



## **Swim Camp Host Overview**

This document provides an overview of what is involved in hosting an iCan Swim camp. If you have questions or would like to pursue hosting a swim program, please email [lisa@icanshine.org](mailto:lisa@icanshine.org)

### **Components of this packet include:**

- **Importance of Swim Camp Hosts**
- **iCan Swim Benefits**
- **Program Description**
- **Adapted Aquatics Instructor Course Description**
- **Adapted Aquatics Instructor Candidate Eligibility Requirements**
- **Adapted Aquatics Instructor Training Program Schedule**
- **Standard Swim Camp Daily Schedule**
- **Swimmer Requirements**
- **Host Responsibilities During Camp**
- **Volunteer Requirements**
- **Facility/Pool Requirements**
- **Program Cost**

## IMPORTANCE OF SWIM CAMP HOSTS

Our mission is to provide unique learning opportunities in recreational activities for people with disabilities. Each person's abilities are embraced and nurtured to foster an environment where everyone can shine!

Without local organizations, groups and individuals with the desire to make this happen in their community accomplishing our mission is impossible.

## iCAN SWIM BENEFITS

### **Benefits for Swimmers**

- Increase in self-esteem and self-confidence
- Aerobic activity without harsh impact to the musculoskeletal system
- Increase in strength and muscle tone
- Creates relaxation and/or an opportunity to release energy
- Creates opportunities for social interactions
- Inclusion opportunities
- Increases communication skills
- Improves self-control and behavioral outcomes
- Learn and Improve safety skills in and around aquatic environments

Each swimmer participating in iCan Swim will have their own unique goals. Goals will range from an introduction to water exploration, learning water safety in an aquatic environment, learning to swim, or skill refinement in preparation to join a Special Olympics, Paralympic or other swim team.

The iCan Swim program goal is to teach the foundation for safely enjoying the aquatic environment and promoting as much independent movement in the water as possible. The iCan Swim program is not aquatic therapy, rather a program to enjoy the water as a leisure recreational activity.

### **Benefits for the Community**

- During the weeklong iCan Swim program swim instructors from the host community may participate in a training and certificate program to teach Adapted Aquatics classes following the camp. These swim instructors are designated as Adapted Aquatics Instructors (AAI). ***The AAI Training Program is a recommended but optional part of the iCan Swim program.***

- Volunteers receive the experience of helping people with disabilities learn to swim not only during the iCan Swim camp but to continue working with their swimmers after camp to help them reach their aquatic goals.

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- Each swimmer attends the same 45-minute (3-7 year age group) or 60-minute session (8- 12 year age group and 13 and above age group) each day of camp Monday through Friday
- Up to 5 consecutive sessions per day
- Camp generally occurs between 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
- 30-minute break between each session (equipment prep and 15-minute volunteer training/debriefing before the next session)
- 60-minute break for lunch
- No less than 3 and no more than 6 swimmers per each session (depending on available pool space)
- **All sessions must have a minimum of 3 swimmers.** If concerned about meeting this minimum, hosts may consider offering sessions #1 to #4 or #2 to #5 initially, until they get a sense of being able to meet this minimum. Adding the 5<sup>th</sup> session can occur any time during registration. To the extent hosts open up all five sessions and have any that do not have at least 3 swimmers, they will need to reassign swimmers to ensure a minimum of 3 in each session. When scheduling your camp day please do not skip sessions. Having a break during the day is difficult for Shine staff as well as the host and volunteers.
- Minimum of 1 volunteer per swimmer plus 3 “floaters” (backup volunteers) per session is recommended in the event a primary volunteer is absent. (ex. if a session has 5 swimmers, there should be 8 volunteers each day—1 for each swimmer and 3 extra). **No swimmer will be allowed in the water without a volunteer.**
- 2 iCan Swim Staff conduct the camp
- If participating in the AAI Training Program, 1-4 AAs will be available for a **minimum of 27 hours** for the training and certificate program to become Adapted Aquatics Instructors and teach classes in the local community

following the iCan Swim camp

- Full time Camp Director (provided by Host) responsibilities are described later in this document in section entitled “Responsibilities During Camp”. Dividing this role between 2 people during the week is fine so long as there is always someone at camp assigned as the Camp Director.

### **ADAPTED AQUATICS INSTRUCTOR COURSE DESCRIPTION**

iCan Shine defines Adapted Aquatics as a program specifically designed and modified for individuals with disabilities to reach their maximum level of independent movement, safety and enjoyment of aquatic environments. Modifications may include teaching strategies, communication modifications, and physical accommodation with minimal use of equipment.

The iCan Swim Adapted Aquatics Instructor training is not water therapy training. Our goal is to help swimmers reach their maximum potential independent movement in the water.

This course includes:

- Introduction to Adapted Aquatics
- The Basics of Aquatic Skills
- Creating an effective class
- How to be successful working with individuals with disabilities
- Enhanced teaching techniques by diagnosis
- Behavior Management
- Equipment usage
- Teaching safety for individuals with disabilities
- Effective communication skills
- Volunteers
- Swimmer goals
- Tracking progress
- Instructional planning
- Overcoming obstacles
- Implementing Adapted Aquatics classes in your community

### **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR ADAPTED AQUATICS INSTRUCTOR CANDIDATES**



	<b>AAI Training</b>	<b>4:30pm-5:30pm</b>
--	---------------------	----------------------

**NOTE: The Session start times and combination of age groups that comprise the five daily sessions are determined by the camp host and vary by camp. Please consider your community needs when setting your sessions and combination of age groups to offer.**

### **STANDARD SWIM CAMP DAILY SCHEDULE**

#### **Saturday**

- iCan Swim staff arrive and check into hotel in the afternoon or evening
- Camp Director sends e-mail to families and volunteers reminding them of Sunday orientation. In addition to the orientation volunteers will stay for a 90-minute training. A reminder for volunteers to wear swimsuit and bring a towel should be included as they will be in the pool on Sunday for approximately one hour.
- Camp Director confirms with facility personnel that facility will be ready for use on Sunday for Adapted Aquatics Instructor Training (optional component for each camp), Parent & Volunteer Orientation and Volunteer Training (including site tour by host)

#### **Sunday**

- Camp Director arrives at facility 30 minutes prior to the four-hour scheduled AAI training to ensure the room and equipment are ready for orientation, meet with iCan Swim staff to confirm facility logistics and items to be covered during the Parent & Volunteer Orientation. Once the AAI training has started the Camp Director may leave and return 20 minutes prior to the Parent & Volunteer Orientation. iCan Swim staff conduct the four-hour AAI training session.
- Camp Director sets up appropriate signs indicating where families and volunteers should park and check-in for the orientation.
- iCan Swim staff conducts the Parent & Volunteer Orientation lasting approximately 30-35 minutes (swimmers should not attend).
- Camp Director provides welcome and any relevant information to the parents and volunteers.
- Following the Orientation the Camp Director provides a facility tour with parents for 10-15 minutes.

- iCan Swim staff conducts a separate volunteer training for approximately 90 minutes. A portion of the training, one hour, will be in the pool.
- Camp Director provides completed swimmer registration and release forms to iCan Swim instructors for review and preparation for Monday

### **Monday - Day #1**

- Camp Director handles swimmer and volunteer check-in outside doors leading to pool area
- Check-in includes ensuring all swimmers and volunteers have their name written on their arm (iCan Swim staff provides the markers) and have followed pool specific rules before each session begins
- iCan Swim instructor will have the daily instructional meeting with volunteers 15 minutes before each session begins and assign volunteers to swimmers
- Volunteers end daily instructional meeting at session start time and go out to check-in area to 'meet and greet' their assigned swimmer
- Volunteers escort swimmer into pool area to assigned starting number (a poly-spot marker on the pool deck)
- Volunteers escort swimmer back to parent/guardian following the session
- iCan Swim staff and AAls will put away equipment and return pool space and deck to original condition.
- During the 30-minute break before the next session iCan Swim Instructors will debrief with AAls and train volunteers for the next session
- Following the last session of the day Shine staff conducts a one-hour training for AAls.

### **Tuesday - Day #2**

- Same as procedures for Monday

### **Wednesday – Day #3**

- Same as procedures for Tuesday
- Camp Director places all PFDs (personal flotation devices) also known as lifejackets on the pool deck ready for use. We recommend the traditional

orange lifejackets available at most public pools.

- Additional water safety activities take place toward the end of each session

#### **Thursday – Day #4**

- Same as procedures for Tuesday

#### **Friday – Day #5**

- Same as procedures for Thursday
- Each parent/guardian completes an iCan Swim Camp Feedback Survey during their child's session and turns in to Camp Director
- An iCan Swim Instructor will speak with each parent individually regarding post-camp strategies for their swimmer(s)
- Each of the five sessions end 10-15 minutes early to enable the camp director to conduct an Awards Ceremony for all swimmers and volunteers (optional but highly recommended).

#### **Saturday**

iCan Swim staff checks out of hotel and departs

### **SWIMMER REQUIREMENTS**

In order to participate in the iCan Swim program, the individual must meet the below requirements:

- have a diagnosed disability
- be at least 3 years of age at the start of swim camp
- swimmers with a G-tube should not swim if the stoma is less than two months old
- swimmers with a tracheostomy are not eligible for iCan Swim

It is important to consider behavioral issues when evaluating this program. An individual may be physically able to participate, but if their behavior is such that they cannot be persuaded to follow instructions, then it is likely this program will not be beneficial. Individuals with severe behavioral issues may be removed from the program if their actions are potentially harmful to themselves or others at the pool. All safety procedures of the facility must be adhered to.



## **RESPONSIBILITIES DURING CAMP**

### **Camp Director**

A full-time Camp Director is designated by the Host and may or may not be involved in planning the swim camp. In addition to possible involvement in helping Host plan and organize the camp, the primary responsibilities of a Camp Director during the week of camp include, but are not limited to:

1. On site during each camp day to coordinate any emergency or other issues with Shine staff (e.g., calling 911 or managing and collaborating with Shine staff to resolve parent or spotter questions/issues) and act as a liaison between Shine staff and parents of swimmers (e.g., fielding and answering parent questions as best as possible and consulting with Shine staff frequently).
2. Coordinate communications and all facility issues with facility staff (e.g., issues with access to or use of the areas as previously agreed to).
3. Assist Shine staff with oversight/supervision and motivation of volunteers
4. Organize and administer a swimmer and volunteer check-in process outside the pool area. Check-in process should include:
  - Having swimmers arrive 10 minutes before session start time with parent/caregiver to apply name tag and wait outside facility until met and greeted each day by assigned volunteer(s), reminding caregivers to have swimmers use the restroom, have their snack, check medical issues (glucose levels, breathing treatments and proper medications). Depending on the facility rules swimmers may also be required to wear a swim cap and/or shower prior to entering the pool.
  - Arrange for some seating in check-in area for parents/caregivers to wait prior to session start times. Paper and markers/crayons may be made available for children to draw their swim pictures for the iCan Swim Art Gallery.
  - Have volunteers arrive 15 minutes before session start time to apply name tag and meet with Shine staff for daily instructions/training prior to arrival of swimmers
  - Have Parent Surveys and Volunteer Surveys along with pens available on Friday (Day#5 of camp) for all parents/caregivers

and volunteers to complete. (to be provided to Shine staff at end of camp)

- Arrange for lunch each day of camp to enable Shine staff and instructors in training to stay at facility during lunch (optional but very much appreciated)
5. Coordinate and communicate all details of pre-camp orientation with facility personnel. This includes but is not limited to:
- Scheduling to meet Shine staff at facility on Sunday for a walkthrough of the facility
  - Scheduling all activities at the facility for Sunday, to include AAI Training, a Parent and Volunteer Orientation and Volunteer Training
  - Providing a screen and projector for Shine staff to connect laptop to show Power Point presentation at Sunday orientation
  - Making arrangements for seating for parents and spotters at Sunday orientation
  - Making arrangements for space for AAI Training and Volunteer Training
6. Coordinate and communicate all details of camp area with facility personnel and Shine staff. This includes but is not limited to:
- Scheduling pool space for each session, locker room/changing room for our swimmers
  - Assuring pool deck area for class meeting space as well as pool entry and exit
  - Assure the pool has qualified Life Guards on duty during all camp session times
7. Coordinate and administer post camp award ceremony with spotters and parents, if any (e.g., end each session 5 to 10 minutes early on last day of camp).

## VOLUNTEER DETAILS

**Volunteers** - Person at least 15 years old to work alongside the participant and provide physical and emotional support. This person should be physically fit and be comfortable assisting another person in the water. We require 1 volunteer per swimmer and recommend 2 additional volunteers be available each day in the event another volunteer(s) is unable to attend. **Swimmers will not be allowed in the water without a volunteer.** Each volunteer is assigned to work with the same swimmer all week at camp.

**NOTE:** Volunteers that are 14 years old may participate but they must be partnered with another volunteer 21 or over and not be responsible for spotting a swimmer by themselves.

**Volunteer Check-in Assistant** - Person assists with check-in of participants & volunteers and other assigned tasks (e.g., helping implement motivational techniques for distracted participants). This is a good role for teenagers interested in volunteering that are under 15 years old.

## FACILITY/POOL REQUIREMENTS

- Each state/province has local requirements for pool operations. Pools used for iCan Swim must have certified operators and follow universal safety standards. All pool rules should be posted and available to Shine staff and the general public.
- The pool must have trained and certified lifeguard(s) on duty. Some states have requirements for the number of lifeguards per square foot or mandatory numbers during public access to the pool. Regardless of the regulations, iCan Shine requires pool supervision by a certified lifeguard during the hours of the iCan Swim program.
- Indoor pools are most suitable for iCan Swim classes but outdoor pools may be considered. Distractions caused by teaching in an outdoor setting is less conducive to learning. In addition, pool closures for outdoor pools are more frequent due to inclement weather. iCan Shine does not provide a refund for sessions missed due to pool closures. iCan Swim instructors are prepared to conduct a land-based session in the event of a pool closure.
- The pool must have restrooms and showers available. If available, we prefer a separate area for parents to sit and view the program.
- Access to the facility on Sunday, the day before camp, for site visit, facility

walk-through, Adapted Aquatics Instructor Training, the Parent & Volunteer Orientation and Volunteer Training

- iCan Swim sessions will need a specific allocated meeting area on the pool deck prior to entering and upon exiting the pool
- Access to entry and exit of the pool space may be shared with the general public, ramp access is preferred, ladder and/or pool side entry acceptable
- A pool with no or minimal activity during the camp is best. Pool space assigned to iCan Swim camp should **not** be shared with the general public
- Access to equipment provided at the facility and a small space to secure Shine equipment. (not required but a bonus) Pool equipment includes noodles for each day and PFD/lifejackets on Wednesday.
- Each session may have 3-6 swimmers depending on available pool space. Most public pools have a "short course" pool a minimum of 25 yards (75 ft.) with 4 or more lap lanes (each 6 ft. wide). The equivalent of three lap lanes (approximately 18 ft.) is required for the maximum number of swimmers per session.
- Minimum pool space requirements are:

Swimmers per Session	Pool Width	Pool Length
3	9 ft.	75 ft.
4	12 ft.	75 ft.
5	15 ft.	75 ft.
6	18 ft.	75 ft.

- We recommend you check with your facility to determine what areas are used for Learn-To-Swim classes. Our needs will likely be similar, however remember that we will have one adult volunteer for each swimmer. Our space will be larger than that of the Learn-To-Swim class space. Depth of **4 feet** is ideal for children 8 and older learning to swim. In addition to the class space a lap lane is highly recommended. For children 3-7 years of age we recommend a shallow area as well as a 3.5 to 4 foot space. Pictures of the pool space and pool deck along with a description should be submitted to iCan Shine at the time of application. A completed iCan Swim Booking Form and iCan Swim Facility Checklist should accompany the photographs.

## PROGRAM COST

- \$5,950 paid to iCan Shine which includes 2 iCan Swim staff transportation costs and liability insurance for host and facility (excludes lodging costs of two rooms for 7 nights for iCan Swim staff)
- Above fee is partially funded by the host charging swimmers a camp registration fee of generally \$125 to \$175 (amount is determined by host).
- Providing lodging for two (2) rooms for seven (7) nights (checking-in and out on Saturday) generally in a hotel near the swim facility
- Facility rental fee, if any
- Providing lunch for iCan Swim staff and Adapted Aquatics Instructor Trainees for each day of camp enabling staff to remain at facility to prep for session following lunch (not required but very much appreciated)
- Miscellaneous costs such as swimmer and volunteer awards
- Optional costs include T-Shirts for swimmers and volunteers

The total cost for a camp will vary depending on the level of donated/discounted items secured by the host (e.g., facilities, hotel rooms, t-shirts, lunches, etc.).

**Most camps cost approximately \$7,000 - \$8,000. This amount is primarily recovered by the host through charging swimmer registration fees set by the host that generally ranges from \$125 to \$175. For example, a camp of 30 swimmers with a registration fee of \$150 will yield \$4,500 to the host thereby funding the majority of the camp cost.**

**Camp Hosts may also consider charging the Instructor Trainees a fee for the training and Adapted Aquatics Instructor certificate. While there are many aquatic therapy programs in existence at the time of this writing there are no specialized learn- to-swim Adapted Aquatics instructor training programs. The Dan Marino Foundation has a learn-to-swim instructor training tailored to working with people with autism. Disabled Sports USA, Special Olympics and Paralympics offer swim team instructor guidance and coaching.**

**The other remaining camp cost is generally subsidized by obtaining donated lodging, t-shirts, donations from local corporate sponsors or individuals, grant - writing and/or other fundraising activities.**

# Have questions?

- OR -

**Ready to begin process to host an iCan Swim camp?**

Please contact Lisa Ruby via e-mail or phone at:

[lisa@icanshine.org](mailto:lisa@icanshine.org)  
(571) 218-0770 (mobile)

*"We cannot hold a torch to light another's path without  
brightening our own"*