

Henry Moses Aquatic Center

Youth Swimming Lesson Q & A

What kind of facility do you have?

The Henry Moses Aquatic Center is a seasonal (summer) outdoor facility operated by the City of Renton. It is programmed with public leisure swimming, lap swimming, swimming lessons, aquatic exercise, and facility rentals.

How does the weather affect your programming?

We operate in any weather, except thunder and lightning.

What is the temperature of the pool water?

The usual temperature range is between 84 and 86 degrees, but it can occasionally fluctuate due to a variety of factors.

Who is in charge of the swim lesson program?

Anne Miller currently supervises the program and is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the lesson program; including instructor training and evaluation, scheduling lessons, and authorizing transfers, withdrawals, or refunds for individual students. She has been involved in aquatics for many years with a background in aquatic management. Anne is at the pool every morning and available to address your questions or concerns. Please feel free to contact her in person, via email at amiller@rentonwa.gov or by telephone (425-430-6714).

What ages are included in your group swim lesson program?

The youth program includes ages 9 months to 12 years.

How do you divide the different age groups?

Youth lessons are divided into 3 different age groups and then divided again by skill level. Starfish (1 level) are 9 months to 3 years (with parent or guardian). Sea Otters (5 levels) are 3 to 5 years of age. Orcas (7 levels) are 6 to 12 years old. Students must reach the minimum age during the session for which they are registering. Only the Swimming Lesson Coordinator is authorized to make exceptions to the age guidelines.

How many lesson sessions do you offer in the summer?

Our sessions depend somewhat on the school district calendars. In the summer of 2011, we will have Fish School Mini-Session (June 27-30) followed by 4-two week sessions. The first full session will begin July 5.

When do you offer youth lessons?

Classes are only offered in the morning. Classes are 30 minutes long. Start times are 8:05, 8:40, 9:15, 9:50, 10:25 and 11:00am. Classes are held Monday through Thursday for 2 weeks, with the exception of Fish School Mini-Session which meets for 4 lessons instead of 8.

You mentioned Fish School Mini-Session. Exactly what is Fish School?

Fish School is a 4-day, reduced cost set of swim lessons scheduled at the beginning of the season. It is designed to provide a unique one-week opportunity for both instructors and students. Each instructor works with 1 or 2 other instructors in a variety of classes to gain practical experience, enrich their teaching skills, and provide a great environment for both new and returning students. Classes are scheduled and conducted like a regular session. Students can brush up on their skills, learn new skills, or experience lessons for the first time.

Are all classes available at each start time?

No, we do not have enough space, staff or demand to offer every class in every time slot. Some high demand classes will be offered each time, but others may be available only once during a session. We try to schedule classes so families will at least be able to schedule needed classes at back-to-back times.

How do I determine what class is best suited for my child?

Please refer to the Quick Assessment Criteria or the Individual Skill Sheets (available online and at the front desk) to begin the process. Both new and returning students will have a fairly accurate idea of what class they need, especially if they took some swim lessons in the off-season. If you have a progression card from another facility, it will help with the placement. We would rather have students succeed in a class that is appropriate, than to struggle in one that is beyond their abilities. If Anne is available to help, she will be glad to answer any questions. If a child is somehow placed incorrectly, we will do everything possible to put them in the right class on the first day. Sometimes a shortage of classes and space does not allow for that, but we will give it our best effort.

Returning students should register for the same class they last registered for in 2010. If they passed to a higher class, but never had the opportunity to take that class, they should repeat the last class they passed. If a student will move from Sea Otter to Orca (because they are now 6 years of age) please ask for help with the class selection.

New students should be placed according to their age and skill. The decision will be based on prior lessons, recent lesson participation, and requirements of the Henry Moses Aquatic Center program.

How do I choose the appropriate class for my child for Fish School and/or Session 1?

When registering for only Fish School, use the same process as above to decide on the appropriate class.

If registering for both Fish School and Session 1, use the following guidelines:

If a returning student took a particular class one or more times last summer and did not pass, they should register for that class for both Fish School and Session 1.

If a returning student passed to a higher class last summer but did not take that higher class, we recommend they register for the last class passed when registering for Fish School and the next higher class for Session 1.

If a new student is registering for both Fish School and Session 1, they should register in the same class for each.

How do I register my children for lessons?

There are a variety of ways to sign up for lessons. Registration is available in person, through the Internet, by mail, or telephone. The first registration period of the season will begin May 25. Please call 425-430-6700 or see the current *What's Happening* brochure for additional information.

Can I register for more than one session of lessons at a time?

You can register for Fish School and Session 1 at the same time, but you may only register for one lesson session at a time for Sessions 2, 3, and 4. Registration for those currently enrolled in lessons is held after the 7th lesson (second Wednesday) of a session. Progression cards are distributed to students after class on this day and parents can register at the Aquatic Center immediately following their child's class. Students not currently enrolled begin registration on the last day of the current session (Thursday) at the Renton Community Center. If space allows, registration will be taken until the second class begins.

If the class I want is full, do you take a wait list?

We will be happy to put your name on a wait list, but that is no guarantee that space will be available. You will only be contacted if space becomes available. Occasionally we are able to create a new class for levels with the greatest need.

Do you offer private/personal lessons?

We do not offer private lessons. Our season is very short and the facility is heavily programmed with public swimming and group lessons.

What is the student/teacher ratio?

Different classes have different standards. All classes have at least one teacher.

Starfish have a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 10 students.

All Sea Otters have a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 4 students.

Orca Prep and Orca 1 has a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 5 students.

Orcas 2, 3, and 4 have a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 6 students.

Orcas 5 and 6 have a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 7 students.

Where do you get your instructors and what kind of training do they have?

The majority of the instructional staff is made up of college and high school students. Others are aquatics professionals "borrowed" from other facilities or "semi-retired" instructors who love teaching in our unique environment. Some of them teach at other facilities after our summer season, but most leave in August or September and resume other jobs or their studies. We have been fortunate to retain many teachers from season to season.

All instructors at our facility have excellent swimming experience and a desire to work with children to create a positive aquatic experience for everyone. Our instructors are certified lifeguards and have current certifications for CPR and First Aid. These credentials help solidify the safety emphasis at our facility. Staff receives extensive "in-house" training to supplement their skills. In addition to training from outside agencies (i.e. American Red Cross, college classes, other aquatic facilities, etc.) and pre-season trainings at HMAC, the instructional staff participates in Fish School for practical experience with students and other staff. The staff is evaluated throughout the season.

Can I request a particular teacher for a class?

Anne will be happy to take your requests, but there is no way to insure the request will be possible. Schedules for the next session are finalized at least one week in advance. Not all instructors are available to teach in all sessions or time slots.

Now that I have registered my child, what is the next step?

On the first day of lessons, you should have your child ready about 5 minutes before class is scheduled to begin. You may bring them ready to go or use the changing rooms at our facility. Everyone will meet in the area near the small blue canopy and the lifeguard office. All instructors are assigned a flag color and will bring their “flag” to this area to meet their class. The flag color for each class can be found on your receipt. Instructors will call the names of students registered in their class. Staff will assist students in finding the correct instructor. The flags will make it easier for students to remember and locate their instructor during the first week. Students may not enter the water until the teacher instructs them to do so.

If my child is sick, injured, or for some reason unable to attend a lesson, are there make-up lessons?

No, there are no make-up lessons. If your child is ill, it is best to keep them out of the water. We will not withdraw a student if they miss a class. If your child will miss an extensive amount of time and is unable to finish a session due to serious illness or injury, please contact Anne Miller immediately.

What if I register my child and we find out they are not really ready for lessons?

We will make every attempt to create a comfortable environment for all students. Occasionally, it will be necessary for students to withdraw from class. Circumstances such as this are addressed on an individual basis and Anne will speak with the parents regarding credits or refunds.

Can others enjoy the water during the morning lessons?

Only instructors and students may be in the swimming pools during lessons. Safety is our primary concern for all participants. We understand the water is very inviting, especially for toddlers. Please refrain from wading or swimming in any area. As an alternative, we encourage you to use the spray garden near the entrance, free of charge.

The only area available for public use during lessons (for patrons 16 years of age and up) is the self-directed water walking area in the lazy river. Posted fees can be paid (or pass cards scanned) at the front office window. Parents of students are welcome to pay to participate in this program.

Do you know of any local indoor swimming facilities that offer programs?

There are several facilities in the area. The two closest ones are Hazen High School Pool at 425-204-4230 and the Lindbergh Pool next to Lindbergh High School at 425-204-4440. Both of these year-round facilities are programmed by the Renton School District. They offer a variety of programs, including evening youth lessons.

Who can I speak with if I have questions or concerns?

Feel free to contact Anne Miller in person, by email, or by phone. Anne is on the pool deck every day for the duration of lessons. Her mail address is amiller@rentonwa.gov. You can reach her by phone, or leave a message at 425-430-6714.