

## Swim Lesson Options in the Elk Valley

---

Many of you have been asking, what's next for swimming lessons? Without anyone to hand the business over to (for now, but I may be back at some point, or train someone at a later time), I wanted to share what other options are available in our local communities. Fernie, Sparwood and Cranbrook pools run the Lifesaving Society Swim Program (group swimming lessons) - please visit the [Lifesaving Society BC website \(https://www.lifesaving.bc.ca/programs-courses/\)](https://www.lifesaving.bc.ca/programs-courses/) for further details about this program. After going through their websites, I also reached out to the Fernie and Sparwood pool managers to confirm the information and add any missing details, as well as obtaining the swim club info from their website - all are subject to change. This email is long and detailed, feel free to save it for later.

### [Elk Valley Dolphins Swim Club \(https://www.evdsc.com/\)](https://www.evdsc.com/)

Rather than progressing through levels and signing up every set, the swim club is different in that you try out for the team (based on your front and back crawl ability only - so best to practice ahead of time for confidence in the big pool) and are placed into the appropriate learn to swim group or competitive pod program based on age and ability. Once you're in, you're in - you can choose to preregister again for the next season ahead of new swimmers trying out (they also try to prioritize siblings). It's an excellent, quality program focused on long term athlete development with a strong team environment. More competitive as you progress with options to race and compete in swim meets if you choose. Stronger focus on stroke development, endurance and learning to train, less focus on survival swim skills or lifesaving skills. Click website above for all the details and you can join their waitlist now.

- **Guppies (3-5 years):** runs for 1-2 trainings a week for 30 minutes in the leisure pool, running for 10 weeks. Looks like they are looking for an instructor for this program, so not sure if it is currently running.
- **Junior Pups (5 years+):** runs for 1-2 trainings a week on weekday afternoons for 30 minutes in the leisure pool, running for 10 weeks. Swimmers should be comfortable swimming 10m on front and back.
- **Pups (5 years+):** runs for 1-2 trainings a week on weekday afternoons for 30 minutes in the main pool, running for 10 weeks. Swimmers should be comfortable swimming 25m on front and back.
- **Competitive Programs (7 years+): Green Pod (7-10 years), Red Pod (9-13 years), Silver Pod (10 years+) and Black Pod (12 years+):** run at various times throughout the week in the main pool with trainings increasing in duration and frequency as they progress. Coaches

propose when swimmers are ready to progress and offer a transition period to work towards advancement.

- **Teen Swim Fit (12-18 years):** runs once or twice a week for 1 hour for a 10 week session in the main pool. More flexible option to work on fitness, stroke refinement or training for events. Ideal for training towards Bronze Medallion too.
- **Masters (18 years+):** offered 4 times a week for 1 hour in the main pool, pay per class or discounts available for multiple classes per week. More flexible option to work on fitness, stroke refinement or training for events. Ideal for training towards Bronze Medallion too.
- **Adaptive Learn to Swim (4 years+):** runs once a week for 30 mins in the leisure pool, running for 10 weeks.
- **Adaptive Pre-Comp (6 years+):** runs twice a week for 30 mins in the main pool, running for 10 weeks.

**Next Opening:** "Returning swimmers are given the first opportunity to pre-register for the upcoming season. Remaining available spots are offered to successful candidates from our pre-season New Swimmer Evaluations. New Swimmer Evaluations are held in Late Summer / Early Fall, additional evaluations will be held throughout the season based on availability (most likely mid-December)." Programs also run in Sparwood and Elkford.

### [Ferne Aquatic Center](#)

(<https://anc.ca.apm.activecommunities.com/ferniererecreation/home?locale=en-US> )

- **Under 3 years:** Drop in Parent and Tot swim, currently running on Tuesdays 10.30-11am.
- **3-5 years:** Preschool Levels 1-5 run in the leisure pool for 30 mins, currently on weekday afternoons and Saturday mornings (4-6 swimmers in each class, no parents, running for 5-8 week sets).
- **5 years+:** Swimmer Levels 1-6 run in the main pool for 30 or 45 mins, currently on weekday afternoons and Saturday mornings (6-8 swimmers in each class, running for 5-8 week sets).
- **Advanced Programs (8 years+):** Once swimmers complete Swimmer 6, they can either go onto the Rookie/Ranger/Star levels (though they rarely run at FAC), or they can head straight to the Bronze Medallion course once they turn 13. This is a highly valuable course for any young person, whether or not they want to go on to the Bronze Cross then National Lifeguard course. The only prerequisite for Bronze Medallion is that they have turned 13 (they do not technically have to complete Swimmer 6 first), though it is recommended they train and practice to be able to swim 400m in under 12 minutes (a requirement to pass the course) as well as practice eggbeater kick for treading water, even better if they complete a First Aid Course too. You can log into your account and add your swimmer to the Advanced Aquatics Interest List now.

- **Private/Semi-Private swim lessons (5 years-adults):** From FAC, "We do not have any staff specifically trained to teach children with disabilities, but we do offer private and semi-private lessons. While we do our best to accommodate requested days and times, the facility is busier than ever. Families can add their child to our interest list, and we'll reach out directly as time slots become available."
- **Notes:** For the Lifesaving Society program, please expect to work on a level for more than 1 set, they did not 'fail', this is normal - it takes time for 8 swimmers in a diverse group to complete 10-12 skills competently, 3 times each over a 5-8 lesson set (when everyone is sick at least once). Also, some levels have a much bigger jump in new skills and endurance building than others. Each level runs according to demand, so not every level will run each set unfortunately (especially higher levels - e.g. Preschool 4/5 or Swimmer 5/6). Demand has slowed over the years, so it may be easier to get in now than you think.

**Next Opening:** Their January lesson set will begin on January 12th and will run once a week for six weeks - registration will open at 8:00pm on December 15th. If you do not know your swimmer's level, you will need to request a brief swim level assessment at FAC at your earliest convenience (i.e. swimmer hops in the pool while a lifeguard asks to see them swim various skills, takes about 5 minutes), before registration opens up. If swimmers are 5 years old, they could be placed in preschool or swimmer levels, depending on their ability and whether they feel ready to move up to the big pool.

### **Sparwood Recreation Center**

(<https://www.sparwood.ca/parks-recreation-culture/parks-recreation/> )

- **Under 3 years:** Drop in Sing and Splash, currently running on Mondays at 2.15-3pm.
- **3-5 years:** Preschool Levels 1-5 run in the main pool for 30 mins, currently on weekday afternoons (4-6 swimmers in each class, no parents, running for 5-8 week sets).
- **5 years+:** Swimmer Levels 1-6 run in the main pool for 30 or 45 mins, currently on weekday afternoons (6-8 swimmers in each class, running for 5-8 week sets). There is also a homeschool lesson program running during school hours.
- **Advanced Programs (8 years+):** Once swimmers complete Swimmer 6, they can either go onto the Rookie/Ranger/Star levels (occasionally run at SRC), or they can head straight to the Bronze Medallion course once they turn 13. This is a highly valuable course for any young person, whether or not they want to go on to the Bronze Cross then National Lifeguard course. The only prerequisite for Bronze Medallion is that they have turned 13 (they do not technically have to complete Swimmer 6 first), though it is recommended they train and practice to be able to swim 400m in under 12 minutes (a requirement to pass the course) as well as practice eggbeater kick for treading water, even better if they complete a First Aid Course too.

- **Youth Stroke Improvement (13-17 years):** "Build your endurance, improve your speed, and perfect your technique. A Great head start to develop the skills required for Bronze Medallion". Runs for 30 minutes once or twice a week over 5 sessions.
- **Adult Stroke Improvement (18 years+):** "Work on your personal goals such as learning how to swim, critiquing swimming strokes, and even adopting swimming into your exercise routine". Runs for 45 minutes once a week for 5 sessions.
- **Private/Semi-Private swim lessons (5-12 years):** From SRC, "We do not have any fully qualified trained staff to teach children with disabilities; we do our best to accommodate when we are teaching group or private lessons. Cannucks Autism/Lifesaving society recently launched an online component to help educate Swim Instructors and is an excellent resource; this is now a mandatory requirement for all Swim for life Instructors." [You can log in and join the waitlist now.](#)
- **Note:** Each level runs according to demand, so not every level will run each set unfortunately (especially higher levels - e.g. Preschool 4/5 or Swimmer 5/6).

**Next Opening:** Their last Fall set is open now for registration (Set #3), running from November 18 - December 11. Registraton will open mid-December for their first Winter set, running from January 12 - February 12. If you do not know your swimmer's level, you will need to [request a brief swim level assessment at SRC at your earliest convenience](#), before registration opens up. If swimmers are 5 years old, they could be placed in preschool or swimmer levels, depending on their ability and comfort level.

I hope that all makes sense and saves you some time trying to research and understand what is available in our local area. It can seem quite complicated, because it is, so feel free to look at the blue **website links** in the titles to learn more or ask at the front desk at your local aquatic center.

Thank you all for the once in a lifetime experience on being able to teach all your amazing swimmers over the last 5 and a half years indoors and outdoors in our beautiful local lakes. I'm so grateful I got to do this and I'm going to miss it so much!!