

Peter and Penny Go Swimming

By Janet, Laurie, Jenny & Victor Metcalfe

Soon after Peter and Penny were born, their parents began taking them to the local swimming pool every weekend. The parents were enthusiastic swimmers, and they hoped their children would be keen swimmers too.

Of course, Peter and Penny were not allowed to go to the swimming pool itself, they were looked after in a little room right beside the pool. Sometimes they cried because they wanted to stay with their parents, but that wasn't allowed because they might disturb the adult swimmers. Besides, they were too young to understand swimming, and they wouldn't appreciate it fully.

When Peter and Penny were three years old, they were allowed to go to another room just down the hall from the swimming pool. There they heard stories from the Swimmers Manual, and they coloured pictures of people swimming.

When they were six years old, Peter and Penny went to another big room – a big room with lots of children. Here they began to get really serious about swimming. For the first ten or fifteen minutes, they were allowed to take off their shoes and socks and splash about in the wading pool. They then went to classes with other children their own age to learn more about swimming. They were taught by some dedicated people who loved swimming but who hardly ever swam themselves any more because they were busy with the children

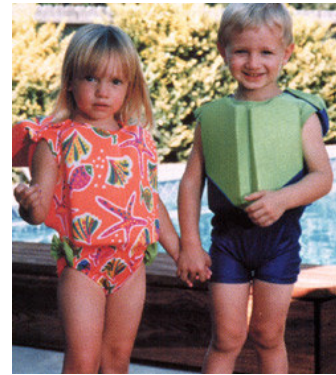
By the time Peter and Penny were thirteen, they had studied the Swimmer's Manual in even more detail and had learned the rules of the swimming pool by heart: "You will not run on the deck, you shall not bring flotation devices into the pool area..." They had also learned about the properties of water, the muscles used in swimming, and the various swimming strokes. They had studied great swimmers of the past, including Olympic medal winners.

They had heard about swimmers who went to other countries such as Africa or India to teach swimming, and they had seen slides of groups of African or Indian swimmers standing beside their swimming pools.

On special occasions, Peter and Penny had been allowed to go with their parents into the pool, as long as they didn't splash around too much and disturb the other swimmers or bother the lifeguard.

At last Peter and Penny finished swimming school and were allowed to accompany their parents into the swimming pool every week.

They tried it a few times. Much to the disappointment of their parents, Peter and Penny had lost interest and preferred to watch television instead.



Some questions for discussion

How do you think Peter and Penny feel here?

Have you had similar feelings?

I wonder if you know a place like this?

How do the children and young people of your place feel?

What do you think is important here?

What are we doing well?

What might we do differently?