

## CABRINI SKILL LEVELS

**1) BEGINNER:** This level is for **5 year olds down to 30 month olds ONLY**, who cannot at this point get themselves, unaided by adult or flotation device, across the pool (approx. 40 feet). If your child is 6 or older, do not sign up for this level. What we do with the younger beginner swimmers is not as effective on older beginners. A 6 or older beginner is a NOVICE in this program. The goal in the Beginner level is to get your child to jump in, surface on the back, swim across the pool, and grab the opposite wall--all without being touched by the teacher. Most beginners will achieve these skills in one, two-week session. Pre-requisite: All beginners must be 2 1/2 years old by the first day of lessons and potty trained.

**2) Novice**—This is for children who are **6 and older, but are absolute beginners**. By starting a little later than is ideal, there will be more resistance and fear at this level than in any other group. The going can be slow here (but will be slower every year that they are able to rationalize their fear), so hang in there; they need to be safe, too, and the going doesn't get easier, but harder the older they get.

**Advanced Beginner:** If your child cannot swim freestyle, breathing to the side for a distance of 40 feet or more, this is the level for you. We will evaluate all Advanced Beginners the first day to divide them into one of three categories (but you just choose Advanced Beginner at this point):

**3) 5 and under Advanced Beginner**—These are kids who are graduates of our Beginner program, and **can swim 40 feet successfully on their backs, but who have not yet developed a freestyle arm stroke**. These children will have their back swimming skills reinforced--this is their safety position--while gradually learning to roll over onto their front and take freestyle arm strokes. This way a natural rolling motion, rather than the head out style encouraged by dog paddle and flotation devices, will be used for them to breathe. And they'll always have their back swimming skills for self rescue.

**4) High End Advanced Beginner**--Kids of **any age who can demonstrate some semblance of the arm-over-arm freestyle motion, but who do not yet incorporate breathing to the side** without having to stop their arm stroke to get a breath. Breathing straight up out of the water, causing the legs to drop and the swimmer to work harder to move forward, is a result of early use of flotation devices and dog paddle, and needs to be "unlearned" at this point. But to move on to Intermediate, rhythmic breathing to the side must be mastered at least the width of the pool (approx. 40 feet).