

Swimming Lessons

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Araceli was looking forward to summer. She was only 6, but she was excited by the idea of going to the beach. She wanted to splash in the water, and she wanted to swim. Her best friend, Shannon, had a swimming pool, too. She wanted to get in the water there. First, she had to learn how to swim!

Araceli's mom was a good swimmer. She was pretty, and she had lots of cute swimsuits. She looked so amazing in the water! She swam like a fish. She could dive and kick and swim in any pool. She wasn't afraid to jump in a lake or off a boat, either. She was going to teach Araceli. Mom was going to be a great teacher.

The first step, mom explained, was to learn to hold your breath under water. They practiced in the bathtub. Araceli would plug her nose, close her eyes, and duck under water. The first few times she only did it for a few seconds. Later, her time increased to 10, 15, and even 30 seconds!

The next step was to learn to kick. With the bathtub filled up, she held on to the end, and kicked. It seemed easy, but it was hard to get the right rhythm. It was an awful lot like riding a bike. Her two legs had to work together.

The third step for Araceli was to learn to paddle with her hands. She got down on her belly on the bed and practiced paddling her arms like a frog or even a dog! Her arms went forward and in front of her, like she was reaching above her head. Then she pushed hard as she swung her arms toward her sides. It was exhausting work.

The final step was to put these techniques together in the water. Mom took her to a neighborhood pool where she practiced. She started by holding her breath. Then, she held on to the side of the pool and kicked. They borrowed a kickboard, so she could hold on to it and practice kicking her way across the pool. Then, she had mom hold her up by the belly while she kicked and paddled. Then, it was her turn to do it alone. It was serious exercise!

Finally, she could swim. She wasn't the best at it, and it would take more practice, but she'd learned to tread water, to hold her breath, to do the doggie paddle, and to float on her back. Some inflatable water wings gave her extra confidence, but she loved the water. Mom was the best teacher ever!



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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What does Araceli want to learn how to do?
 - A. swim
 - B. dive
 - C. fish
 - D. surf

2. Who is going to teach Araceli?
 - A. a swim instructor
 - B. a lifeguard
 - C. mom
 - D. dad

3. What is the first step in mom's lessons?
 - A. paddling
 - B. kicking
 - C. holding your breath
 - D. floating

4. What is the third step in mom's lessons?
 - A. paddling
 - B. kicking
 - C. holding your breath
 - D. floating

5. Which of these places is NOT a place where Araceli practiced her swimming?
 - A. in the bathtub
 - B. in a pool
 - C. in the yard
 - D. on a bed

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