than without it; although they will not get farther, of course, if the kick is an ineffective one.

Introduce:

Arm Stroke: Have the children line up with their backs against the wall (on the side or the end of the pool) and squat until the water is at shoulder level. Stand in front of them and demonstrate the arm stroke. Squat until your shoulders are covered; reach out *under the water* and pull the water toward the stomach with a bent arm. The emphasis is not on pulling down, but rather on pulling *toward* the body.

Having seen swimmers raise their arms out of the water, they also will want to do this. Tell them that perhaps later they can raise their arms out of the water, but for now, you want them to pull them under the water. "When your arm is up here in the air [demonstrate], it's not helping you swim. It's what it does under the water that counts. It will pull you through the water. Now all together, reach and pull, under the water, reach and pull."



Practice the under water arm stroke in a circle.

TEN LESSON PLANS

Progressive Arm Stroke: Tell the children to bend their knees until their shoulders are covered, and then practice the arm stroke while walking through the water across the width of the pool. "Reach and pull, clear to your stomach, reach and pull under the water." As this parade marches around, you may assist by standing in back of a child and helping him pull his arms toward his stomach. "Now let's try it. Over to the side of the pool in your glide position."

Glide with Arm Stroke: Tell them before they push off to use their arms only, no legs. No kicking. Have children go one at a time, and continue to call "Reach, pull, reach, pull," noting the point reached by each child. From the point each reaches, turn him around and tell him to practice the arm stroke all the way back to the wall again.

Arm Stroke with Kick: "If you can get *this* far with your kick [you point with your finger] and *this* far with your arms [you point again] how far do you suppose you can get using - *both* your arms and legs?" This is an exciting moment. Don't tell Tom he should get all the way across the pool because he won't, and this will take the joy out of his accomplishment. When he stands, turn him around and say, "Look how far you came! Can you believe it? Oh, what a good sardine you are," and give him a big hug.

Some will forget to move their legs, some will paddle one arm and let the other go limp. But one thing is certain: If they are using both arms and legs in some fashion and have their face in the water, you can honestly say to them, "Now you are swimming!"

Playtime: By this time, the children are able to play on their own instead of playing supervised games or following adult-inspired ideas. You will find that their play will consist of showing one another the new skills they have learned.

SUMMARY OF LESSON V

Take to the Water:

A rock, or sinkable object
Lesson plan
Check sheet for individual skills

Children get in and get wet. You stay on the deck to check off their achievements on the check list.

Test:

1. Hold breath to the count of five, face *out* of the water.
2. Hold breath to the count of five, face *in* the water.
3. Hold breath to the count of five, face in the water, eyes open. (They are on the honor system.)
4. Bob ten times.
5. Cork float to the count of five.
6. Face-down float to the count of five.
7. Glide and regain footing properly.
8. Glide with kick and regain footing properly. (Distance should be ten feet.)
9. Dive for a rock.

Review:

1. Rotary breathing holding on to the railing in wall position.
2. Rotary breathing with kick, in wall position.
3. Bobbing with a partner in seesaw fashion.
4. Front glide. Be strict about form.
5. Glide with kick.

TEN LESSON PLANS • V

Introduce:

1. Arm stroke. Squat until shoulders are covered. Reach out under water, pull water toward stomach with bent arm. (The children are lined up with their backs against the wall, or are in a circle.)
2. Progressive arm stroke. Children reach and pull arms through the water as they walk in a circle.
3. Glide with arm stroke. In glide position, push off from the wall using arms only, no kicking.
4. Arm stroke with the kick. In glide position, push off from the wall using the whole stroke (arms and legs and face down).

Playtime.

LESSON VI

Objective:

To teach back glide, back kick, and finning on the back.

Entering the Pool:

The children will enter the pool today from a sitting dive. If you have steps, direct them to sit on the third (or top) step. If you do not have steps into the pool, use the deck. There is definite psychological advantage in directing the children to dive from the side. The reason for this is that when the child dives off the *end*, he glides or swims toward the deeper water; and this knowledge may make him uneasy, even though he sees an adult standing in the shallow part of the pool.

If you are using the steps, the child is to sit on the third (or top) step, place his feet on the second step and spread his knees. If you are using the deck, the child sits on the edge and places his feet on the railing or gutter, spreading his knees. The glide is familiar to the group by now. "Big breath, arms over the ears, thumbs hooked, and dive right through your knees. Good." This will be great fun, so suggest on the second round that they reach, reach, reach for the other side of the pool, and see how far they can glide. Then on the third round, they can dive, and glide with the kick—and once more? "O.K., dive, and use arms only, and just once more? All right, use the whole stroke (arms and legs). Oh, I forgot to tell you, you are no longer corks, you are steamboats now because you have learned to float and now you are swimming or paddling like a boat."

Review: You have already covered many of the points given in previous lessons by using the sitting dive as your starting point for today's lesson. Gather your group in a circle and continue.

Face-down Float: "Today we are going to make a flower float. Our heads will be the center of the flower and our legs will be the petals. Let's all hold hands, take a big breath, put our heads down and our legs up, and I will count to ten, and then we will all stand together.

CHILD: Would you count out loud for us under the water?

TEACHER: That's an idea. I'll try it.

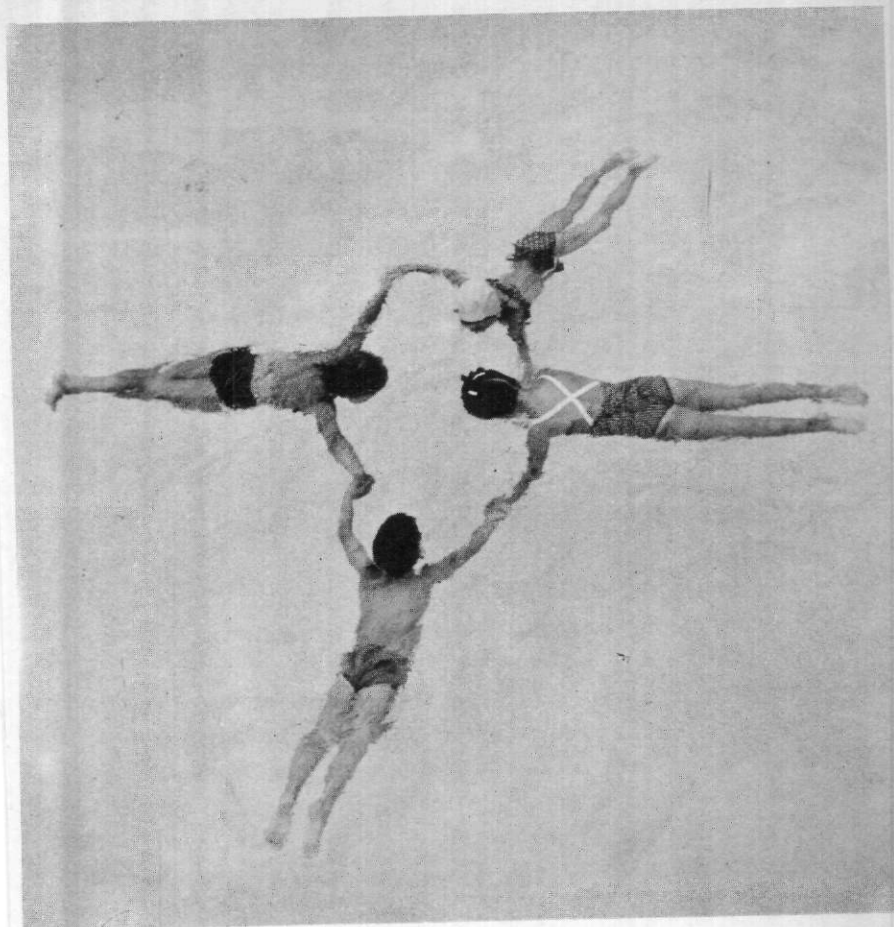
"Take a big breath, everybody down," with you counting to ten and making lots of bubbles. Chances are some will even open their eyes under water to see if you are counting. (In a later lesson, singing under the water may be suggested.) Tell the children that you are going to watch their flower float and count for them, so step outside the float and count. You will have observed by now that the second time they do *anything*, they do it better. They are holding their breath for a much longer time, their legs are straighter.

Line up the children at the railing. Number the children starting with the child on the far end. "You are number One, and you are number Two, and you are One, and you are Two. Now look and see who you are standing beside, because you are going to glide out as far as you can go, and back to the wall. When you come back, you should get into the same spot you are in now."

PAUL: I don't like it here. It's too deep.

TEACHER: YOU are the tallest, and the water only comes to your shoulders. And besides, you can swim now.

Remind the children of all the things they should think about before they push off on their glide. The Ones go first, and stay on the other side when they reach it. When they pop up about halfway, tell them to take another breath, push off



A Flower Float is pretty. The girl at right is performing perfectly; notice her head and her shoulders and back are in line and just breaking the surface.

from the bottom of the pool, and continue to the other side. The Twos then try to go farther than the Ones.

Today be very strict about a perfect glide. "When you are practicing your glide, your arms don't move, your legs don't move, nothing moves. Pretend your arms are glued to your ears. That will keep your head down and will keep you streamlined and you won't roll. Use your foot to push off from the side. And remember, your head ducks under *first*, then push. I know it's a lot to think about, but if you do all of these things, you will surprise yourself one of these times, and find you can go all the way across the pool on one breath."

Glide with the Kick: First the Ones, then the Twos. "Keep the thumbs hooked, concentrate on the distance you can go." Post yourself a little past midway from the side at which the children push off.

Arms Only, No Kicking: Remind the children to push off with their thumbs hooked, and *then* to start the stroke. *Always push off in the glide position before you begin stroking.* This is important because the basic body position for the crawl is the glide position, and the swimmer should take full advantage of his glide after the push-off, for he is traveling faster than his own stroke would carry him. The difference aesthetically is very important also.

Arms and Legs: The children are used to hearing you call this "the whole stroke" by now, and you can use that term and the term "arms and legs" interchangeably. "Push off in a glide and then use the whole stroke as far as you can."

Rotary breathing in wall position, no kicking.

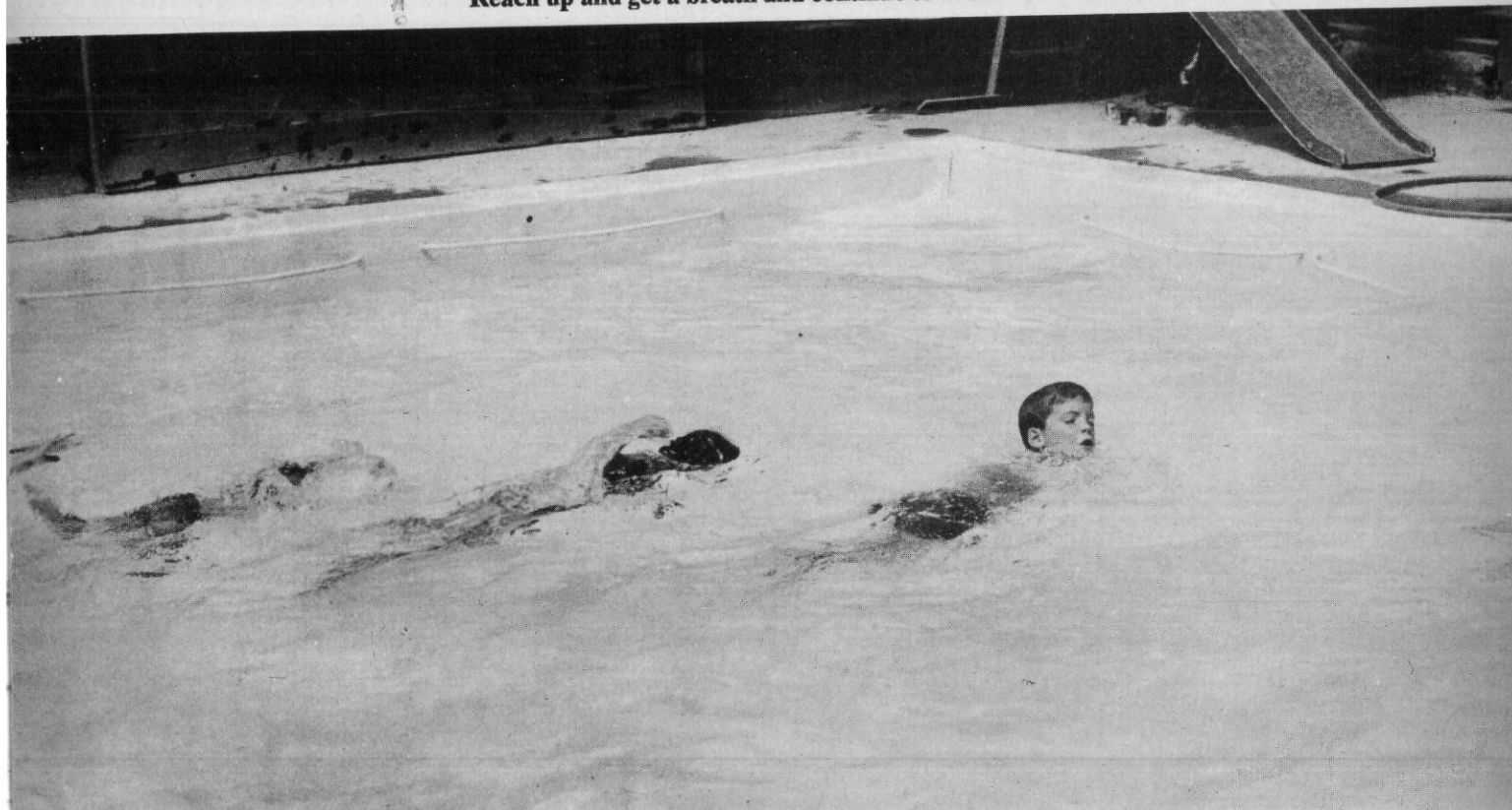
Rotary breathing in wall position with the kick.

Introduce:

Getting a Breath and Continuing to Swim: Have the children stand at the side, watching you as you demonstrate why

they have been practicing this rotary breathing so much. From the opposite side, swim toward them (keep your arms under water, as you have been directing them to do) and breathing from the side, get at least three breaths as you continue to swim toward them. Ask the children to try this one at a time. Inevitably in their first attempt, they will stand up after the first breath. But work patiently, and herald joyously even the barest success at getting a breath while afloat. Even if the child lifts his head forward instead of to the side, consider this successful for now. The important thing at this point is to get him to breathe without standing. You will find it helpful to walk through the water with a child, supporting him under the chest; direct him to paddle and kick, and when you call "Breathe," to reach up for air. Continue calling out "Breathe" rhythmically, until you both reach the other side. In this way the child gets the feeling of the sequence of movements expected of him. He is not prepared yet to breathe and blow rhythmically with each stroke. Therefore, you can have him take two or three strokes and then breathe. Children who have learned this underwater stroke become masters of the pool and feel perfectly safe in deep water. The stroke is also known as the human stroke or the dog paddle. In this stroke, the child's arms are under the water. The great advantage is that he may breathe when he wishes; in this stroke, the arm movements and the breathing do not have to be related to one another. In the crawl stroke, however, where the swimmer pulls his arms up out of the water for the recovery of arm position, his breathing must be rhythmic with his arm movements. The crawl is one of the most difficult of all swimming strokes, and it is purposely not taught to the children until the intermediate level.

Reach up and get a breath and continue to swim.



Review:

The *Back* *Float:* Before the lesson today, look over Lesson IV and try to keep in mind all of the fine points about the back float. In brief: Have him hold his arms out at his sides like an airplane; then, maintaining the position of his arms, the child should squat until the water is at shoulder level. Now, he is ready to ease back, with his head back and his eyes open. Stand behind him and hold your hands over his ears. "Take a big breath, make an island out of your tummy. Don't worry about your legs, let them dangle, but do keep your tummy up high." Remind him again about the best way to regain his footing. "Pull up a chair, and stand." As soon as each child has done a back float, line them all up along the railing at the end (or at one side) of the pool.

Introduce:

The *Back* *Glide:* The child starts his glide by holding on to the railing with both hands, his ears back in the water, his eyes open, his feet against the wall of the pool. Before he lets go of the railing, remind him to keep his arms close to his sides, and *not* extend them as he does in the Airplane Float. Before he lets go of the railing, tell him to take a big breath. Now say, "Slowly, let loose."

Avoid saying "Push off," as they interpret this literally, and even when you add "Barely" or "Slowly" they will still jet-propel themselves into a fast sink. And this is what you will witness—many fast sinks. The problem seems to be in getting them to straighten out their bodies.

"Let's try it again, and keep your head back. Look up at the sky." The results appear disastrous, but if one child can keep afloat on his back for three seconds, after several attempts,

The back float



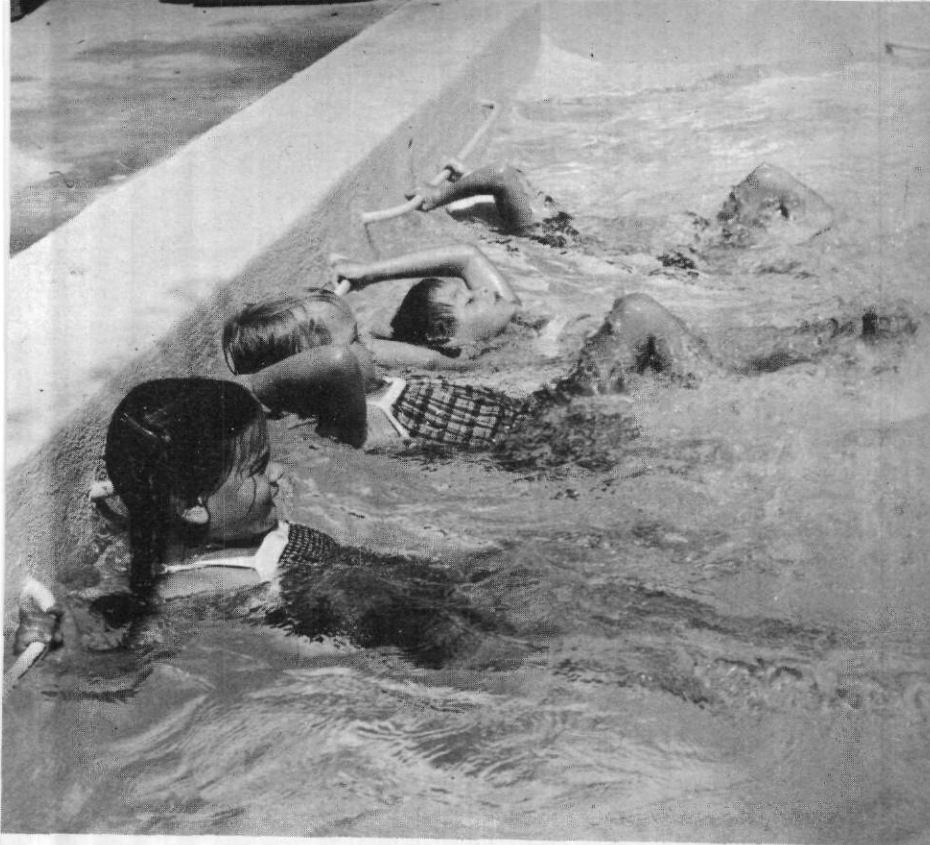


Getting ready for a back glide.

the rewards are in view. It is generally true that girls are more buoyant than boys. Girls have a layer of adipose tissue that boys do not have. It is also true that more fat on the body is an aid to the back floater. Bone structure is another factor which serves as either an aid or a handicap to the back swimmer. But the most important factor in getting results is consistent practice and the increased un-tensing which accompanies it. One child found that he could float by resting his head on the second step. The water just covered his ears in this position on the steps, and gradually he floated away from the step. Another child experimented with the kick board. He held the kick board behind his head and rested his head on the board, which served much the same purpose as the teacher's holding his head. After bobbing around this way awhile, he found that floating was not as impossible as he thought it at first.

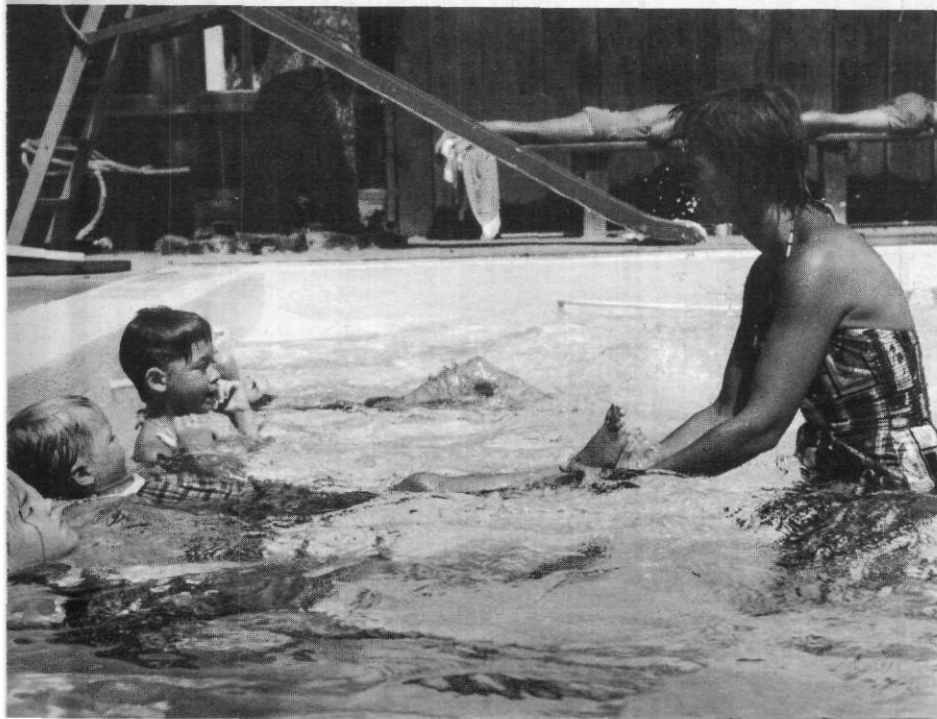
The Back Kick: Have the group stand with backs to the wall; tell them to squat until their shoulders are covered. Have them raise their arms over their heads and grasp the railing in such a way that the backs of their hands are toward the water, not the wall. This will help to hold their hips close to the surface. The kick is like kicking a ball. The kick is up, up, up. Of course the foot drops down too, but the emphasis is on the *up* motion. The toes just break the water.

The children will think what you mean is to pull the knees up to the chin, feet clear out of the water, heels hitting the water first. Lots of kicking and splashing. That, however, is *not* the way to back kick. This offers another opportunity in which to demonstrate what you have just witnessed. If they see you look so ridiculous, this may help. "I want to see just your toes, *not* your knees. How do you kick your shoe off when you're ready to go to bed? Kick a hole in the sky. Kick up, up, up." If you can think of more original or intelligent ways to deliver the message, good for you. By the way, it is a little



Practice for the back kick. Child in front is holding the wall incorrectly. None are kicking properly.

Just the toes break the water .



awkward for someone to hold on to the railing in this position. It is more comfortable in a corner of the pool. See that each child has a chance to work in a corner, where there is more room for his head.

Back Glide with Kick: "Everyone in the back glide position. Ears way back, eyes open, big breath, keep your arms to your sides. Let loose slowly and begin to kick, pull up a chair and stand." The child who was able to float for three seconds will probably be able to stay afloat with the kick for five seconds. Attempt the kick anyway, even though some cannot stay afloat for zero seconds, because it helps to straighten out the body. If the children become discouraged or are begging to do something different, play a game before you introduce finning.

Finning: This is the simplest of the arm movements that may accompany the back kick. Practice finning (without the back kick) this way: Stand in a circle with water at shoulder level. Both arms are extended from the sides at the same time and should not be more than twelve inches from the body. Never do the arms come above the water level. The wrist is relaxed, and the elbow is bent. Call the signals, "Relax, pull, relax, pull." The "relax" is lifting the arms, and "pull" is back to the sides. Although in an earlier chapter it was advised not to use the word "relax," it seems to be the most fitting word here, since in this case it is not used in a general sense, but to indicate a specific action. The children's arms will be stiff and flapping. As you sing, "Row, row, row your boat, Gently down the stream, Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, Life is but a dream," emphasize the word that is the *pull* motion. Example: GENTly DOWN the STREAM.

Fin and Kick: Back to the back glide position to see what happens when you let go of the railing and start to fin and kick at the same time. "I have a good idea. Let's sing 'Row, row, row your boat' after we let loose of the railing, and see



The backstroke: finning and kicking



how much of the song we can sing." What you hear is "Row, row . . . bloop."

Just before playtime today, tell the children that tomorrow they will be going down to the deep end of the pool. Some will be delighted, and some will plainly announce, "Not me, I'm not."

Do not allow any dives at playtime today, because they need to be well supervised, and you want to spend some time with Anne who is now afloat, and can glide for a second or two. You predict that she will be a good back floater because she was the one in your group who could stay afloat the longest. You are so thrilled over her progress, you will have to take care not to overdo your jubilation.

SUMMARY OF LESSON VI**Take to the Water:**

Lesson Plan
Polyethylene toys

Introduce:

Sitting glide from the step.

Review:

1. Face-down float. The variation today: learning to make a flower float.
2. Front glide. Divide children by numbering them One, Two, One, Two. The Ones perform, then the Twos. Emphasis is on distance. They are to take a breath from their stopping place on the first glide. Ones are to stay until the Twos join them. Then Ones glide back, followed by Twos.
3. Glide with the kick. First the Ones, then the Twos. Keep thumbs hooked.
4. Arms only, no kicking. (Two groups again.)
5. Arms and legs. (Two groups again.)
6. Rotary breathing in wall position, no kicking. (Whole group.)
7. Rotary breathing in wall position, with the kick. (Whole group.)

Introduce the Whole Stroke:

1. Demonstrate how to do the whole stroke (arms dog-paddling and legs kicking) and how to get two or three breaths as you *continue* to swim.
2. Have each child try this individually. Emphasis is on getting a breath as he *continues* to use arms and legs.

Review:

Back float (see Lesson **III**).

Introduce:

3. Back glide (from the railing): Hold on to the railing with both hands, ears back, eyes open, take a big breath, let loose slowly, tummy up, body out straight, float, stand correctly.
4. Back kick: Child stands with back to the wall, brings arms over his head and grasps railing. The kick is *up*, toes just breaking the water surface.
5. Back glide with kick.
6. Finning: Stand in a circle with water at shoulder level. Call the signals, "Relax, pull." Arms do not come above surface of water; elbow is bent.
7. Fin with the kick, from the railing.

Playtime.

LESSON VII

Objective:

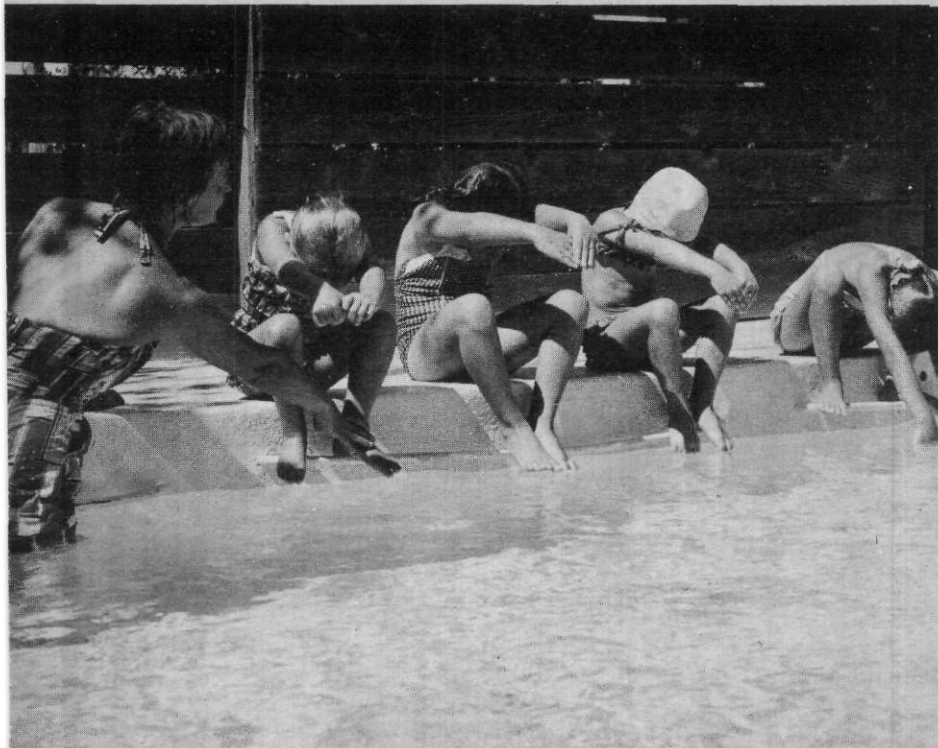
Sitting dive from the pool deck.
Turning in the water.
Turning from front position to back position.
Changing directions.
Deep-water drills (including treading water).

Getting into the water: It was mentioned in the previous lesson that if you did not have steps going down into your pool, the children could learn the sitting dive from the pool deck. There is not a great deal of difference between the sitting glide (from the top step) and the sitting dive (from the pool deck). The top step and the pool deck are only about ten inches apart in most cases, but some very amusing and amazing things can happen within that small span.

The children sit on the deck with their feet on the railing or the gutter, and spread their knees. They put their arms over their ears, hook their thumbs, take a big breath, put their heads down, and dive in. Some will maintain the position perfectly; but others manage to jump in feet first (glunk), or rear their heads way up like baby birds just before they hit the water (splat).

For the child who jumps feet first, gently hold his feet for him as you stand in the water.

For the head rearer, tell him to keep his arms pasted against his ears and to look *down*, not up. Tell him to be sure to keep his chin against his chest. If he doesn't he'll land on his stom-



A dive is head first. Holding the feet will help the belly floppers and those who go in feet first.

ach. Because the child is so close to the surface of the water, these belly busters do not cause him any pain and he thinks he is a great diver. It's difficult to convince him that he isn't.

There's still another variation, and that is the child who somersaults. Suggest he reach for the other side of the pool, and if the suggestion isn't effective, then place a kick board about ten feet out in the water, and have him reach for the board.

The first sitting dive is one for practice and fun and form. The next dive should be a glide for distance. That is, see how far the child can glide on one breath from the sitting dive. On the next round, have each child start the whole stroke, and see how far he can swim on one breath. Often because the dive is an aid to distance, this will be the first time that they have been able to swim the entire width of the pool.

You do not have to be an acute observer to notice the contrast in the execution of routine skills before and after the dive is learned. What was previously done with mousy-like suspicion, and with apparent dislike and apprehension, now seems to be relished to the other extreme of utter abandon. The children dive in, scramble out, and are ready to go again. This is also a switch. Heretofore, *you* have been the one ready to go, and they were the ones who needed prodding.

In the beginning, however, it is important that the children wait their turn and dive one at a time. They are diving in water that is slightly over their heads, but you need not announce that. Have them sit on the side of the pool and swim diagonally toward the corner of the opposite side.

Review:

Bobbing in a circle. Play Ten Little Indians as described in Lesson IV.

Make a flower float as described in Lesson VI.

"Can anybody hold their breath under the water to twenty?"
Several can.

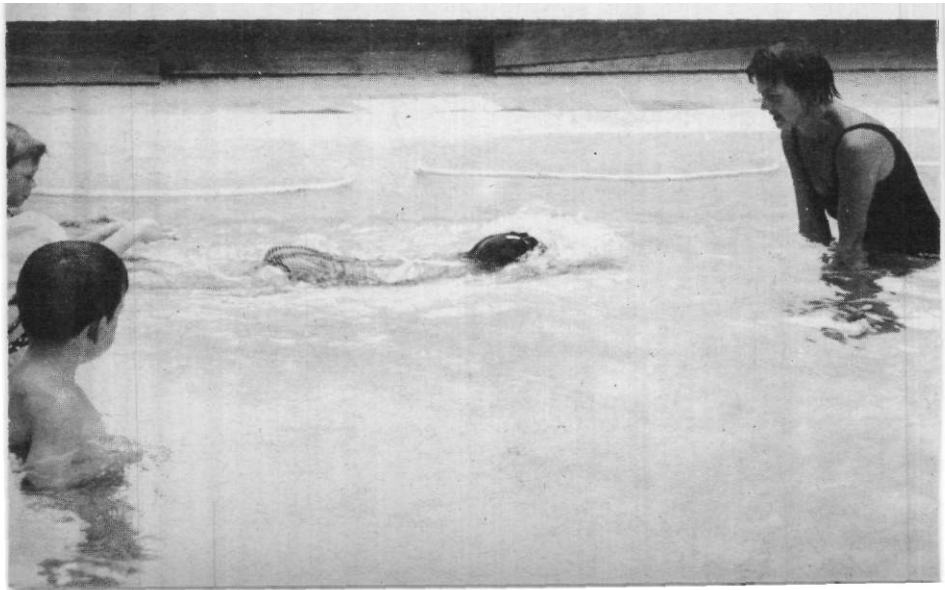
Practice the glide from the glide position on the side of the pool. The children might go one at a time, or number them off One, Two, One, Two. The emphasis is on long, smooth glides. Remind them that they were able to hold their breath to twenty, only seconds ago. Count out loud for them. It's surprising how much longer they can sustain their glide.

When both groups reach the other side of the pool, they are to return, using the kick with the glide. Ones first, then the Twos.

Now back again to the opposite side, using the whole stroke, arms and legs.

You are so delighted with the progress today that you turn to one child and say, "Wherever did you learn to swim like that?" The child replies, "We went to the lake yesterday, and my brother taught me how." Your spirits are only partially dampened.

When the emphasis is on long smooth glides, count loudly and stand back so the child has to reach for you.



Now practice the whole stroke again. Tell the Ones to use the whole stroke. "Only this time, now wait, this time, reach up and get one breath somewhere in the middle of the pool and continue to swim." Remind them to keep kicking, and not to stand. After the Twos have had their turn, tell them to take two breaths on the return trip.

TEACHER: YOU didn't take any breaths at all.

CHILD: I don't need any. I can go all the way across on one.

TEACHER: When I call "Breathe," take a breath.

Introduce:

Progressive Rotary Breathing with Arm Stroke: Walk with the hands on the knees and practice rotary breathing. Keep this procession going in a large circle for at least ten breaths. Then begin reaching and pulling the arms under water as the breathing continues, for about ten more breaths. You will be busy going from one child to the next, helping to keep his cheek on the water, his face straight down, and making sure the arms are pulling toward the stomach. Call "Breathe and blow," "Reach and pull" very slowly. Don't forget to call "Eyes open" whenever necessary. And now is a good time to remark about the children who have their fingers spread wide apart. "How many of you use a fork for soup? Make a *spoon* out of your hand, not a fork, so you can really pull yourself through the water. Feel the difference?"

Now hop back to the wall, and try the whole stroke again with breathing. The results will be about as follows: One child can get across the pool taking three breaths, one can get in two breaths before he stands, one takes one breath, and Anne is trying furiously.

Review:

Back Stroke: Have the group face the wall, hold on to the railing, and repeat all of the instructions necessary for the back stroke, as described in the previous lesson. You are absolutely astonished that two of your group can cover a distance just short of fifteen feet. The third is afloat, but he can't seem to stay afloat when he starts any motion. And the fourth is sinking, but not quite as fast as he sank yesterday. This is the day for celebration! Seeing such dramatic results gives you the zest and energy you need to patiently review with the children who are having difficulties.

Now is the time to explain how the good swimmer breathes when he is swimming on the back. Up to this point the children have just been holding their breath, and they were not afloat long enough to need another breath. Tell them always to breathe through their mouths. Get a big breath quickly, hold it, let it out and quickly get another big breath. It is similar to gasping. In contrast to rotary breathing, they are not to breathe out through the nose at all.

Introduce Turns:

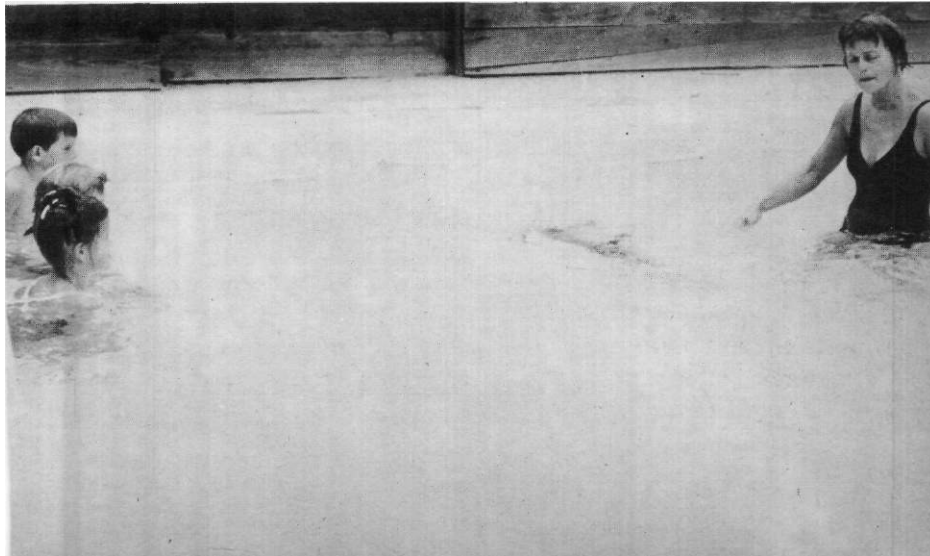
Turning in the Water: It is important for the children's safety that they learn to turn while swimming, so that they can get back to their starting point if necessary. They have been practicing only straight swimming, and though a turn sounds simple enough, it takes more control of the body than some manage to have. Even though they understand the directions and watch the others, they are unable to turn their bodies without some practice. The teacher stands approximately ten feet from the middle of the group. The child on the far end is to swim out to you, pass in front of you, and end up over in the corner. He is to make this turn on one breath. It is more fun to say something like this: "Now, Paul, swim out to my house, just honk,

don't stop, and swim on over to Barbara's house." And so **on** down the line.

Turning with Rotary Breathing: Now you need to check with each child to see which side he breathes on. If he breathes on his right side, he should start at the end (the corner) of the pool so that when he breathes he faces the *inside* of the semi-circle. He is to perform the same semicircular swim, only he should try to take at least two breaths.

Turning from Front to Back: "Pretend you have been swimming a mile or two and you suddenly get very tired—and all swimmers get tired—so you need to rest." (Don't ask them what *they* would do, as it would take five minutes out of the lesson.) Demonstrate by swimming halfway across the pool, turning on your back and continuing the rest of the distance using the back stroke (football kick and finning). The first time the children attempt this skill, they *really* rest. They swim out, stop, stand, turn around, kick off from the bottom to get on their backs. It takes some practice to turn without touching bottom.

**Not an unfortunate drowning, but "learning to turn in the water."
The teacher stands ten feet from the group.**



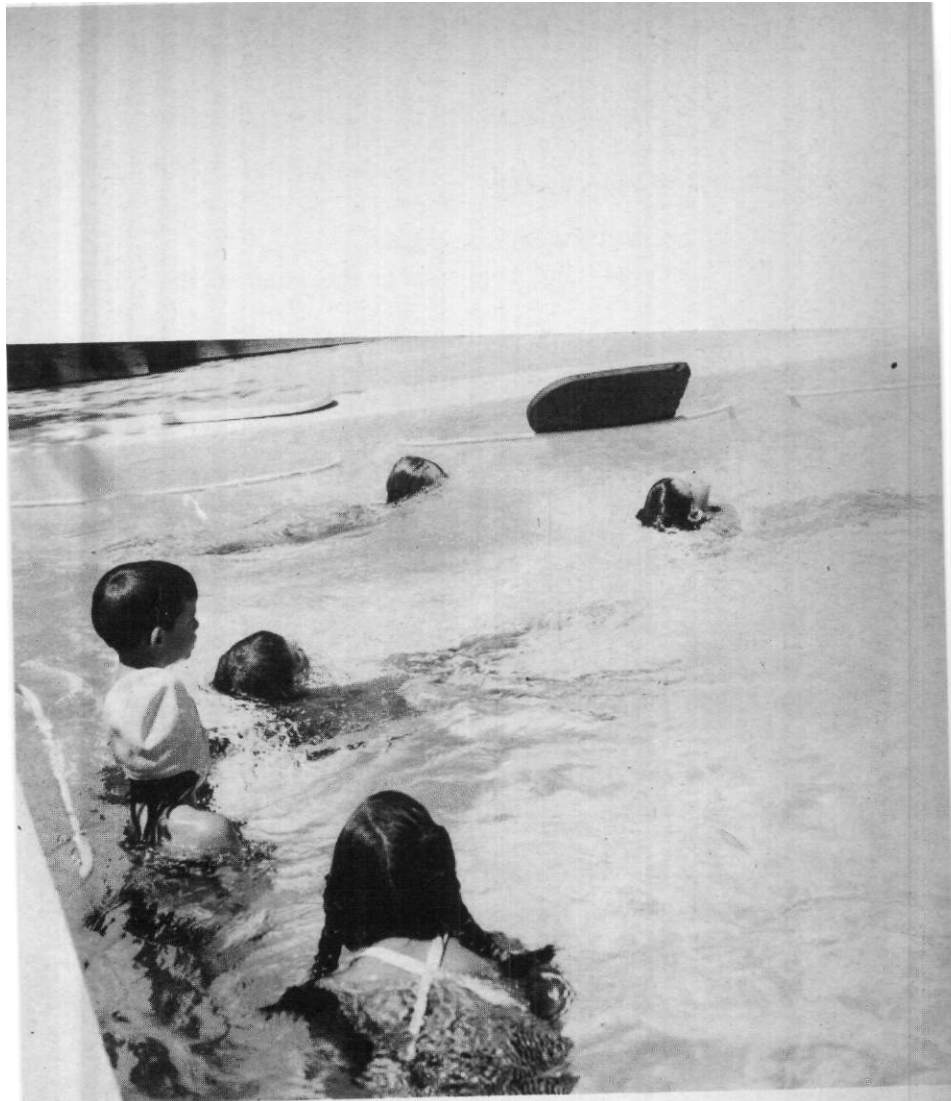
Changing Directions: This is a really rough one. "Pretend you are swimming out to an island for a picnic and when you get halfway there, you remember that you forgot your lunch; but you're tired, so turn on your back and swim the back stroke all the way back to the shore." For your demonstration, have the children line up in two rows in the center of the pool. Tell them to watch your legs. Swim between the rows, turn on your back by pulling your legs under you, extend them in the opposite direction, and start the back stroke back to the wall. There will be some struggling as they try to turn without touching the bottom.

Both of these last two skills (turning from front to back, and changing directions) are absolutely necessary for deep-water swimmers. That is, turning without touching bottom. Do not point out to the children the dangers of deep water, however. You want them to swim pleasantly and safely in deep water, and not to be afraid of it. Don't say, "When you get out in the deep there won't be any bottom to stand on." They know that already. Announce simply: "We are going down to the other end of the pool now."

Before you start out on this adventure, size up your group a little. Some of the more "expert" swimmers may be the ones who seem most apprehensive. They need a little nudging.

There will be others who have been trying to get down to the deep end every day. A good way to start is to line them up along the railing, your eager ones first, hesitant ones next, and you can bring up the rear. If the whole group seems willing, swim alongside of them and warn them to stop on the side and not go farther than the corner. The children will huddle together on the side of the pool, close to the corner; a good place

for you
is
directly
behind
them,
on the
end.
You
know
that
they
are
excited
, and
you
yourself
f
observ
e more
sharply
and are
more
alert in
this
situatio
n.



Changing Directions: Swim halfway across pool, turn without touching bottom, and return to starting place on your back.

Introduce Deep-water Drills:

Take a big breath and hold it, exhale.

Take a big breath and hold face in the water to the count of five.

Hold the railing with one hand and bob ten times.

Cork Float: Hold the railing with one hand, hold the knees under the chest with the other arm.

Tread Water: Have the children all face the same direction. They are to hold the railing with one hand and fin with the other arm. Everybody turns, holds the railing with the other hand and fins with his free arm. Now start riding your bicycles while you are finning with one arm. Your legs do not come to the surface. They stay straight up and down in the water, just as though you were walking.

Now have all the children face the wall, and individually, hold each child under the arm (your other arm is holding the railing) and tell him to fin with both arms while he rides his bike.

"Start riding your bicycle first, let go of the railing, and start finning, and see how long you can keep your head above water." Like any new skill they find this difficult and heads bob under before you can count to one. The railing is within easy grasp, and is grabbed more times than you would care to count during this first practice. But children like this challenge, and before long can tread water for a few seconds, maybe three, then five, and then with each practice they increase the length of time they can perform this difficult and satisfying skill.

"O.K., back to the shallow end for playtime."

Some are pretty disappointed that this is all of the deep-water activity, but with your promise of bigger and better things to come, and your suggestion that they practice more sitting dives, they scurry hand-over-hand down the railing. Going down the slide, diving for rocks, playing Ring-around-a-rosy no longer has the same appeal as it did only three short lessons ago.



Treading water is one of the first deep-water drills.

SUMMARY OF LESSON VII

Take to the Water:

Lesson Plan
Clock

Introduce Sitting Dive:

If you have no steps to your pool, you will work from the side. If you do have steps, you will begin here the practice of sitting dives; then move to the side.

Dive for practice in entering the water correctly.

Dive and glide for distance.

Dive and use the whole stroke (arms and legs, head down). If you want to devote more time to this, use legs only first, then arms only, and finally the whole stroke.

Review:

1. Bobbing in a circle. (Play Ten Little Indians.)
2. Make a flower float as described in Lesson IV. (Emphasis is on the child's holding his breath for a longer time than in his previously established record.)
3. Number the children off, Ones and Twos. In each of the following exercises, the Ones go first across the pool, then the Twos join them. The Ones return first, then the Twos.
 - Glide.
 - Glide with kick.
 - Arms only.
 - Arms and legs (whole stroke).
 - Arms and legs, take one breath, continue to swim across.
 - Whole stroke, this time taking two breaths as they continue to swim.

Introduce:

1. Progressive rotary breathing with arm stroke: Walk with hands on knees and practice rotary breathing. Begin underwater arm movement as you continue rotary breathing and walking in a circle.
2. Whole stroke again, with breathing; getting at least three breaths is the goal for each child.

Review:

1. Back stroke. Finning and kicking, and explain breath control on the back.

Introduce Turns:

1. Child swims in a semicircle from the wall, passes in front of you (you are standing about ten feet from the wall), and finishes in the corner.
2. Turn with rotary breathing: If child breathes on his right side, he should start in the corner so that side faces the *inside* of the semicircle. He should get two breaths.
3. Turning from front to back: Swim halfway across the pool, turn for the back position, and continue to the other side of the pool, using the back stroke.
4. Changing directions: Swim halfway across pool face down, pull your legs under you, without touching the bottom, extend them, and start the back stroke, and return to your original position.

Introduce Deep-water Drills:

1. Big breath and hold it, blow out air.
2. Big breath, hold face in the water and count to five.
3. Hold the railing with one hand and bob ten times.
4. Cork float: Hold the railing with one hand, hold the knees under the chest with the other arm, face down for the count of five.

5. Tread water.
 - a. Hold railing with one hand and fin with the other arm. Reverse this.
 - b. Hold railing with one hand, fin with the other arm and ride a bicycle with your legs.
 - c. All face the wall, and you hold each one under the arm, while he fins.
 - d. Face the wall, start bicycle paddling first, then finning; aim is to keep head above water.

Playtime: In the shallow end of the pool.

LESSON VIII

Objective:

How to dive from one knee.
Swim in deep water (front and back).
Jump in deep water.
Proper ascent from deep water.

Line up the children on the deck and demonstrate a dive on one knee. The depth of the water should be just about equal to the child's height. Hook the toes of one foot over the edge of the pool; the knee of the other is on the deck. With arms over the ears, and thumbs hooked, the child should begin to lean as if to touch the water with his hands and without changing the position of his arms—i.e., extended and over his ears—he leans until he falls in. Remind the children to keep their chins on their chests in order to keep from belly flopping. You do not have to complete this dive; just show them the correct position. The children are to dive, one at a time, returning each time to the same spot on the deck. They should repeat the one-knee dive several times, and should begin to dive for distance, as in the sitting dive. On the second round, have them begin the whole stroke, reaching up for a breath when they need it; the aim now is to reach the other side of the pool. For the belly floppers say, "I want you to swim all the way *under* the water after your dive." Two rounds is all the time you will want to give to diving because this is a busy and exciting twenty-five' minutes today.

Review:

Beginning in the water from the Glide Position: Glide across for distance, glide back with the kick, glide across with arms only, then use the whole stroke (arms and legs on one breath). To expedite this, number the children, Ones and Twos. Now, before they start out on the breathing, remark that some of them can get one breath, and some can get two breaths, and some three, but that today, they should breathe when they need to, and should not stop until they reach the other side. Also, you have not said much about their rearing their heads forward, because the important thing earlier was to teach them how to breathe; however, today remind them to be sure to breathe from the side, because when they lift their heads forward, their feet sink; so ask them to breathe just the same as they do when they practice rotary breathing on the side. Cheek on the water, and blow. If you feel it is necessary to review rotary breathing, or progressive rotary breathing (walk, use arms as you breathe), do so.

Have the children go individually, and correct the basic faults. In other words, if a child is having trouble and seems to be doing everything wrong, don't talk about the way he spreads his fingers. Go back to basic things like the way he pushes off in his glide, with his head out of water; or the fact that he is not kicking at all; or ask him if he knew one arm was doing all the work, and the other arm was taking a nap. If a child can paddle along and breathe fairly regularly pulling his arms under the water, ask him to try a width with the overarm stroke. Do not call it the "crawl" stroke, or "free-style" stroke, because this does not present the picture you want the child to visualize. In using the underwater arm stroke, the child can take a breath whenever he wants to. In using the overarm stroke, this is not the case. Without showing the child specifically when to breathe, let him try pulling his arms out of the water and breathing to the side when it seems natural for him to do so. If he is fairly successful, tell him that he can swim

faster this way and that he should continue it. You will have to be the judge as to when you should make this suggestion. Use this as a guide: When the child can take three or four breaths as he uses the whole stroke, and is breathing correctly from the side, and when he looks as though he could swim farther than the width of the pool, then he is ready for the overarm stroke and for more work on rhythmic breathing.

Have the Ones, then the Twos swim the width of the pool, tread water at the side, and come all the way back to their starting position using the back stroke (fin and football kick). *Now* is the time to suggest that they sing "Row Row Row Your Boat"; this will make them remember when they sank before they could get a word out, and they will feel pleased with themselves. Tell that back swimmer merrily headed toward the deep end of the pool that if he would open his eyes, he would swim straight, or at least go where he wanted to go.

Review making a turn while swimming using rotary breathing. Review turning from front to back, and changing directions (all fully described in the previous lesson).

Down to the Deep End: Perhaps your shy child needs no urging about going down to the other end of the pool today. She saw with her own eyes that all of her friends who went down on the last lesson all came back. Play follow the leader, hand over hand, down the railing, advising the leader to stop just short of the end, while you bring up the rear. Tell your little friend who looks tearful by now that she can just watch, and you will not have her do things she is not yet ready to do. She goes because her pride is at stake, and because she trusts you.

You may have someone who missed yesterday's lesson, so review holding breath, and the cork float, and invite her to join you. If you have no one to be initiated, start in with treading water, facing the railing, and urge the children to see how long they can keep it up. Remind the children to start peddling first, then to fin. "Since you are all such lovely singers, let's

see who can sing the longest while treading. Everybody ready? 'Home, home on the range, Where the deer and the antelope play . . . ' " It may be more fun for *you* to sing "Seventy-Six Trombones," but it is important that you pick a song which they know so that you won't hear the excuse that they can't keep their heads out of water because they don't know the words to *that* song.

Introduce:

Announce very calmly to your best and most confident swimmer: "Swim the width of the pool. Grab the railing if you need it." Instruct the others in your firmest voice. "You are all to stay right here." Use your best side stroke and swim along with your first swimmer. Tell him to remain at the other side of the pool, comment very little on his exhibition, unless, of course, he did not use the railing or gutter at all, but chances are he will have had to. Swim back and escort the next child. Tell him to remain with the first one. Now, of the children who have been swimming in the deep water, one grabbed the railing only once, and one held the railing with one hand *all* the way, swimming very well with the other arm.

But there's Anne. Coax her to just cut the corner—from her railing, on the side, over to where you are holding on to the railing at the end. Maybe she will, maybe she won't. It's only one stroke. You can't give her too much time because you can't leave your others unattended. You may reach your hand out to hers, and she reaches for it and beams all over at this short glide. "I wouldn't take you down here if you couldn't swim, Anne, but you can swim the whole width of the pool now, so you will be a deep-water bug before you know it." A conversation is going on as you and Anne, by means of the railing, join the others at the end of the pool. "Did I tell you you were all deep-water bugs now?"

Back to your first swimmer: "This time swim over, taking

as many breaths as you need, and see if you need the railing at all; when you get to the other side, tread, and come all the way back on your back." "Oh, no," they moan. This is a large order. Do not ask this of a child who cannot swim well on his back in the shallow end. Even the child who is sure of his back stroke in the shallow end may freeze at this suggestion. He may start out very well on his back stroke and suddenly turn and get in his more comfortable position—that of swimming on his stomach. Or he may turn and grab the railing. It is necessary that you accompany each child even though the railing is there to grab. He has the railing on one side and you on the other. If he starts to grab you, push him gently to the railing. Offer an alternative swim for the poor back swimmers. They are to swim over, pound the deck three times, or bark like a dog, and then swim all the way back.

This sounds perhaps as if you are pretty busy. You are. Whether it is a precarious business, taking four children down to the deep water who are not experienced swimmers, depends on the specific situation. If you know you have a child who does not take your instructions seriously, and you know by now that he will not heed you when you say "Stay," do not take him along as part of a group. If you do not swim, and have been using an older child to demonstrate, you have gotten along pretty well up to now. However, do not attempt to offer any help with your hands if the children are in the deep end of the pool and if you cannot swim. You can do it all by means of a bamboo pole and a little intelligence. Walk along the deck holding the pole a little ahead of the child, and as he swims the width, you walk along on the deck. When Anne hesitates, extend the pole to her, or have her reach for the pole which is extended a foot or two from her, then pull her from the side to the end by means of the pole instead of your hand. This is not to say that this method ought to be used instead of your swimming alongside the children. It is only to say that there is a substitute way if the teacher cannot handle himself

easily in deep water. In this lesson there is a gradual separation from the teacher, and in the next two lessons, a complete independence develops.

Making a Turn: This time you are the policeman. You hold on to the railing on the end about halfway across, and extend your hand. The child closest to the shallow end is to swim out to you using the whole stroke and rotary breathing, touch your hand which is the "Go" signal, and swim back to the corner. For the back swimmers, have them touch the "Go" signal and fin and kick on their backs as they swim back to the wall. (Same as changing directions.)

Climb Out of the Water: There is an easy and graceful way to climb out of deep water. You should practice it and have it perfected before you show the children. It is fun sometimes, before you show them the proper way to get out of deep water, to burlesque for them ways in which you have seen some people get out. Demonstrating all the sights you have seen, such as throwing one leg on the deck, and struggling with the other leg, ending up by falling back in the water, or teetering on your stomach or any way that looks awkward, ungainly, and splashy.

The correct way is done simply with one movement. You place both hands flat on the pool deck, and then, with upward thrust and a quick twist of your body, you flip yourself in a sitting position either to the right or left of your hands, your feet dangling in the water.

It is not as easy for the children as you had hoped. Especially for those solidly built ones who are somewhat less than agile.

Jump with Teacher: Take the child's hand and jump from the end of the pool (with the child closest to the railing or gutter). Climb out the proper way and continue with each child. "Can I hold my nose?" "Certainly."

Jump to the Teacher: Then, stay in the corner, and let each

There is an easy and graceful way to climb out of the water: Place your hands on the deck and, then, with a quick twist of the body, catapult yourself out on the deck in a sitting position.



child jump to you. Some will not jump unless you are holding their hand. So be it.

Jump Alone: Jumping into water over their heads is just made-to-order for some, and takes courage for others. It is time, now, for you to climb out of the pool and get your bamboo pole. The pole should be about six or seven feet long and the end you extend into the water should be bound with friction tape. Stand on the side as the children are lined up on the end ready to jump alone. Instruct them to jump, climb out, and get at the end of the line for another turn. If your pool has a railing, the hesitant ones have learned to jump and grab the railing at the same time. Warn the children not to jump too close to the side.

Jump and Swim: On the second round, each child is to jump feet first and start to swim, using the whole stroke and rotary breathing, down to the shallow end of the pool. He is to use the railing when he needs it. You escort each child by walking on the deck, with your pole just a foot or two ahead of the swimmer. It is interesting to observe that your best swimmer is grabbing the railing more than he needs to. Also interesting that one of your group is swimming better than he has ever swum before. He is really pulling those arms and kicking those legs, whereas in shallow water he had made only a partial effort. It is a good idea to count the number of times the children grab the railing on their trip down. This is not to be used as a black mark against them, but just as an observation which you can comment on at the next lesson. For the child who can swim without using the railing at all, this is an earned victory. "Gee, isn't that wonderful? You swam twenty-five feet. Your longest swim yet. How about it, do you think you could swim all the way back? We'll see next lesson."

Playtime: For playtime today, give free rides letting the child hold on to the bamboo pole as you pull him back and forth the width of the deep end. Then back to the shallow end to practice one-knee dives.

SUMMARY OF LESSON VIII

Take to the Water:

Lesson plan
Bamboo pole

Introduce:

Dive on one knee. First dive should be a dive for distance; the second should begin the whole stroke. Urge the group to get as many breaths as they need to reach the other side of the pool.

Review:

(Divide the group into Ones and Twos. The first four exercises which follow should be done on one breath.)

1. Glide for distance.
2. Glide with the kick.
3. Use arms only, no kick.
4. Use the whole stroke (arms and legs).
5. Rotary breathing at the side, or progressive rotary breathing if necessary.
6. Introduce overarm stroke if it seems to be called for.
7. Use whole stroke, tread water, and return on the back, using football kick and finning.
8. Turn in the water (swim from wall, past teacher, end up in corner), using rotary breathing.
9. Turn from front to back (swim midway, turn over on back and finish distance of pool on back).
10. Changing directions. (Swim midway, pull legs through and return to starting point on back.)

Review: Down to the Deep End

1. Cork float (no railing).
2. Tread water (sing).

Introduce:

1. Swim the width of the pool (teacher swims alongside using side stroke), using the railing when necessary. Only one child at a time.
2. Swim the width again, emphasize taking breaths instead of grabbing railing; tread water; have them come all the way back on their backs; finning and football kick.
3. Offer alternative swim for poor back swimmers (Swim over using whole stroke, rotary breathing, pound the deck three times, and use the same means of return.)
4. Make a turn in the water (teacher is the policeman).
5. Climb out of water.
6. Jump with teacher.
7. Jump to teacher.
8. Jump alone.
9. Jump and swim to shallow water.

Playtime: Give rides with bamboo pole in deep water. Practice one-knee dives in shallow water.

LESSON IX

Objective:

Preparation for test to be given on last lesson.
Correct weak points of each child.
Learn standing dive.
Endurance swim.

Review:

Today it is important that you have in mind specific ways to help each child overcome his weaknesses. These will chiefly involve the back stroke and breathing. Review the points of the back stroke in Lesson VI before you start today. Start with the back float, holding each child's head in your hands, then the back glide; review the kick and finning separately, then put the whole stroke together. There *will* be progress.

Perhaps you notice that another child is getting no help from his kick when he swims face down. Have him hold a kick board and kick back and forth across the shallow end, using rotary breathing. If another child has a fairly strong kick but putters around with his arms, not really pulling hard under water, set him to work using arms only. Have a third child practice rotary breathing on the railing and so forth.

Divide the groups into Ones and Twos. In glide position, review glide; glide with kick only; glide with arms only; whole stroke on one breath; whole stroke with rotary breathing. "See, it helped to practice your kick; you fairly *flew* across. Let's see how it is in the deep water." And down they go along the railing, and you climb out.



Review: "In the backstroke there will be progress."

Introduce:

Standing Dive: Have the children ascend from the water in the way they have been taught in Lesson VIII. (Since you are on the deck, with your handy pole, it may be necessary to brace yourself and pull a few out. You do this for the ones who can't get out by hook or crook.)

For the standing dive, stand with toes hooked over the edge of the pool, feet spread a comfortable distance. The toes are hooked to help in the push-off, and to prevent slipping. When the arms are over the ears, and the thumbs hooked, bend from the waist, and as you bend, one leg (usually the right one), lifts slowly behind you until you lose your balance, and fall in head first. Warning: It is difficult to demonstrate *without* falling in.

The children should try this dive, one at a time, from the *end* and near the side. There may be a child who will stand like a statue for a painfully long minute, and in spite of all of your words of encouragement, will not be able to take the dive.

"Bend a little farther."

"I'm scared."

"Let your leg go back a little farther."

"I'm scared."

"Take a big breath, and go."

"I'm scared."

"Bend your knee a little."

"I can't."

"Do you want me to *help* you a little?"

Splash!

The child interpreted the word "help" correctly. How else could the teacher help but push him a little? And the thought of this is worse misery than he was already encountering, so before the teacher had a chance to "help," in he went. With each dive, a little more ease and grace is developing. After three times around, instruct the children to stay in the water and hold the railing on the side.

A one-knee dive and a standing dive.



Review:

Tread Water: Emphasis is of course on keeping the head above water longer than the time before, longer than they did at their last lesson. Pair them off, and have them face each other and count loudly; each one will attempt to stay above longer than his partner.

Turn from Front to Back: Have each child use the whole stroke with rotary breathing to about the center of the pool and when you yell "Turn," he is to turn on his back and finish the distance with the back stroke. For the good back swimmers, you can yell "Turn" sooner and given them the satisfaction of a good long back stroke. For the poor back swimmers, yell "Turn" when they are nearly at the other side, and they will have the satisfaction of being able to go a short distance at least. Each turn is taken near the railing on the end so the child can use it if necessary, and he is comforted by the sight of you ambling along slightly ahead of him with your pole.

Changing Directions: Again, one at a time, and near the railing on the end, have the child swim out, pull his legs through and return to his starting place, using the back stroke. Here again, you call the signals, so call "Turn" to meet the needs of the child. The very fact that you are not omitting any child, but calling his name and assuming he can perform this as well as the next one, very often convinces him that he can, and he does.

Introduce:

Jump and Swim Front and Back: Now they are to jump in, not dive, use the whole stroke until they reach the other side; they are not to touch the railing, the wall, or the side with their feet, but instead, tread water and return to their starting place, using the back stroke. You do not need to tell the child who

cannot yet swim the width on his back that he can turn over and finish on his front, he will do this anyway. You can egg him on. If he gets midway: "Come on, you can make it, just a little bit farther, nice and easy, fin fin fin, slowly-slowly with that kick, I won't let you bump your head, I'll tell you when you are there, don't look back, hooray hooray hurrah, stop."

Sitting Dive and Swim to Other Side: This has been a workout so far. Physically and otherwise. So have the children all climb out and lie down on their stomachs while you explain a game. The game is called "King Fish," and how you play the game depends upon the abilities of your group. If there is only one child who needs the railing, then the whole group can go at once. If there are two children who need the railing, divide the group. You are not taking any chances. Anne needs the railing, you know, once and sometimes twice, but Barbara too needs to grab it occasionally. So Anne and Tom are in the first game with Anne closest to the end. Barbara and Paul are in the second game.

The game is simple: The children are to get into a sitting-dive position (feet on railing, knees spread), and when the teacher says "Go," they are to dive, swim to the other side, climb out, and the first one in a sitting position with his arms clutching his knees is the King Fish.

Up to now, no more than one child has been swimming in deep water at any one time. So do not propose this game until you are sure of your swimmers. And even when you are, you do not take anything for granted; you walk along the end with your pole, your eyes bouncing from one swimmer to the next.

Anne won because she can really shinny out of the pool. She is jubilant. (Note: To avoid a lot of false starts, do not say "On your mark, get set, go." Simply wait until they are all ready and use one word "Go.") While you are watching them you are conscious of the fact that during the racing the children lose their good form; but, really, you are so busy watching to

see that no one is in distress that you can't tell who kicked which way or whose breathing was the most regular; but you can see that racing would be better at a much later time, because though the game was fun, the minute you say "race" to children it means the sacrificing of some of their skills. This point is stressed here because playing this game (or one similar to it) is fun, but in the beginning stages of learning to swim, it is wiser to concentrate on developing skills and form. In addition, children five and six years old are really poor sports and do not lose gracefully.

Now is the time to tell your group that their next lesson is their last lesson and that they will be given a test to see if they can do all of the things they really have learned to do in the water. The hardest part of the test is: Jump from the deep end of the pool, and swim twenty-five feet (show them where that would be and mark it with something like a kick board if your pool is longer than twenty-five feet), tread water, and swim all the way back to the deep end using the back stroke.

So devote the remainder of the time today to practice. "No, you won't pass the test if you grab the railing. That's why we're practicing today, to build up our endurance." "What's endurance?" "If you can swim fifty feet today, then you already have endurance. Go." Let each child try this before you tell them about your other test, which is to swim twenty-five feet, tread water, and swim all the way back.

"Go."

"Whole stroke?"

"Yes."

"Arms and legs?"

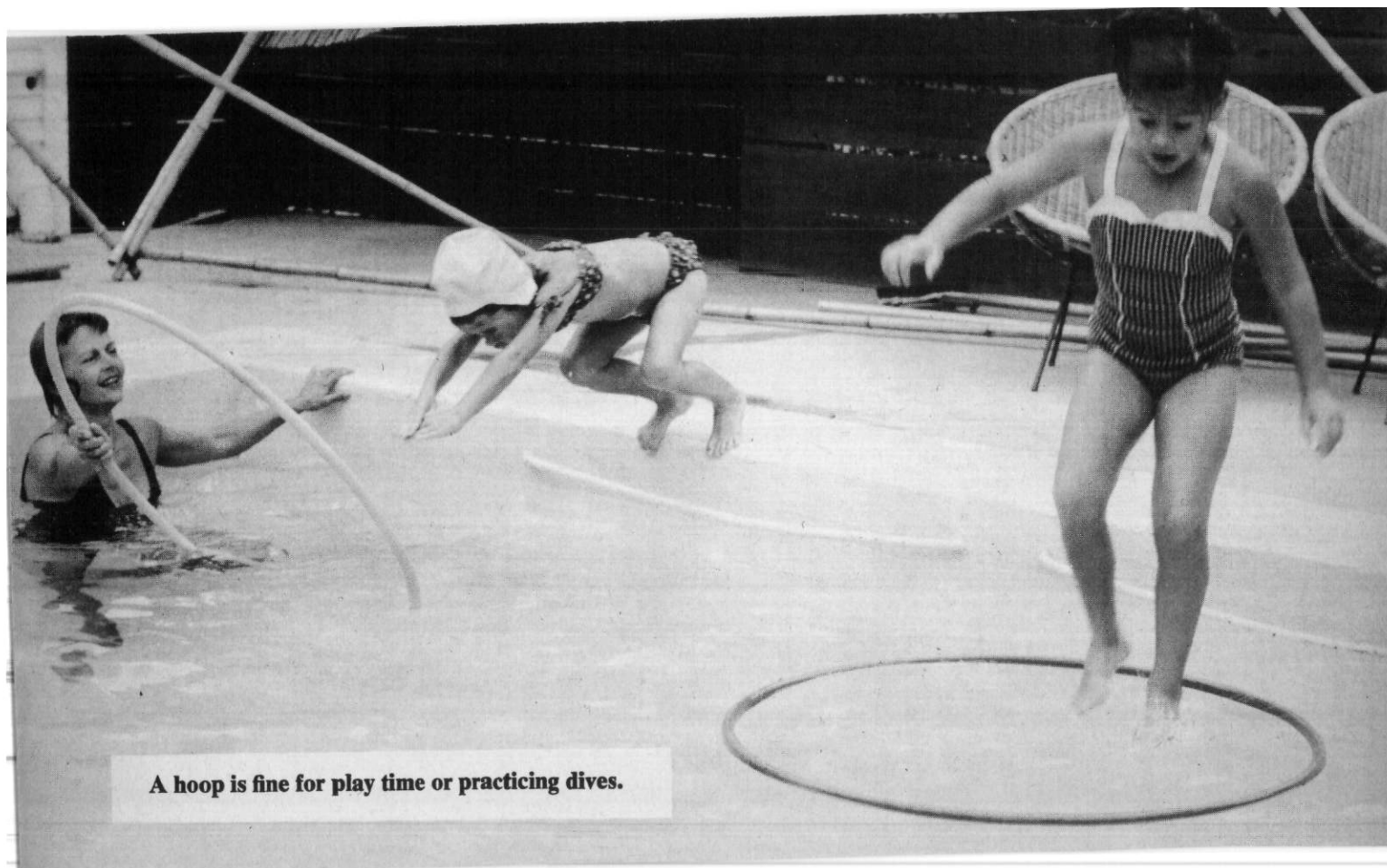
"Yes."

"Rotary breathing?"

"Yes."

"*All* the way back?"

"Yes."



A hoop is fine for play time or practicing dives.

"Backstroke?"

"Yes."

"What if I can't make it?"

"What if you can!"

Playtime: Playtime today is in the deep end of the pool, each doing what he likes to do best. Some will practice jumping, some will try more standing dives, some will swim a little; none will practice their back stroke without urging, and **one** little voice will say, "Can I have my playtime in the shallow end?" "Sure, Anne." Whether or not you allow more than **one** child in the deep water during playtime depends on how many children you are supervising, or how many adults are observing, or your own fears, and on your own swimming ability.¹⁵⁸ • HOW TO TEACH CHILDREN TO SWIM

SUMMARY OF LESSON IX

Take to the Water:

Lesson plan
Bamboo pole

Review:

1. Be prepared to work on each child's weak points. Work individually, and have all work on their specific problems in the first few minutes of the lesson.
2. Have whole group review rotary breathing with the whole stroke.
3. Review all the points of the back stroke in Lesson VI and practice with the whole group.
Then divide the group into Ones and Twos.
4. Glide for distance.
5. Glide with the kick.
6. Glide with arms only.
7. Whole stroke.
(Numbers 4 through 7 *on one breath.*)
8. Whole stroke with rotary breathing (with emphasis on breathing from the side).
Whole group to deep end; teacher out of water.
9. Hand over hand down to deep end.
10. Climb out properly.

Introduce:

Standing dive. Toes hooked on edge of pool, arms over ears,
thumbs hooked, bend at the waist, lift one leg slowly behind you,

lose your balance, and fall in, head first.

Review in Deep Water:

1. Treading water (with singing).
2. Turning from front to back (judge distance according to ability of back swimmer).
3. Changing directions (the turn again depends on the ability of the back swimmer).

Introduce:

1. Jump in from side, use whole stroke and rotary breathing to other side, tread water, swim all the way back using the back stroke.
2. Game called "King Fish" (sitting dive, swim to the other side, climb out properly, first one out in a sitting position, clutching his knees, is the King Fish). This is the first time more than one child is swimming in the deep water at the same time, so play it safe.
3. Jump from deep end of pool, swim (whole stroke, rotary breathing) twenty-five feet, tread water, and come all the way back using the back stroke. (Make mental note of number of times child uses railing.)

Playtime: In deep water under careful supervision.

LESSON X

Take to Water:

Test sheets
Bamboo pole
Rock or object to dive for

Objective:

To pass the test.

If you are a qualified swimmer we suggest you obtain from the YMCA or American Red Cross some beginning swimmer .skills' sheets before you test your swimmers. If you are not qualified to sign "beginning swimmer" cards and award buttons for passing these national aquatic tests, the test given below will serve as a very adequate substitute. It is a combination of the beginning swimmer tests given by the Red Cross and by the YMCA; and, in addition, this test includes some of the skills the children have learned that are not on the national tests.

The chief difference between the YMCA test and the Red Cross test comes in the last skill tested, which is the most difficult. The YMCA test reads: "Jump feet first into water over head, swim 25 feet, any stroke, turn around, and return to Starting place." The Red Cross examination reads: "Jump feet first into water over head, swim 15 yards, turn about and swim back to starting point," and "Dive into deep water, swim 15 yards, turn around, turn over on the back and rest in floating position for 15 seconds, then turn again and swim back to

starting point." In the test given below, the most difficult skill reads as follows: "Jump into deep water, swim 25 feet, tread water, turn, and return to starting place using the back stroke." You may feel that each of the children in your group deserves some kind of award, and you can make a list of each one's accomplishments on a card, even though they may not complete the whole test. If you are not a qualified instructor, and if you have a child in your group who can pass this test, you might wish to get in touch with an authorized swimming instructor and make arrangements with him to have the child receive a national award. Or you may look upon the test as being excellent review and may not feel that any special awards need be given the children.

THE TEST

In Shallow Water:

1. Hold breath to the count of ten, and exhale.
2. Hold breath to the count of ten with the face in the water; lift face; blow out air.
3. Do a cork float to the count of ten. Regain footing properly.
4. Do a face-down float to the count of ten. Regain footing properly.
5. In a correct glide position, push off from the side of the pool, glide for ten seconds, regain footing properly.
6. In a correct glide position, push off from the side of the pool, and kick a distance of fifteen feet.
7. In a correct glide position, push off from the side of the pool, and use the arms only for fifteen feet. No kicking.
8. Holding on to railing, push off on back, glide for five seconds, regain footing properly.
9. Holding on to railing, push off on back, glide with the kick for five seconds, regain footing properly.

10. Holding on to railing, push off on back, glide with the finning movement for five seconds (no kicking), regain footing properly.
11. Use the whole back stroke, i.e., finning and kicking, for the distance of fifteen feet.
12. In water chest-deep, recover an object from the bottom of the pool.
13. From a sitting glide from the top step, or a sitting dive from the deck, swim twenty feet on one breath.
14. Using the correct wall position, facing the side with head out of water, kick feet near the surface for fifteen seconds.
15. Using the correct wall position, repeat rotary breathing ten times.
16. Walk in water with hands on the knees, using rotary breathing ten times.
17. From a glide position, use the whole stroke and swim twenty feet, getting at least two breaths.
18. From a glide position, swim under water at least ten feet, pulling with the arms. (Remind them how they used to swim under water between your legs, in Lesson IV; tell them to pretend they are going down to bring up a rock, but instead of coming up immediately, to swim along the bottom of the pool.)
19. Swim in a semicircle, starting from the side, out about ten feet, and making a gradual turn to end up over in the corner. (See turns, Lesson VII.)
20. In a glide position, push off, using both arms and legs, swim ten feet, turn and swim to other side of pool on back. (See Lesson VII.) Turn from front to back.
21. In a glide position, push off, using both arms and legs, swim ten feet, pull legs through, and return to starting place swimming on back. (See Lesson VII for changing direction.)
22. Bob ten times.
23. Using a one-knee dive from the deck, dive for distance; i.e., see how far child can get on the glide, using no arms or legs.

In Deep Water:

1. Cork float for ten seconds.
2. Face-down float for ten seconds.
3. Swim width of pool, getting at least two breaths.
4. Tread water for at least ten seconds.
5. Make a standing dive into deep water and climb out of pool properly.
6. Jump into deep water, swim twenty-five feet, turn, and swim back to starting point.

Or for the good back swimmers: Jump into deep water, swim twenty-five feet, tread water, and swim all the way back on your back.

After these ten lessons, there is still much to do. The challenges become greater, and in some ways they become different. A child of five will begin to learn the competitive swimming strokes (free style, breast stroke, back stroke and butterfly). He will try these strokes experimentally and intermittently and should be encouraged to practice them. And without particular pushing, he will begin to adapt these strokes and swim them naturally. A compulsive concern about form is not appropriate to this stage of a child's swimming.

If your child has found that he wants to swim, you might look around for a class in synchronized swimming or encourage him to join the team at the Y or at the Elks' Pool or start a swimming club in your own neighborhood. As more and more families build their own pools, and more and more swimming clubs are started, more and more children not especially good at other sports will find that they can swim easily and gracefully. These lessons are intended, above all, to create this feeling of ease and mobility in the water. If your child's initiation to the water creates this feeling, his interest in swimming will, very likely, be lifelong.

Part Three

*Pool Owners' Pleasures
and Perils*

WHEN the swimming season opens everyone is enthusiastic. But no one is more enthusiastic than your children's friends. For two weeks before you plan to open the pool they have been appearing with their suits and towels under their arms, or wearing their suits under their jeans and clam-diggers, and trying to act very nonchalant. This latter group is made up of ten-year-olds who have learned by now that it isn't polite to ask; they just stand around all day with a kind of yearning look. So the day you say you will open your pool, you'd better open it, or be prepared to hear the most mournful wails.

There is nothing so startling as the first time a neighbor child comes to your door dressed in a swimming suit and announces at your breakfast table, "My mother says I have to be home by five." This happens only once. Next time you are prepared with: "*Five* minutes before eleven, or *five* minutes after eleven?" "Before, I think," and that's settled.

When you are doing your Christmas shopping, you may see a child who looks familiar to you, but you just can't place him. When he sees you staring at him, he gives you a very disinterested look, but some time later you recall that he was one

of the children who swam in your pool the preceding summer. The reason why you do not recognize one another is that you both have all your clothes on.

You will always have swimming pool friends, i.e., people you only see in the summer. But this is fine, because this is about all you have in common with one another. You have the pool, and people like to swim. How many of these strangers you have visiting your pool will depend on a great many things—on how many children you have; on how many friends they have; and on how many friends their friends have. How many friends of friends you allow will depend on how much time you have and on how bighearted you are. It is very difficult, however, when eight little boys and girls are swimming, and an eager face appears and someone yells "Hi, Billy," for you to say anything else but "Do you have a suit, Billy?"

This question brings up another point, by the way, which is worth discussing. Even though you are loaded down with suits of many sizes, it is a good idea to send your young friends home to get their own suits and towels. In this way, you will not be blamed for letting a child swim whose parents had called the doctor in the middle of the night before because the child had a temperature of 103. It will also eliminate the problem of an irate mother stamping her foot angrily on the pool deck because her child, who won't get out of the water, has a bongo lesson in fifteen minutes.

Sometimes neighborhood children who swim frequently in your pool avoid the great inconvenience of having to tote a suit back and forth by leaving their suits in your dressing room. Often the mothers of these children will call to say that their family is leaving for the beach in five minutes, that they have looked high and low for their child's suit. Is it at your pool? The pool owner checks to find that another child is wearing the suit and is making great waves in a life raft at that moment, but promises the mother she will get the child out of the suit

as fast as she can, or would she like her child to borrow a dry suit for the trip? Well, this can get pretty complicated. Sometimes the child who borrows the dry suit continues to wear it a few times at the pool until, one day, he is accused by the original owner of swiping his suit. The accused culprit in turn accuses the pool owner of losing *his* suit, leaving the pool owner thoroughly confused.

But there are disadvantages in sending a child home to get a suit, because in ten minutes the phone will ring, and not wanting to leave the children unsupervised, you have no choice but to ask all the children to get out of the water while you answer the phone. And then you spend the next five minutes convincing the mother: No, it is *no* trouble; Yes, you *did* invite him; No, you didn't know he was a twin; Yes, you *do* supervise (except when the phone rings); and Yes, you *would* tell him to go straight to Grandma's house. Certainly you would want to make certain that your children were being supervised if they were in a neighbor's pool, so don't take offense when mothers call to make sure that you are going to watch their offspring. You watch them even though they are all good swimmers. Boys and girls around ten years old have usually had enough swimming lessons and experience in the water to make it a pleasure to watch them. To encourage more swimming and less fooling around, you should remove tubes, life rafts and kick boards before they arrive. They will never miss them.

It is also a good idea to find out how well each child already swims. It is better to find this out by a test performance rather than from verbal testimony. If a child has difficulty swimming the width of your twenty-foot pool, he will not be very safe in deep water, and should be told confidentially to stay within the boundaries of the shallow end—confidentially, so that he will not feel humiliated in front of the "good" swimmers. If he is a big enough splasher and kicker, chances are the others will not discover that he is not a good swimmer; and

even if they do, he will not necessarily become a target for ridicule.

If the fun seems to be diminishing, or if the children have resorted to doing nothing but cannon balls and can openers, suggest a game (see "Water Games for Swimmers") or toss out a ball and see what develops. Children from six to eleven are responsive to almost any suggestion, and they are so accustomed to organized games that ten children with a ball almost automatically divide themselves into two teams and begin a game of Keep Away. You may need to impose some rules, such as "No fair climbing out of the water"; this rule, by the way, is a good one to follow at all times. If a child needs to be reminded a great many times about ducking, pushing, running, and horseplay, or if there is a child who constantly gives you a heart attack because he wants to dive in water too shallow, invite him to sit with you on the bench awhile. Then say, "You know, if you got hurt here, none of us would ever have fun here for a long, long time." There is one thing a pool owner can't afford to put up with, and that is the child who unjustifiably yells "Help." After you have "saved" this fun maker and told him the story of the little boy who yelled "Wolf," if he continues to yell "Help," then consider that he's just pressed his luck too far, that's all. There's another trick that ages pool owners. There are children who can hold their breath for an interminably long time as they perform the dead-man's float. Only they don't announce first that they are going to do the dead-man's float, they just do it. And after you give yourself five seconds to decide whether this is for fun or for real (you never give yourself any longer than six seconds) there you are kersplash in your freshly ironed pique shorts, looking into the surprised face of an innocent child.

Contrary to opinion, you have to urge your best friends to come swimming. They think that you are plagued with people who want the use of your pool, and they don't want to be one

of *them*, so you have to invite them specially; they will not just drop in.

Depending on the size of your pool, and the number of swimmers, in a mixed group (e.g., adults and children), it is often not much fun for either to fight their way through the crowd. An idea that has worked very well is to let all of the children swim, and then have them lie on their towels on the deck, and then have an adult-only swim. This gives the children a chance to rest and plenty of opportunity to criticize the way their parents swim.

Children usually do not know when they have had enough—enough water, enough sun, enough exercise; and it is your responsibility to remind them to get out and rest a few minutes. And then when *you* decide that they have had a satisfactory swim, and call out gaily, "O.K., everybody out," what you will hear is a chorus of "I just got here," or "Come on, five more minutes," or "One more dive." Maybe you will try another system: "I've set the timer for ten minutes. When the bell rings, you are to blast out onto the deck." When the bell does ring, be prepared for a number who didn't hear it ring, a great many more who just got there, and others begging for just one more dive. They couldn't be less interested in such reasoning as it's time for dinner, it's getting cool, or that they may come back day after tomorrow.

Save your energy and words because settling this matter is only half the battle. The other half is to get them out of their wet suits and into their dry clothes. If your group consists only of boys, you find that after they arrive for their swim, it takes them about 33 seconds to get out of their clothes and jump in the pool. But after their swim, finding their own tennis shoes, socks, and underwear, and pulling them on their wet bodies takes closer to 33 minutes. Also, if the hair-combing ritual has become important to them, not one of them would be caught dead coming out of the dressing room with his hair rumpled.

It does no good to try to "control" the dressing process. You would be accused of playing favorites if you asked the swimmers to dress two at a time, and allowed the others to swim. And calling out "If you boys aren't out of there in two minutes, I'm coming in" causes such wild excitement at the thought of being seen in their underpants that it slows their progress about five minutes. It's better to busy yourself picking up kick boards and collecting fins; and then make sure they all get out the gate.

When you have only one dressing room, and if both boys and girls are swimming and must use the same facilities, there are, of course, problems of an even more complicated nature. The girls are scared that the boys will peek at them while they are getting dressed, but no more worried than the boys are when it is their turn to dress. Girls often leave more things behind, because they bring more things to leave behind. More scarves, more beach bags, more terry-cloth robes, more hairbrushes.

Even if there is a room in your house which is readily accessible from the pool—a room in which your own children may prefer to change—it is still worth some effort and ingenuity to provide special poolside dressing rooms. Cabanas may be built or bought, although in either case, you should not expect to provide reasonable facilities for less than fifty dollars.

A pool owner had a young guest, who had just arrived, ask her where the bathroom was, and she instructed him to go through the back porch, down the hall, and to the second door to the left. She was startled when, a few moments later, he came to the pool dripping wet. Later, when she checked her suspicion, so was the lower half of the house. Somewhere, somehow, the commandment of taking a soap shower before entering a pool had been driven home to this young man. He also came equipped with a snorkel, foot fins, ear plugs, a face

mask, and a nose clip. In addition, he had a full-length beach, robe and swim suit with matching shirt. Aloha! He told the pool owners he sure liked coming to their pool better than going to the public pool because they wouldn't let him bring *anything* down there, and besides it was so crowded.

Many pool owners have an arrangement with the people in their neighborhood about sharing the privileges. They hoist a flag and this means: "It's swim time." Usually another part of the agreement is that each child must be accompanied by a parent. So mothers unplug irons, grab the baby, and race down the street with the child who has been waiting for the flag to go up. Usually, mothers do not get in the water, they sit and talk with other mothers, often involving the pool owner, who is a mother and who also likes to talk. And who's watching the kids? Sometimes, nobody. The biggest danger here is that the pool owner may lose control of the situation. It is not too easy to reprimand the big boy who crashes into everybody, when his mother is watching him and shows no signs of thinking that this behavior is out of "the ordinary. Then, there is not much the pool owner can do about the baby in the stroller, eating and spilling a thousand arrowroot crumbs. Then there is the mother who decides, just about the time everyone is ready to leave, that it *is* very warm—she believes she *will* have a little dip after all if you wouldn't mind lending her a suit. This takes some rummaging, but pool owners always have lots of suits around—tired and worn as some of them may be—if they look long enough. "Oh, I need some goo, I burn so easily." There, she's ready to get in. "Ohhhh, this water is so cold. How do you stand it so cold?" Perched on the steps, she instructs all who are near, "Don't splash me!" Finally, after she's in, she calls out to you, "Say, my cousins from the South are coming up tomorrow. I'd sure like for them to see this pool."

Naturally children are going to run around a pool. They are

used to running everywhere else they go, so why stop here? And just as naturally, you are going to remind them *not* to run around the pool. Pool owners often post a thousand rules like NO RUNNING, NO PUSHING, NO DUCKING, NO EATING, but because the list is endless, it could easily include items like NO SWEARING, NO SPITTING, NO THROWING UNDERWEAR IN THE WATER, NO DIVING OFF THE FENCE OR TABLES, NO UNNECESSARY NOISE. The reason you need not list these rules in large painted letters is that some children who use the pool cannot read, and others who can read very well do not abide by the written word, and some of the written words just give them ideas they never thought of before. The best and only rule to follow is that while children are in your pool, you are also in or around the pool.

Adults are more difficult than children because not only do they have as many carefree and untidy habits, but an adult guest will read the pool rules and somehow think that they don't apply to *him*. As he reads them, he will flick ashes from right to left, and eventually crush the cigarette on the pool deck. It is easy for pool owners to remind children of rules that seem necessary, but it is difficult for an adult to tell another adult how to behave.

The pool owner knows, but visitors generally do not know, what a problem it is to keep a pool clean. Everything that goes in must come out, and some objects come out with great difficulty. For example, a paper napkin will disintegrate into a thousand pieces. Bobby pins leave a rust mark and are a menace to the filter system. Band-Aids invariably come off in the water and are hard to sweep up. At the end of a hot day, with many swimmers using sun-tan lotion, you can see pools of oil on the surface of the water. This, in turn, contributes to the scum on the sides of the pool that eventually has to be scrubbed off. Those objects which have a way of being forgotten at the bottom should be removed as soon as possible. Before the

children get out, you might suggest that they dive for them. "See that bathing cap strap? The cap's down by the drain, and while you're down there, get that penny, can you?"

Everyone just assumes that the water is pure as the driven snow. So it is really up to you to own and use a chemical kit to test it periodically. The water should be slightly alkaline, and if the pH factor reads 7.2 to 7.6, that is as it should be. The acid pH factor runs from 0 to 7 and the alkali runs from 7 to 14. If the water is too acid you add soda ash until it is chemically balanced. If the water is too alkaline, acid should be added. All problems concerning the filter, heater, chemicals and algae are not a matter of hit-and-miss and should be entrusted to an experienced and qualified pool maintenance and service man. Even if you don't require his services regularly for maintenance work, you should find one who knows that there is more to keeping a pool in proper condition than delivering chlorine.

Everyone thinks a swimming pool should be clean and sparkling. Every pool owner works hard at keeping it this way. If the water is a little cloudy or a little green, he is up and **at** it right away. If the pool has a bad case of black algae, this seems no less serious to some visitors than for a member of your family to have a case of black measles. You will never convince some people that algae is not harmful to a person's health. A guest pauses on his way to the dressing room, points to the water and says, "What's that?"

"That's a little case of algae."

"Little? It spreads, doesn't it?"

"Yes, we're hoping to get it under control with chlorine before we have to drain the pool, scrub it off with straight chlorine, etch it with muriatic acid and paint it."

"Gee, that's terrible."

"I know, and expensive, too."

"I mean the algae is terrible."

The guest, of course, would not swim in your pool if it were not heated to a comfortable 80 degrees or more, which is the chief reason you have the algae, because even with consistent and diligent chemical treatment, and the filter working properly, and extra hours of sweeping or vacuuming, algae grow more rapidly in warm water. You can explain to a more sympathetic guest how your husband was down on the bottom of the pool with a wire brush trying to rid the pool of this unsightly slippery stuff and how nervous you were because he had a rock tied to his foot to keep him down. But only another pool owner would appreciate your making the experiment of filling an enema bag with pure chlorine and applying the syringe to the black spots. The experiment did not work, but you both agree that it had been worth a try.

What the guest does not know is that a pool can be algae free, and still contain harmful bacteria which he cannot see. He may guess that conditions are not perfect if the water tastes salty or if his eyes burn and turn crimson. Maintaining proper chlorination, and this means regular dosages of chlorine with periodic superchlorination (depending on how many swimmers are using your pool), running the filter long enough each day to filter the water once completely, and sweeping or vacuuming are all the pool owner need do; if he can afford a pool maintenance man to do it for him, all the better.

It's not surprising that children of pool owners find life with a pool not all it's cracked up to be. It seems to them that they are always on the handle of the broom sweeping toward the drain. Then there are the leaves to dive for. Then there is the problem of what to do with "friends" coming up to swim that they don't like to have around very much.

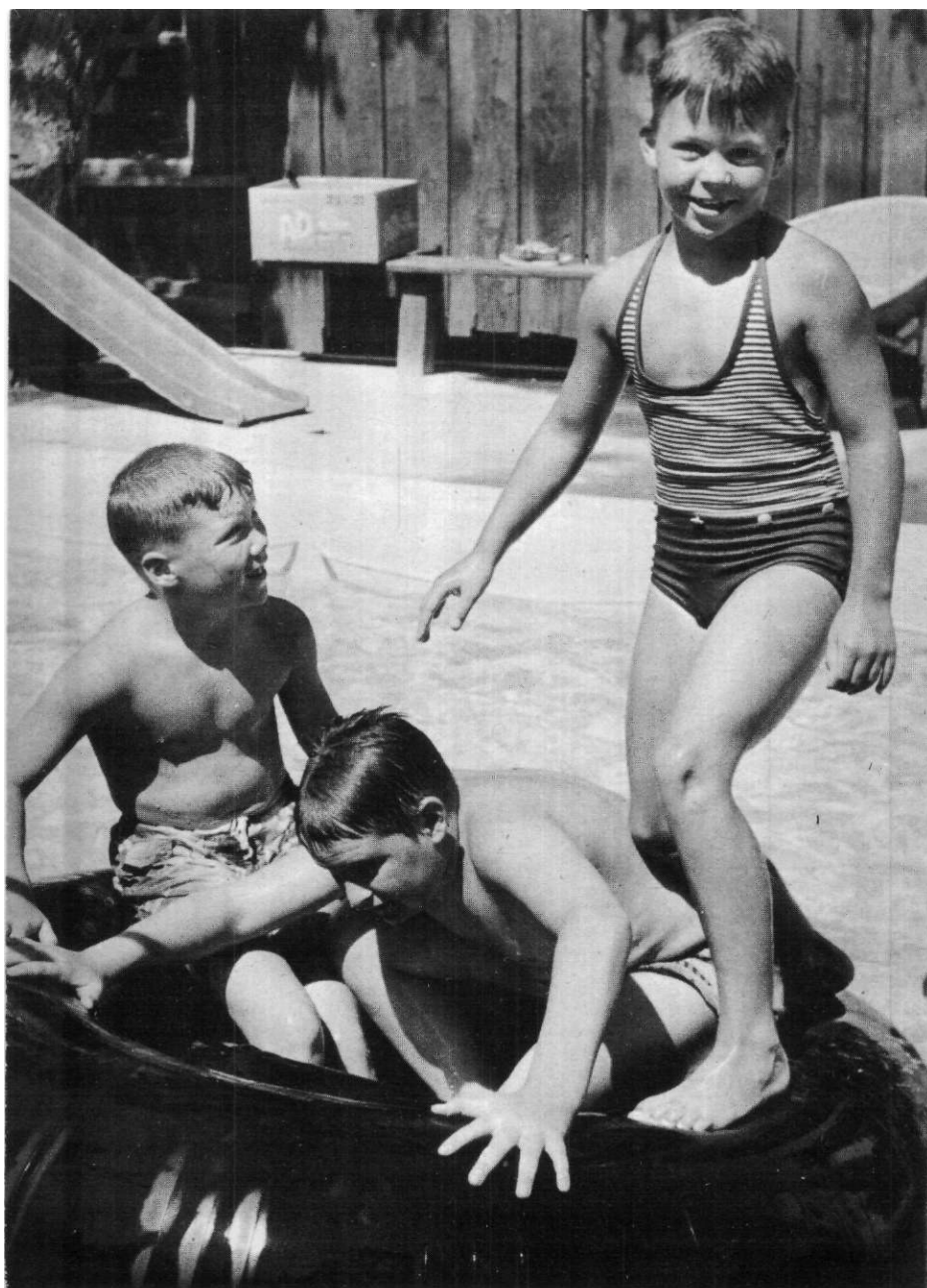
It occurs to the children midway through the summer that they never go any place because of the pool. It occurs to them midwinter that their parents *only* are invited to dinner in January, whereas in July the same set of parents as well as their

four children had been entertained at an all-day pool and barbecue party. So when the child says that the pool doesn't even have a diving board, he is really saying a lot more than just that.

All neighborhood pools should be fenced and the play areas of small children—such as sand piles and tricycle riding areas—should be so arranged that they may be closed off from the pool area. It is the responsibility of the pool owner to see that the pool gate is locked when the pool is not in use. A plastic cover for the pool has advantages in that it will keep out lots of dirt and leaves when the season is over; but it is up to the pool owner to keep any child on a tricycle far, far away from the pool, and not assume that the plastic cover has eliminated danger.

Each year, companies that make accessories for pools come out with new equipment for pleasure or safety. Some are a combination. Some of these accessories are very expensive and very disappointing. Some are inexpensive and lots of fun, giving both additional pleasure and safety. Example: a variety of life ring. But most people have an inner tube or two around their pool because they are free or can be obtained at very little cost at the filling station where they get their gasoline. These should be the exclusive possession of those who know how to swim. *Never* let a child who cannot swim safely in deep water play in one of these, or in any other variety of floating equipment. They are slippery as an eel; a child can easily slide through the hole in the middle, and then where is he? But for young people who can swim, these tubes provide great fun. They are just right for diving through; two can seesaw, one can float on top, and one can tip the other one over. On a calm day* *you* can sit in an inner tube and read *The New Yorker*. It is fun to take a running jump, holding the inner tube behind

* A calm day is when all of the children have gone to the Wednesday matinee.



Children like best of all to own a tractor or airplane inner tube.

you, and to land in the water in a sitting position. Children like best of all a tractor or airplane inner tube. Depending upon the area in which you live, you may find it difficult to obtain these large tubes at a modest price.

Another good pool accessory is an air mattress. Their advantage lies in their versatility. When they are deflated, they fold flat, and you can't say this for an inner tube. They are easily inflated by mouth or bicycle pump, and besides being more relaxing than an inner tube in the water, they are comfortable on the cold, hard cement. It is also fun to take a running dive and land flat on your stomach on an air mattress (which is in the pool, of course). They are perfect for drying off and for sunning after a swim, and if you have these around it takes the strain off that not-so-waterproof chaise longue. Their versatility includes their use as a mattress for sleeping bags when camping out. Their drawback: They are easily punctured.

If you have a toddler or small child too young to teach to swim, and you are around the water, then a life jacket is the only answer for the child's safety and your ease of mind. One problem is: Sometimes children who are ready to learn to swim have become so attached to and feel so secure with their life jackets that they are reluctant to part with them.

The kick board was mentioned in the lesson plans as an aid to beginning swimmers. This is a useful piece of equipment because the best kind made of lightweight plastic foam which weighs only about six ounces is inexpensive (under \$5.00) and small, and doesn't create special storage problems; it can be used to practice the kick, for small-child "surfing," and also for lifesaving.

The variety stores carry a ninety-eight-cent rubber ball in bright colors that is soft enough not to hurt (as basketballs do) when thrown square in the face, heavy enough not to blow away (as beach balls do), and just right (about eight inches in

diameter) for throwing with one hand.

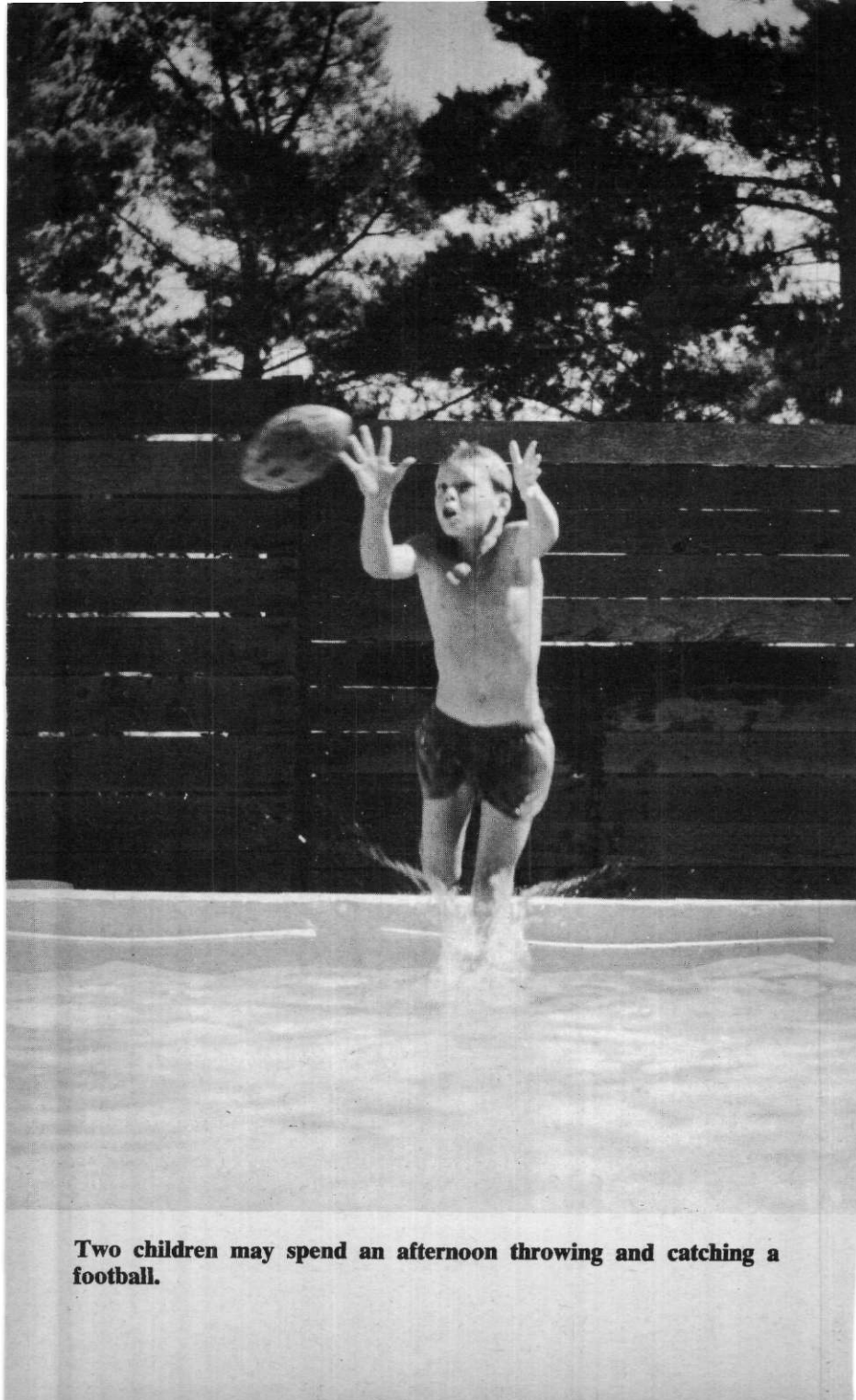
All of these items are fairly standard equipment around pools. Their primary asset is their buoyancy, so that besides their other functions, each can be used for lifesaving. A person in distress will grab hold of anything, and the thing he should grab least of all is *you*, or whoever goes to help. There are other things you might have around the pool such as a length of rope, or a bamboo pole (from a rug store), a wicker chair, a towel (you hold on to one end). All of these are acceptable and preferable to throwing yourself in after the victim. If a child is in distress you do not hesitate about jumping in and pulling the child to safety. But there is real danger when anyone jumps in to save someone who is near his own size. Although the subject of lifesaving is too important and complex to be treated briefly, it should be added that if you ever attempt to rescue someone who has given way to panic and who begins to pull you under, you should go under because the last place he wants to go is down. Obviously, maneuvers which will support him and move him toward safety should be practiced.

Pool owners rarely are subjected to a tragic incident, but careful attention to some basic precautions is absolutely necessary. Some pool owners may not even swim, but they should have some knowledge of lifesaving. They should not hesitate to call the fire department, and they should know how to administer artificial respiration. The Red Cross offers courses in lifesaving throughout the country all year long. The American National Red Cross, Washington, D.C., publishes a pamphlet which describes the relatively new Arm-lift Back-pressure method. Recently, at an American Medical Association meeting in San Francisco, one of the papers read at the meeting described the effectiveness of breathing into the victim's mouth. This method is especially successful with children. After you have made certain there is no foreign object in his throat and

his tongue is in position, lay the victim on his back and hold the victim's jaw in a jutted-out position, pursing his lips outward. Place your mouth over his mouth *and* nose (in the case of a child) and steadily blow air. One hand should hold the jaw, and the other hand should press firmly on the stomach so that it doesn't fill with air. You should be able to feel the subject's chest rise as a sign that the lungs have inflated; then remove your mouth and let the lungs deflate. Repeat the entire operation no more than 20 times a minute. After every 20 breaths, you should rest long enough to breathe deeply yourself.

All of these problems and risks, however, can be prepared for. If they are anticipated, the greatest possible room is left for the pleasures and benefits of swimming, for young and old—such unanticipated and incalculable delights as you may know for yourself.

Part four



Two children may spend an afternoon throwing and catching a football.

RACES and contests are tailor-made pool games—but remember that they are appropriate for older children only. Elimination games for young children are never successful; their participation is necessary throughout a game since they are not good losers and cannot take defeat gracefully. For older children who are all approximately equal as swimmers, races and contests are made to order. Do not forget, however, that they also like to play the games listed for beginning swimmers such as Diving for Pennies.

For the most part, children create their own fun, and each age has its repertoire of water games. For example, two children may spend an afternoon diving for a fin or catching a football in mid-air above the water; while six children may spend several hours paddling in inner tubes, diving through them, or tipping over the crew. Games are in order when your children are having a party that includes using the pool, or when numbers larger than six are using the pool, or if any group wants to do something a little more organized and a little more fun than paddling around.

You do not need to be a professional physical education instructor to direct these games; but you should be prepared to exert energy and attention, and it helps to have a fairly strong voice.

Games for the Beginner—Using the shallow end of the pool

In Lesson I of this book, there are a number of games which are described in detail. Ring-around-a-rosy, Pop Goes the Weasel, Fanner in the Dell, are some of these. They are already familiar to the children because they are all good land games.

Dive for Pennies: Scatter two handfuls of pennies in the shallow end of the pool. Children may keep the number of pennies they get. Large colorful marbles are fun to dive for, and trickier because they roll. Also, cellophane-wrapped candies are enticing, do not dilute the water, and are especially appropriate for parties. Only those children who are unable to pick up the pennies, marbles, or candies by diving should be allowed to use their toes.

Follow the Leader: You should appoint one child as a leader, and all of the other children are to follow him in whatever skills he pursues. Using the width of the pool, he may glide, stand on his hands, walk with his hands on his knees, sing under water, and if he can't think of new ideas, it is fair for you to suggest skills recently learned in the lesson plan. After once around the shallow end, the next child in line should be leader.

Ping-pong Blow: Using the width of the pool, each child blows a ping-pong ball while doing the dog paddle. He must not move the ball forward with his hands or his head. More , advanced swimmers can use the length of the pool.

Apple Push: Each child is to push an apple across the width of the pool using his chin or nose, but not his hands. This game makes use of the dog paddle and the kick. It would also be fun to use the whole length of the pool, and the game could easily be converted into a relay.

Cut the Cake: The group joins hands and forms a circle while "It" walks (or swims) around the outside of the circle. It cuts the cake by bringing his arm down between two members of the circle. These members swim or run around the circle in opposite directions. The first one back to his place remains in the circle; the other one is It.

Cut the Cake and other circle games are especially appropriate for a birthday party of children from five to eight years old.

Games for Advanced Swimmers—Using the deep end or the entire pool

Most children would love a tether ball in the pool, but the pole to support the pole would have to be put into the pool as the pool was being constructed, and only few pool owners have been this farsighted. Volleyball cannot be played too well with an imaginary net, but a net for your pool *could* be rigged if you are an enthusiast. Water basketball would be fun, and perhaps worth the money to buy; or you can build a basketball backstop if you have several children whose ages run from around eight to eighteen. Only a few of the games listed below require equipment, and when they do, it is the kind the child or pool owner already has in his possession.

Whether or not you suggest a Dive for Distance, which is more like an individual stunt, or a race or relay will depend upon the circumstances. Many of the races or contests can be turned into relays—and the relay games can be easily converted also.

The Medley: Swim one length of the pool in the following order: One length butterfly, one length back stroke, one length breast stroke, and one free style. Now this can be a race or the emphasis can be put on form. When children swim side by side, however, it is usually a race; and they do not attach much importance to form. If the width of your pool is around twenty

feet, do not attempt to have more than three imaginary lanes.

Water Skills Spelldown: Played in a way similar to a spelling bee. Start with simple skills such as a glide, then go on to all of the basic strokes including the butterfly and the breaststroke. If you want to eliminate all but one contestant, a test to see who can tread water the longest, or who can walk on his hands in shallow water the longest, or who can swim the greatest distance on the bottom of the pool—any of these will provide a winner.

One-arm Swim: Swim free style the length of the pool, using the kick and the left arm only. The winner, of course, is the one who gets there first.

Standing Broadjump: Have each contestant from a standing position jump feet first as far as he can into the water. Children can hurt themselves with a hard jump in shallow water, so this one should always be played in the deep end of the pool. The winner is the one whose jump covers the greatest distance.

Dive for Distance: Using the racing dive, have each contestant dive with the understanding that the winner will be the one who makes the greatest distance on his dive. Distance is measured from the point at which he comes up for air.

Glide for Distance: Same as the above, except contestants are in the water and submerge, then push off and glide.

Tread Water Contest: See who can tread water the longest. Timing can be done either by counting or singing a song. Last one under is the winner.

Horseback Riders: The rider sits on the shoulders of the "horse" with his legs locked around his back. The "horse" holds on to the rider's legs. Each rider tries to unsaddle the other rider or riders, since any number may play. For the safety of his rider, the "horse" should stand in water at least chest-deep, and well away from either side of the pool.

Dip-dip Tag: An observer might suspect that an adult who hated noise had invented this game, since it is played in almost total silence. A group of twelve-year-old boys claim, however, that they originated it. Another form of tag, this game is played for the most part under the water in the deep end of the pool. It must keep his eyes closed at all times and try to find the other swimmers who must stay within a boundary which is established by a fin or a kick board on the deck before the game starts. The boundary is extended if the number of people playing is increased. The game starts with It on one side of the pool, and the other players on the opposite side. After It has counted to ten the game is on. When It comes up for a breath of air, the players who are also up call out "Dip-dip"—if they are a "safe" out-of-arm's-reach distance away. The players within a generous arm's reach must however stay quiet as possible so as not to be discovered. The fun of the game is to try to swim directly over or under It without giving oneself away. It usually swims with arms and legs spread wide and often darts quickly in the hope that he may touch another player. As soon as he does, that person is It. If It swims out of bounds, he is called back into the playing ground. Anyone who peeks is a cheater; and cheaters are frowned upon and sometimes thrown out.

Relay: Supposing there are nine children, you divide them into groups of three in such a way that the swimming ability is distributed fairly equally. On "Go" the first three swim the

length, some object in his hand as he swims the length
touch and back again, and hands it over to the next swimmer.

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can be an apple, or orange, or a length of toweling. It should be an object that floats. (Potatoes don't float.)

Egg-on-a-spoon Relay: Place hard-cooked eggs on a spoon. Hold the end of the spoon between the teeth. Start in the deep end of the pool, swim to shallow end, pass spoon and egg by hand to teammate who swims back to deep end carrying egg in spoon, and so on, depending upon the number playing.

Surface Retrievers Relay: Scatter thirteen or more corks on the surface of the water in the deep end of the pool. On the word "go" the child jumps or dives in after a cork. He is allowed to get only one cork, must climb out the side of the pool (no ladders or steps) and as soon as he drops the cork in a designated place such as a box, his next team member may go.

Deep-water Retrievers: Played very much like the preceding game except that the players must pick up objects which have been dropped on the bottom of the pool. These can be golf balls, potatoes, or any other sinkable item. If the items are small enough, the objective could be to see how many items could be picked up in one try. (Not fair to stuff objects into suit!)

All of these games have their counterparts in the games you have played out of the water. A pool is like a court, a place with boundaries, and within this place—as on a tennis court or the magic circle of Farmer in the Dell—you enter a play world in which you are someone else or perform heroic feats or possess magical powers. The significant difference between play in the water and on the earth is, of course, in the difference between the way these media support weight and volume, allow movement, and in the very different way water and air feel upon your skin, eyes, and nose.

Inner-tube War: Sitting in inner tubes, each tries to unseat the other person without upsetting himself. This can be played

every-man-for-himself, or in teams, depending on the number of tubes available.

Inner-tube Race: This can be played as a race, using one or two lengths of the pool, but it is fun as a relay also. Swimmers may decide whether they want to lie on top of the tubes on their stomachs and paddle their arms, or sit in the tubes, and use their arms in much the same way as they do for the back stroke. In either case, no kicking; arms only.

Tag: In this game one child yells "Not It," and the last person to say "Not It" is It. The rules for any tag game played in the water vary, but one rule holds for all, and that is that no one may climb out of the water, run on the deck and then go back into the water in an effort to make his tag. The simplest tag game: It tries to catch someone, and then that someone is It; but he can't tag the person who just caught him—"no touch back." Some of the variants of tag are:

Chinese Tag: If It touches someone on the neck then that person must swim with his hand on his neck until he in turn touches someone—on the leg perhaps; then that person has to swim after the others with one hand holding his leg, and so on.

Underwater Tag: It cannot tag anyone who is completely submerged. If any part of his body is above water, and he is tagged, then he is It.

Body Tag: Before the game starts, decide what part of the body must be tagged by It. If the members all agree that It must touch the head, then he must tag another's head before that person is It. Different parts of the body become the object for tagging as the game progresses.

Tag with Floating Base: Use a kick board for a floating base. It cannot tag anyone who is on base.

Water can be as natural an environment for play as air, but if you do not think so, that is all right. What you might think about, however, is that water is a different and exciting world

—somewhat in the way that the rarefied world of the mountain climber is different. Or, if you are a science-fiction fan, and have imagined life in a fourth dimension, you will understand the way in which water can provide a dimension in which our sense of life is different—and a pool is much closer than the moon.

Swimming is as close as a person can come to flying—in the way a bird flies—in that as the air supports the bird, the water supports the body, freeing it to dart and glide, or lazily paddle around. For anyone who already knows the water, there is no need to extol further the pleasures of swimming. But for anyone who does not know these pleasures and should like to, this book has been written.