



Sears I Can Swim Nation Headquarters
2225 Macleod Trail South, Calgary AB, T2G 5B6
Toll free 1877 633 7945, (f) 403 537 6792
www.searsicanswim.com

So you've decided to take on SEARS I Can Swim...

You are about to embark on the greatest journey of your career. SEARS I Can Swim is committed to seeing your facility and yourself succeed in administering a smooth transition. Where to start?



6 months out

Program Scheduling

As the facility programmer you need to decide what type of approach you'd like to take with running SEARS I Can Swim and what approach is feasible for the facility to run.

Demand-Driven Approach

Participants show up to take SEARS I Can Swim lessons. **Parents sign up for scheduled lessons between 30 minutes –90 minutes.** Children are then grouped according to ability level on the first day.

Advantages:

Children aren't restricted to the amount of time they can swim. Young children may swim longer than the normal 30-minute time slot. It is recommended that the facility give general guidelines when marketing SEARS I Can Swim in this manner.

Stage 1 30 minutes

Stage 2 45 minutes

Stage 3 60 minutes

Stage 4 90 minutes

These are only **guidelines**; facilities may choose their own time frames. There is no competition between children as they are all there to learn to swim better and have fun. Also creates less parental pressure for children to complete a certain level by a certain time frame. Children **progress at their own rate** and are **awarded for what they know and they can do.**

Disadvantages:



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Some teachers may feel overwhelmed by the wide variances in ability levels within their class. By providing in-services on dealing with varying ability levels and utilizing lesson plans this feeling of being overwhelmed can be easily overcome. Having kids leave 30 minutes into a class, while others stay longer can make it difficult for teachers to cover the necessary components with each child. You may want to suggest 30 minute classes only start on the top of every hour to avoid this. You may have some kids with very wide ability levels during the same time slots.

Block Schedule Approach

Children **sign up for particular stages within the SEARS I Can Swim program**. Facilities can offer several stage classes at one time or stagger stages depending on pool space and availability. (e.g. If your pool has limited pool space in the mornings, you may want to offer Preschool and Stage 1 in the morning, then offer Stages 2 – 4 in the mid-morning or early afternoon during weekends or later in the evening during weekdays).

Schedule the classes as follows:
Preschool classes – 30 minutes,
Stage 1 classes – 30 minutes,
Stage 2 classes – 45 minutes,
Stage 3 classes – 60 minutes,
Stage 4 classes – 90 minutes.

Advantages:

By offering block section of preschool and/or the stage program you **can further break down ability levels**. During one particular stage you can have a beginner teacher, intermediate teacher, and an advanced teacher. Depending on swimmer numbers you may have to combine intermediate / advanced or vice versa. **Class lists are usually easier to make up prior to lessons**. The first day process becomes easier and easier once you've started a database of repeat swimmers or continue to get repeat swimmers. Greater control of classes and class sizes.

Disadvantages:

By blocking programming certain stages at certain times some parents may have to spend longer periods of time at the pool waiting for all their kids to finish different lessons. This can be alleviated by providing various stages at all different times.

Start up Kit

Once you've decided which type of approach you are going to run order the SEARS I Can Swim Start-up kit. Order forms can be found online at www.searsicanswim.com or by calling National Headquarters at 877-633-7946. Once you receive the start-up kit go through the Provider Agreement, sign and send in a copy to National Headquarters to start a file on your facility. The Administrative Handbook reviews important details for the first day and is a reminder for the awards and administration for SEARS I Can Swim.

Lesson Scheduling

Pool Space:

Figure out how much pool space you have and the length of time your able to run lessons. Most pools will run lessons from 4:00pm—6:00pm M-F and 8:30am-1:00pm on Saturdays and Sundays.



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Sample Schedule Weekend
Saturday (5 teachers)
8:30am-12:00pm

Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4
Ducklings 8:30-9:05am	Stage 1 9:10-9:40am	Dolphins 3 9:45-10:15am	Stage 4 10:20-11:50am
Dolphins 1 8:30-9:05am	Stage 2 9:10-9:55am	Stage 1 10:00-10:30am	Dolphins 2 10:35-11:05am
Stage 1 8:30-9:05am	Stage 4 9:10-10:40am	Stage 2 10:45-11:30am	Ducklings 11:35-12:05pm
Stage 3 8:30-9:30am	Dolphins 2 9:35-10:05am	Dolphins 1 10:10-10:40am	Stage 1 10:45-11:15am
Stage 2 8:30-9:15am	Dinos 9:20-9:55am	Stage 3 10:00-11:00am	Dolphins 3 11:05-11:35am
Block 5			
Stage 2 11:10-11:55am			
Dolphins 2 11:20-11:50am			

What space do you have?

Depending on the pool space you have, take consideration when scheduling your lessons. Typically look at running as many stages at once as possible. This will give your customers the opportunity to enrol all their children at the same or as close to the same time as possible. Take a look at the sample schedule below.

Number of lessons:

Decide upon how many lessons you will run. ICS recommends 10 sessions for each lesson set. Figure out if there are any holidays that lessons will not run on, or special events within the facility that will cancel lessons and extend their finish dates.

Number of teachers:

Determine how many teachers you can utilize during your schedule. The Sample Weekday schedule outlined uses 5 teachers; 3 for 2.25 hours and 2 for 1.45 hours. In this time segment 14 classes of SEARS I Can Swim can be taught covering most areas of the program. Stage 1 is offered 4 times and could be replaced with either a Ducklings or Dinos course. Stage 4 could be the I Can Swim FAST program or a sport module program. On a weekly schedule you could change the sport module each day of the week to offer the entire program. The Sample Weekend schedule outlined on the previous page uses 5 teachers for a total of 17.5 teaching hours. In this segment 22 classes of SEARS I Can Swim can be taught covering all aspects of the program. Many Stages are taught at the same time so accommodating swimmers with varying ability levels should not pose a problem. This schedule assumes there is enough space to offer varying stages of the program with 5 teachers on at a time. From this,



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schedule your lessons according to the type of approach you are taking. It is recommended that when running the demand driven approach you try to schedule all programs to run each hour. i.e. offer preschool—stage—modular programs all at once if feasible to allow parents to register all children at once and prevent a three or four hour excursion. Also when scheduling for this approach schedule in a 5 minute buffer zone between lessons, 9:00am-9:30am, 9:35am-10:05am etc. to allow teachers time to talk to parents, update progress slips or gather necessary equipment between classes.

Sample Schedule Weekdays

Monday (5 teachers) 4:00pm—6:10pm

Block 1

Stage 1 4:00—4:30pm

Stage 2 4:00—4:45pm

Stage 3 4:00—5:00pm

Stage 4 4:00—5:30pm

Dolphins 2 4:00—4:30pm

Block 2

Stage 1 4:35—5:05pm

Stage 2 4:50—5:35pm

Stage 3 5:10pm—6:10pm

Dolphins 3 4:35—5:05pm

Block 3

Dolphins 1 5:10—5:40pm

Stage 1 5:10—5:40pm

Dolphins 2 5:40—6:10pm

Stage 1 5:40—6:10pm

Program Budget

How do you figure out what to charge? What type of profit margin or mark up should you be setting? Each of these answers will vary with the type of facility you are running and the area of the country you are marketing to. In general most organizations look for a 30-35% profit margin. That is to say that after all expenses the facility is taking in 30-35% profit. Expenses to consider are your teachers wage, I Can Swim fees, facility costs and equipment costs. Many of these factors need to be built into your lesson fee.

Example swim lesson budget formula:

Step #1

Calculate Maximum Lesson Price:

lesson hours * teacher wage = A

A * number of lessons in a session = B

B + min. equipment fee = C

C + (I Can Swim Fee * min. candidates) = D

D / number of min. participants = E

E * 1.30% = Max. Lesson Price Charge

Step #2

Calculate Minimum Lesson Price Charge:

Repeat same formula this time plugging in for maximum number of participants. Go through the formula for each segment of 30 min. classes, 45 min. classes, 60 min. classes and 90 min. classes to come up with the maximum amount you would charge for each lesson set. Do the same thing and calculate the lesson price if you had max. number of participants. Take the two numbers for each 30 min.



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class add them together and divide by 2 to determine the average price of a lesson. This is a great way to determine what pricing structure facilities should be charging for each their lessons.

Marketing

6 months prior to start up the majority of your marketing will be done through a seasonal brochure. Most brochures are worked on well in advance to registration dates. Once you have finalized a lesson schedule and pricing structure the information is ready for publishing. SEARS I Can Swim provides the following marketing descriptors to include in your brochure.

Ducklings

Have fun in shallow water with your own little duckling! Mom, dads, grandparents . . . come sing, play, and splash along with baby. You don't even have to be able to swim yourself to help your child enjoy their first swim class.

Dinos

If you don't think dinos can swim, this program will surprise you. Dinos are toddlers who enjoy the water more with the comforting presence of a parent or grandparent. With lots of songs and activities, your child will have fun and relax in the water.

Dolphins 1

Is your child ready to be in the water without you? Friendly teachers will introduce them to basic swimming skills in a fun class they'll love! Our low teacher / swimmer ratio ensures a fantastic experience.

Dolphins 2

If your child is always splashing around and comfortable in the water . . . learning front and back paddle and deep water swimming will make pool time even more fun. Our low teacher / swimmer ratio ensures a fantastic experience.

Dolphins 3

Youngsters get more than just their feet wet in this class! They master front and back paddle and develop the basic skills for freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly—and have fun learning. Our low teacher / swimmer ratio ensures a fantastic experience.

SEARS I Can Swim Stage Program

Learn how to swim quickly and effectively by mastering 54 skills in three stages, including butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, water safety, entries and turns. The SEARS I Can Swim Program builds skills one step at a time and rewards your progress as you go. An effective, stress free alternative to the traditional pass / fail approach!

Stage 1 Orientation to Water

Start at the beginning! Learning fundamental skills and movements common to all swim strokes gives you a solid foundation for swimming. We encourage swimmers to succeed by providing lots of positive feedback and rewarding the accomplishment of skills as they are achieved.

Stage 2 Skill Development

Ready to swim? After you've built on your fundamental skills and learned water orientation, you'll master arm action, sculling, and breathing. Develop a love for swimming in a fun, rewarding atmosphere.

Stage 3 Skill Improvement

Look who's swimming! You'll improve all four strokes, your reaction / rhythm abilities, and your endurance, and move on to more advanced dives and basic turns.



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6 months out key notes:

- **Decide Approach: Block vs Demand**
- **Order Start up kit & return Provider Agreement**
- **Lesson Scheduling: Amount of time**
 - Type of space
 - Number of Teachers
- **Program Budget:**
 - Cost of space
 - Teachers wages
 - I Can Swim Fee
 - Ratios
 - Program mark ups
 - Subsidies
- **Marketing:**
 - Program Descriptions
 - Brochure inputting



2 months out

Staff Training

At least two months prior to the start of your lessons you'll need to contact National Headquarters and set up certification training for all your teachers. SEARS I Can Swim has over 100 Teacher Course Conductors stationed across Canada able to meet the needs of any facility switching programs. All SEARS I Can Swim Teachers must either be certified through our Upgrade Course (8hrs) or the Teacher Course (26hrs). The Upgrade Course is for teacher candidates that currently have their Water Safety Instructors Award, Swim for Life Instructor, or YMCA Swim Instructor. The SEARS I Can Swim Teacher course is for teacher candidates with Bronze Cross certification and no teaching certifications.

Communication

With any change in an organization it is extremely important to communicate what is happening to all front line staff and people involved in the organization. You will definitely need to develop a memo outlining what the change is, how it will impact the organization, how to support the change and specifically how each department will be affected? You will also want to set up short update in-services especially for front line staff dealing directly with registrations. It is important to go over Frequently Asked Questions, Why the organization made the switch, Where to register (ie. Equivalencies) etc.? These in-services are extremely important to get the buy in of your front line staff as they are the people directly selling your program. Try to provide as much information as possible and make sure the info is available somewhere afterwards to refer back to. Post in a staff logbook or create an information binder for front line staff.

Marketing

This is the time to begin your internal and external marketing campaign. Posters, postcards, newspaper ads and brochures are easy ways to promote your program in the community and stir up interest in upcoming registration.

In house displays



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SEARS I Can Swim provides guidelines for setting up a display with the Administrative Handbook and also provides pictures for marketing. Promotional looped videos are available from National Headquarters to run in your lobby. Display the SEARS I Can Swim banner from your start-up kit.

Advertising

Creating word of mouth and generating excitement and interest about a new program can be done through local advertising. A sample ad is included. Stir up interest in your facility by creating something interesting and intriguing. Get people asking questions and utilize parental comments as you start your sessions to keep the ball rolling. Word of mouth is one of the key marketing factors fitness facilities can use to increase revenues and registration numbers. Many people will drive distances to attend programs at your facility in comparison to ones much closer just because they heard that it offered exceptional service and fantastic programs.

Parent Education

Keeping parents informed and up-to-date on what's happening is probably a programmer's hardest job. Parental education is so vital to your transition success. Provide with an overabundance of information rather than a lack of. Have brochures available to explain the various programs and stages offered, have a person available on the first lesson to answer any questions and explain any changes.

Order Supplies

Either based on previous registrations or the average of your max. / min. registrations for each stage, place an order with SEARS I Can Swim. Passports, posters and stickers will be sent out to accommodate your first go round of participants. These awards are all included in your \$10 annual fee per participant. Orders can be placed any time throughout the year on an as needed basis. Quantities are monitored at National Headquarters to correspond to registrations. If materials ordered significantly vary from registrations received appropriate billing will follow. In addition to ordering appropriate materials from SEARS I Can Swim facilities will need to purchase any necessary lesson equipment at this time.

Registrations

Approximately 2 months prior to lessons start is when registration for lessons will begin. This is the time to make sure staff are well prepared to handle any questions and be able to help your customers with what they are looking for.

2 months out key notes:

- **Organize staff training:**
train your staff with an Upgrade or Full teacher Course
- **In-house communication:**
front line staff are the key sellers of all your programs
- **Marketing internally / externally:**
get the word out, you have the best program to offer
- **Start Registrations:**
here they come!
- **Order Materials:**
posters, passports, stickers

2 weeks out

Staff in-servicing—post certification training approximately two weeks prior to the start up of lessons you should run a teacher in-service to inform your teachers with information pertaining to them. Talk about teacher expectations (in the Administrative Handbook there are sample expectations located on page 18.), classes, administration, communicating with parents, dealing with diverse classes, progress slips, first day expectations, potential problem areas and how to solve them. You may want to incorporate a



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stroke clinic or a collaborative brainstorm on teaching ideas for various topics. You'll want to let individual teachers know which stages and times they will be teaching so that they can start to prepare. Discuss administrative procedures such as on the first day all participants will receive a passport and wave poster with dot stickers. On the 3rd lesson day participants will receive their first progress slip and any awarded stickers etc.

Teacher Expectations

Some of the teacher expectations that a facility should really look into might include; teachers being in the water at least 90% of the time, show up at least 15 minutes prior to the beginning of their first lesson, keep all students in view at all times and ensure that students are never left on their own and continually record progress as to plan appropriate activities. Many facilities also require their teachers to commit to all lessons within a 10 lesson schedule with the exception of one sick day allowance. This keeps consistency in the delivery of your program and creates relationships between teachers and swimmers and parents.

First Day

Go through with your teachers what they can expect to happen on the first day. Much of this information is located in the Administrative Handbook on pages 9-11. The first day should look something like this; just outside the change rooms have a registration check-in table where swimmers and parents come to find out who their teacher is. Class lists will need to be made up prior to. All swimmers not placed into a stage will need a quick assessment (Assessors guide in Administrative Handbook), have a couple of extra teachers available by the registration table to assist with assessing. Teachers will have their names or a certain animal figures posted somewhere along the pool deck. This will be the teachers meeting spot for the rest of the session. Parents and swimmers check in at the table find out who their teacher is and where to find them. This is a great place to also have your first newsletter outlining pertinent information for parents. A sample newsletter is located at the back of the Administrative Handbook. During classes Assessors can also be used to roam around and find out how classes are going and whether any swimmers need to be moved to place them in the proper ability level. Any changes with placement of swimmers has to be done by the second class. Assessors should look for swimmers who are significantly stronger or weaker in comparison to the rest of the class and attempt to accommodate them into a more appropriate class. Sometimes this cannot be done and the teacher must work with the varying ability levels.

Value Added Services

What keeps customers coming back? First and foremost exceptional customer service, secondly providing a memorable experience through quality programming and outstanding teachers. A facility focusing on these core areas within their organization will create customer loyalty to their products and services. SEARS I Can Swim provides all I Can Swim providers with the tools to be successful. There are ample ideas to make your customers feel like they're getting a one of a kind experience.

Pool Parties

Throw a huge pool party to celebrate the beginning of a new program. SEARS I Can Swim can help with local athletic celebrities. Let swimmers try out a variety of aquatic sports, offer fun relays and games & activities, throw a stroke clinic for other teachers and parents, there's no limit to what you could do. Call National Headquarters for suggestions on what could be done.

Newsletters

A great communication tool that will keep parents up-to-date on current events and let them know of other upcoming events. You can also relay information on how the awards work, when to expect to receive materials and any special theme days or activity days that they may want to join in on. Do you have programs for parents running at the same time as swimming lessons? This would be an ideal place to advertise them.



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Contests

Offer your customers a chance to win a free set of lessons, a facility t-shirt, a discount for registering in a program etc. with simple contests to get them interacting in the facility. Have a facts quiz about staff and / or the facility, offer seasonal contests like colouring contests for swimmers or building a snow man in front of the entrance way. There is no limit to what you can do to motivate customers within your facility and create further word of mouth.

Parents Day

Hosting one lesson in the 10 lesson session where parents are encouraged to join in the lesson is a great way to further develop that positive customer experience that will keep customers coming back. Teachers still teach to the swimmers, but can use parents to help as assistants. Use this day as an evaluation day also. Provide parents with a good cup of coffee and an evaluation form to let you know how things are going. Take the feedback seriously and try to make any adjustments necessary. You could also put out a newsletter following the evaluations to summarize what customers are saying about your lessons and any steps your taking to solve any problems.

Mini Performances

If you are running the Stage 4 Sport Modules you may opt to hold a performance day where all sports put on a demonstration of what they have been working on over the past 10 sessions. This is even a greater way to expose your programs and expose the true competition feeling of the sports. It's what all the training is for.

High Performance Athlete Profiles

Having a local high performance athlete come out and help with a clinic will add value to your program and link the whole idea of grass roots swimming to National or Olympic level athletes. Have a local athlete even come out for a demonstration session and then an autograph session.

Program Diversification

SEARS I Can Swim offers a number of programs outside of the aquatic portfolio through our affiliation with Talisman Centre. One of our highlight programs is the 'Personal Bests for Youth' program. A great program for young people to expand their self awareness and see more possibilities for themselves than ever before! Hands-on activities, relevant, practical content, and coaching techniques used for high performance athletes will help youths achieve extraordinary results in their lives. Developed by an Olympic coach, this program gives teens the clear vision and concrete skills to succeed. Call National Headquarters to find out more information.

1 week out

Finalize teacher packages

Whether you set up binders, folders or bins for your teachers you should have the materials they need to run a smooth, successful lesson available and ready for them to start preparing. In this package you may want to include; lesson planners, a clip board, class list, assigned pool space, newsletters for kids, a copy of the teacher expectations, staff home phone lists, a copy of the lesson schedule etc.

Parent Newsletter

This is the newsletter that you can hand out on the first day at the registration table. A sample newsletter is located in the Administrative Handbook. Be sure to include any cancelled dates, special events dates where parking will be limited, theme days, parents day etc.



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Signage

Make up signs with teachers names and / or animal characters to put up along the pool side as a meeting spot for classes.

Class lists

These can easily be done up prior to classes beginning. Usually most programmers cut open registration off 1-2 days prior to the start of lessons and take any registrations personally up to the day before lessons begin. This way they have more control over class sizes and have a better understanding of the flow of the lesson schedule. Unfilled classes that do not meet the minimum participant requirements should be cancelled and registrants called and moved into the next appropriate class.

Print off all registrations and begin to break classes into appropriate ratios. You may be able to use ages as an appropriate guideline to break a Stage 2 class with 14 registrants into 2 classes. As a programmer what you want to attempt to create are similar ability levels within each class. Depending on how you scheduled lessons and whether you've cancelled any classes, you may be able to assign more than one teacher to a class. Do up a master list of all classes so that teachers that are roaming the deck have a clear idea of who's teaching what classes and what swimmers are in what classes. Any movements of swimmers should be recorded on the master list so that programmers are aware of everything that's going on.

Admin handbook review

Prior to the start of lessons it is important for programmers to review the Administrative Handbook and brief yourself on anything that you might have missed.