

Starfish Swim Lesson Program

The Hartford Parks and Recreation Department is excited to announce a new swim lesson program "STARFISH". Starfish Swimming is a nationally recognized swim instruction curriculum developed by the Starfish Aquatics Institute (SAI). STARFISH uses innovative and effective teaching methods that allows easy transition from one class to the next and enables instructors to have the flexibility to teach based on the students abilities.

Star-Babies Classes Polliwog, Guppy, Minnow (6 months – 3 years old)

The purpose of STAR-BABIES is to foster in very young children a high comfort level in the water while at the same time training parents and caregivers in water safety and drowning prevention. This course does not teach children to become accomplished swimmers or to survive in the water; it does provide a confidence building, fun, and loving experience. A parent/caregiver must be in the water with the child, and the instruction is directed to the parent/caregiver on how to work with the child at their level.

Safety Goals: Parents/caregivers will learn eight water safety concepts important for reducing the risk of drowning.

Swimming Goals: Parents/Caregivers will learn methods for teaching their child self-rescue skills so that when the child is developmentally ready, they can fall in, submerge, turn around, grab wall and pull up to self-rescue or be able to roll on to the back to breathe.

Polliwog (6 months – Almost walking)

Guppy (Almost walking – 24 months)

Minnow (24 months – 36 months)



Star-Tots Classes Sunfish, Dolphin, Turtle (3-5 years old)

The purpose of STAR-TOTS is to foster in young children a high comfort level in the water while at the same time training parents and caregivers in water safety and drowning prevention. During these courses children will learn the basics of self-rescue swimming skills and the parent / caregiver will learn important water safety concepts. A Parent / Adult will need to be in attendance for the first 10 minutes of the first and last class for the Safety Goals.

Sunfish (3 – 5 Years old)

This class is designed for those who cannot float on the front and back relaxed and unassisted.

Safety Goals: Kids will learn how to always ask permission before getting in any water. Parents will learn water safety concepts including the importance of constant and dedicated surveillance, sizing lifejackets, preventing Recreational Water Illness, rescue assists and steps for performing child CPR (this is not a certification). **A Parent / Adult will need to be in attendance for the first 10 minutes of the first and last class for the Safety Goals.**

Swimming Goals: Enter from the wall, submerge, turn around, grab wall, and pull up with assistance.

Dolphin (3 – 5 Years old)

This class is designed for kids who have passed Sunfish or can jump in and return to surface and float on the back independently while assisted, but cannot yet do this independently.

Safety Goals: Kids will learn how to always ask permission before getting in any water. Parents will learn water safety concepts including the importance of constant and dedicated surveillance, sizing lifejackets, preventing Recreational Water Illness, rescue assists and steps for performing child CPR (this is not a certification). **A Parent / Adult will need to be in attendance for the first 10 minutes of the first and last class for the Safety Goals.**

Swimming Goals: Enter from the wall, submerge, come to surface unassisted and get a breath in vertical or horizontal (on back) position.

Turtle (3 – 5 Years old)

This class is designed for children who have passed Dolphin or can swim underwater or on the surface and can get an occasional breath but cannot yet swim at least 10 ft. unassisted.

Safety Goals: Kids will learn how to always ask permission before getting in any water. Parents will learn water safety concepts including the importance of constant and dedicated surveillance, sizing lifejackets, preventing Recreational Water Illness, rescue assists and steps for performing child CPR (this is not a certification). **A Parent / Adult will need to be in attendance for the first 10 minutes of the first and last class for the Safety Goals.**

Swimming Goals: Move in the water independently 10 ft. with or without floatation (rollovers).



Starfish Swim School

(Ages 5+)

Students work toward development of the five core swimming competencies and receive color stage awards for each achievement. The color stages are used to divide students into broad ability groups. Children progress at individual rates with the opportunity to learn the core swimming skills and progress to advanced strokes. Learning is self-paced but challenging.

Novice & Novice 8+ (Equivalent: Red Cross Level 1)

This class is designed for children 5 years, Novice 8+ for those 8 and older, who can't swim without support, and/or cannot back float, Reach or Throw (Don't Go), and how to call 911. Novice 8+ is for those 8 and older.

Safety Goals: Always ask permission before getting in the water, put on a lifejacket, back float, and kick 20 ft.

Swimming Goals: Jump in, submerge, recover for air, roll on back for 5 seconds as well as swim 10 feet and change directions returning to wall in swimwear and regular clothes – bring clothes that can get wet the last two classes.

Beginner – (Equivalent: Red Cross Level 2)

Pre-Requisites - Meet goals in Novice or be able to swim underwater or on the surface and can get an occasional breath.

Safety Goals: Always ask permission before getting in the water, Reach or Throw (Don't Go), how to call 911, tread for 15 seconds.

Swimming Goals: Jump in, submerge, recover for air, swim forward 10 feet, change direction and return to wall in swim wear and regular clothes – bring clothes that can get wet the last two classes. Plus, swim forward using side glide position and kick 10 ft.

Intermediate – (Equivalent: Red Cross Level 3)

Pre-Requisites – Meet benchmarks in Beginner or must be able to tread water for at least 15 seconds and can swim using side breath.

Safety Goals: Always ask permission before getting in the water, survival float and tread water for 30 seconds.

Swimming Goals: Start in side glide, swim Freestyle 30 ft. with 1 - 2 - 3 breathe pattern.

Starfish Stroke School

(Ages 5+)

Students refine Freestyle and learn stroke technique for Backstroke, Butterfly, Breaststroke, and more!

Advance 1 – (Equivalent: Red Cross Level 4)

Pre-Requisites – Meets goals of Novice, Beginner and Intermediate

Safety Goals: Always ask permission before getting into water, perform scenario assist, and know how/when to call 911

Swimming Goals: Swim 30 ft using Freestyle and Backstroke and learn Butterfly.

Advance 2 – (Equivalent: Red Cross Level 5)

Pre-Requisites – Meets benchmarks in Advance 1 or be able to swim Freestyle, Backstroke and Butterfly

Safety Goals: Put on lifejacket while in water and kick 30 ft. as well as other Starfish safety concepts

Swimming Goals: Swim Freestyle, Backstroke and Breaststroke 30 ft.

Expert – (Equivalent: Red Cross Level 6)

Pre-Requisites – Meet benchmarks in Advance 2 or be able to swim all strokes

Safety Goals: Tread water or survival float for 2 minutes

Swim Goals: Swim Freestyle, Backstroke, and Breaststroke 50 yards, Butterfly 25 yards and perform flip turns and open turns