

Conditioning

Teaching Breath Control (4 Months – 2 Years Old)

Conditioning is a stimulus response method used to teach baby breathe control on command. By teaching baby breathe control on the verbal trigger 'Ready Go', we prepare them for their first underwater experience. By introducing conditioning to the baby we ensure that their first underwater experience is free from fuss and trauma.

Steps for Conditioning:

- Sit or have the baby upright
- With a plastic cup, fill half with water
- Use the trigger words "(Childs Name), Ready Go"
- Wait one second then pour the water on top of the forehead
- Allow the water to run completely over the face before laying baby back down
- Congratulate baby on a job well done
- Remember to never condition a crying baby

Conditioning should become part of the daily bath or shower routine as long as the parent is comfortable. As a parent try to remain calm and relaxed as your baby will react according to the parent's facial expressions (social referencing) and body language.

Parents should start with a half cup of water and slowly work up to the full cup once the baby and the parent gains confidence.

If the baby shows any signs of distress stop conditioning immediately. If baby is repeatedly swallowing water stop conditioning immediately.

How early should you start conditioning?

Conditioning and water familiarisation should be introduced from Day 1 home from the hospital. If you are uncomfortable introducing this method at such an early stage then you can wait until you are a lot more comfortable handling the child.