

Children who swim start smarter

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Swim coach Laurie Lawrence and Professor Robyn Jorgensen with swim school student Billy Green.

(Medical Xpress)—Children who learn how to swim at a young age are reaching many developmental milestones earlier than the norm.

Researchers from the Griffith Institute for [Educational Research](#) surveyed parents of 7000 under-fives from Australia, New Zealand and the US over three years.

A further 180 children aged 3, 4 and 5 years have been involved in intensive testing, making it the world's most comprehensive study into early-years swimming.

Lead researcher Professor Robyn Jorgensen says the study shows young

children who participate in early-years swimming achieve a wide range of skills earlier than the normal population.

"Many of these skills are those that help young children into the transition into formal learning contexts such as pre-school or school.

"The research also found significant differences between the swimming cohort and non-[swimmers](#) regardless of socio-economic background.

"While the two higher socio-economic groups performed better than the lower two in testing, the four SES groups all performed better than the normal population.

The researchers also found there were no [gender differences](#) between the research cohort and the normal population.

As well as achieving physical milestones faster, children also scored significantly better in visual-motor skills such as cutting paper, colouring in and drawing lines and shapes, and many mathematically-related tasks. Their oral expression was also better as well as in the general areas of literacy and numeracy.

"Many of these skills are highly valuable in other [learning environments](#) and will be of considerable benefit for young children as they transition into pre-schools and school."

Provided by Griffith University

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