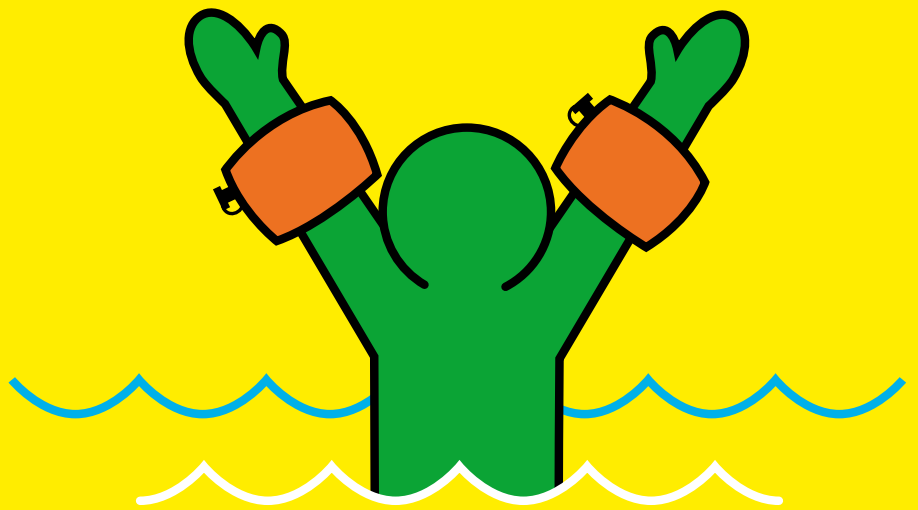


swim 4 life

local supporter's guide

Everything you need to help families get active in the pool



Created in partnership with



welcome to swim4life

Swimming is a great way for families to be up and about and have fun together. It doesn't matter how old you are, being in the water helps us be more active and stay healthy, and can also be a great way to unwind and enjoy ourselves.

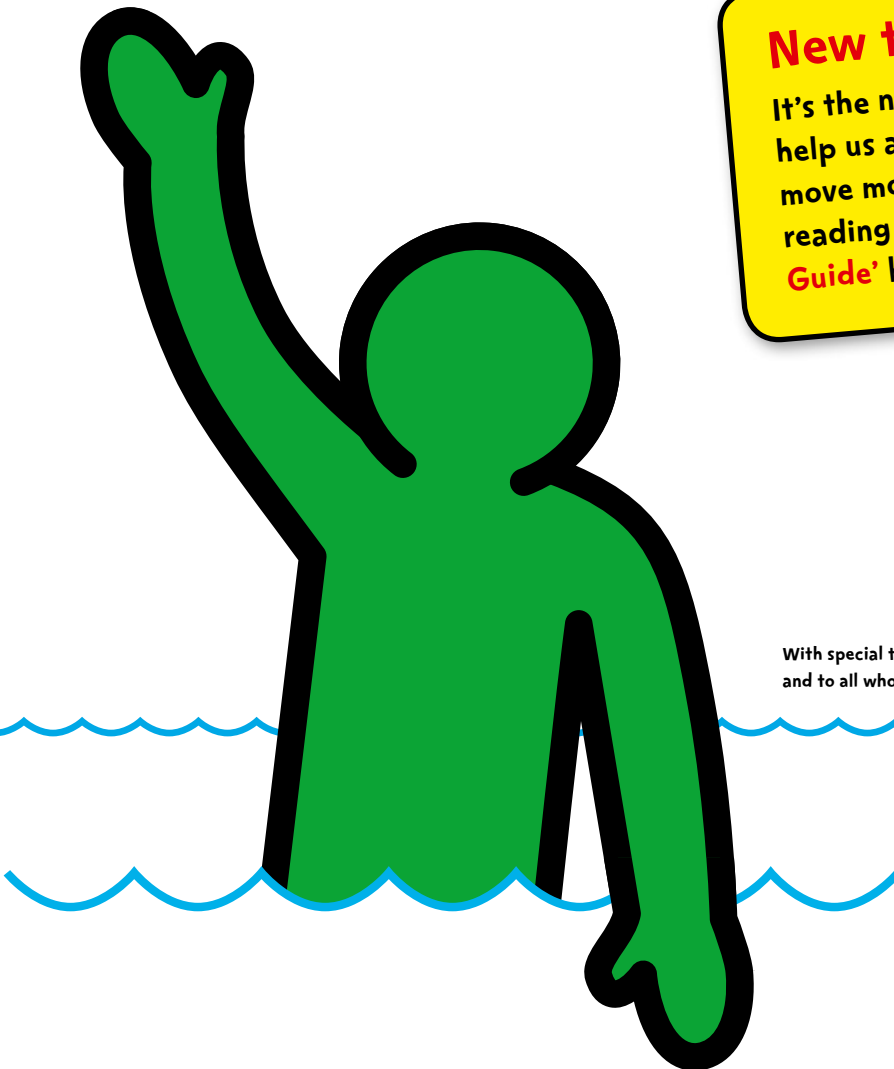
That's why Swim4Life has been launched to support Change4Life, helping us live healthier, happier and longer lives. This toolkit contains ideas for simple, fun games that you can plan and run around swimming so we can get as many people as possible into their local pool!

What's more, from 1st April 2009, almost 300 local councils are providing free swimming for people aged 60 and over – and more than 200 are offering free swimming to those aged 16 and under too. So there's never been a better time for the whole family to enjoy one of the nation's favourite activities! Check whether your council is running free swimming [here](#).

New to Change4Life?

It's the nationwide movement which aims to help us all, but especially our kids, eat well, move more and live longer. Find out more by reading the '[Change4Life Local Supporter's Guide](#)' by clicking [here](#).

With special thanks to the ASA in developing this toolkit and to all who contributed their comments and ideas.

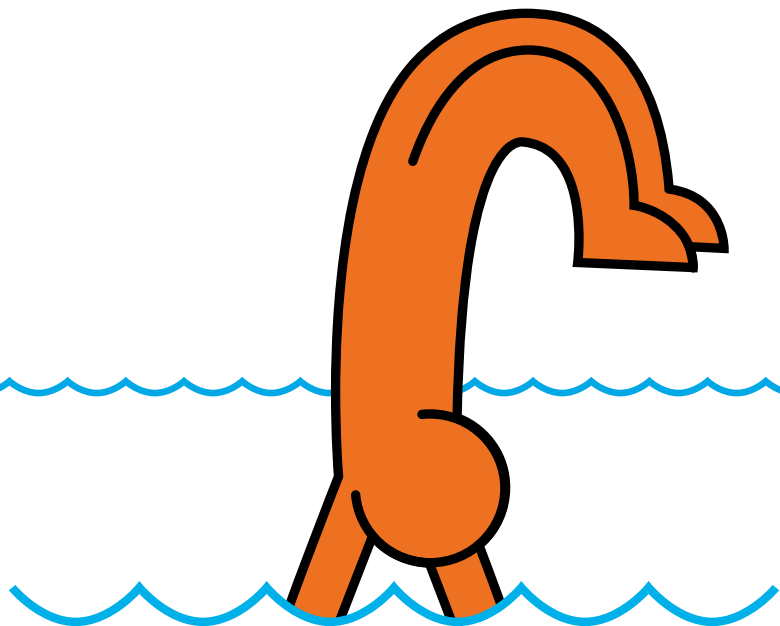


what's swim4life all about?

Our research tells us that parents may find some of the lifestyle changes suggested by Change4Life harder to make than others. So we want to help parents, children, partners and supporters of the campaign to organise fun games that focus on helping people make these changes.

An important part of Change4Life is about keeping active and getting into the habit of moving around regularly. And swimming (which really means any activity in the pool) is a great way to help keep us healthy. By doing so, families will be well on their way to achieving some of the changes that are necessary for a healthier future.

Although a few of the changes involved in Change4Life can seem a bit daunting to some families, swimming is something that people like, especially as it's a useful skill to have in life.



small changes, big benefits

Change4Life is all about making small lifestyle changes that add up to big health benefits. We've identified 8 healthy changes that families may consider making for a healthier future, and swimming can help achieve two of them in particular.

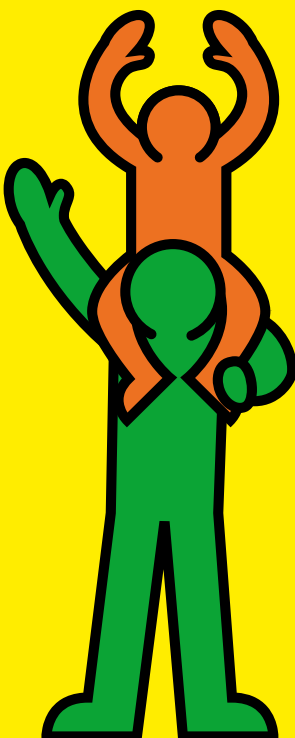


60 active minutes

Active kids are happy kids – they like to be up and about, running around and having fun. The trouble is, in this modern world they've got other things to do and plenty of reasons not to go outside and play or run around.

In fact, kids need to do *at least* 60 minutes of physical activity that gets their heart beating faster than usual every day. This doesn't all have to be in one go, and it will burn off energy and prevent them storing up excess fat in the body which can lead to cancer, type 2 diabetes and heart disease. It also helps their muscles and bones grow nice and strong!

Swimming is a great, fun way of helping kids do this, especially as an after-school or weekend activity with their family or friends. And because they're having such a good time in the pool, kids can burn off energy without really noticing!



up & about

Modern life has made things much more comfortable for us – so comfortable, in fact, that most of us spend too long sitting down doing nothing much at all!

Of course it's important to relax, but there's a difference between chilling out and vegging out. The fact is that kids who are inactive don't burn off enough energy and store up fat in their body.

The solution is simple – get up! Simply being up and about burns energy and helps prevent serious illnesses like type 2 diabetes, heart disease and cancer. Something as obvious as getting kids up off the sofa and encouraging them to do something more active will help.

Taking the kids swimming is a great way of making sure they're moving around and having lots of fun. And there are so many things you can do in the pool they should never get bored of going.

Want to read more about the 8 ways to Change4Life? Read the 'Change4Life Local Supporter's Guide' by clicking [here](#).

how can you help families swim4life?


Swimming or being in the water is something that most people enjoy, so it should be easy to get people to change their lifestyle and go along to their local pool.

However, there are some barriers that may be preventing families from swimming more than they do, or even at all. Understanding what those barriers are and identifying which apply to the families and children you work with (or even your own!) is the first step to helping them find solutions.

Parents and carers may feel that going swimming is too expensive, or that it's a hassle because it takes time to dry hair and deal with the wet clothes afterwards. They might also think they'll get bored while the kids are in the pool, and some might not want to go in because they feel self-conscious about wearing a swimming costume or because they can't swim.

But there are ways to overcome all of these barriers and encourage kids and their families to get into the water and start having fun. And that's where you can help; by talking to them about the benefits of swimming and giving them tips and advice on how they can make it part of their weekly routine.

The following games are designed to help you do this. You'll need to decide which are the most suitable for you and the families and children you work with.



There are some questions it's worth asking your local pool before you take a group swimming. Things like which buses run there, what the dress code is and whether you're able to section off an area of the pool are all good to know in advance.

For more help with preparing for Swim4Life, have a look at our **'Swim4Life Top Tips for Local Supporters'** by clicking [here](#).

swim4life games

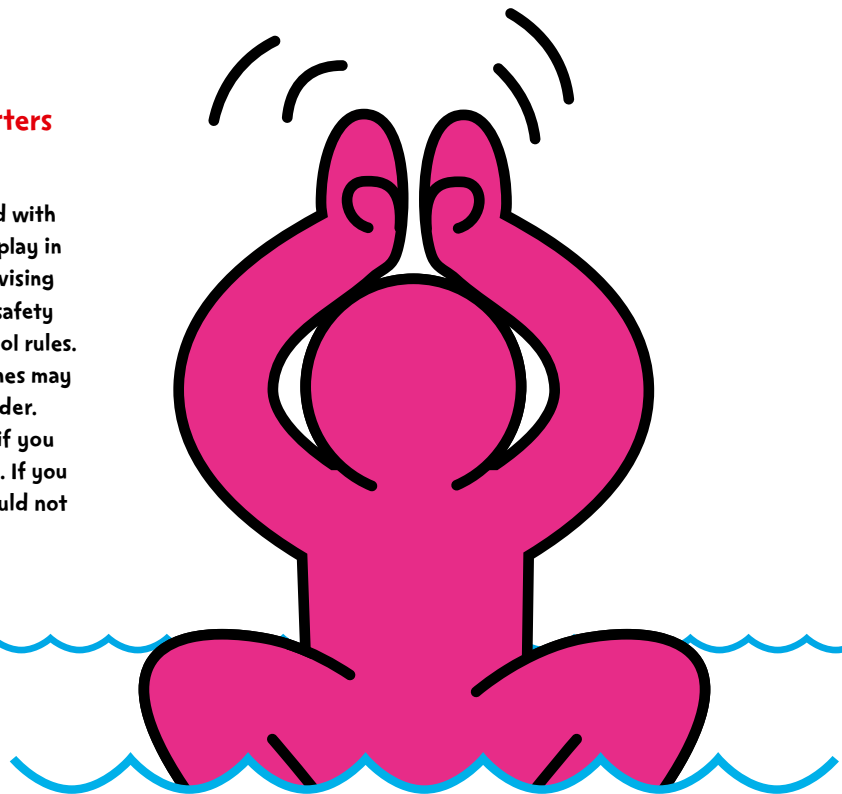
All the games on the next few pages can be played as a family or in a larger group going swimming together. They might all be kids or could be a mixture of adults and kids.

There are limits on how many kids each adult is allowed to look after in the water. This number depends on the session and type of pool you are in. So check with each pool you visit as they can have different rules.

The games are easy to play as they need little or no extra equipment (don't forget to ask permission before using equipment in the pool). They can also all be played in the shallow end of the swimming pool, or can be adapted for the deep end for more confident or older swimmers.

Important notice to Local Supporters using the Swim4Life Toolkit:

The Swim4Life games have been developed with expert guidance for parents and carers to play in the water with their children. Adults supervising children must take responsibility for their safety and remind participants to comply with pool rules. Rules vary from pool to pool and some games may not be permitted by your local pool provider. Check with your local pool provider first if you have any doubt whether a game is suitable. If you are not the child's parent or carer, you should not get in the water without parental consent.



swim4life games



Let's play... The Mirror Game

Everyone stands opposite each other in twos, with one of them copying the actions of the other as if they are looking in a mirror. They could pull faces, swim side-to-side, jump, splash, dip underwater and lots more!



Let's play... Underwater Humming

This fun guessing game is great for X Factor wannabes. One player hums a song underwater and their partner has to guess the tune. You can adapt this game to underwater talking too, which makes it even more tricky!



Let's play... Starfish Tag

This playground game is great fun in the pool! Once tagged, each person must stand still until they're released. This can be done by being tapped on the shoulder, or by swimming under arms or through legs for more confident swimmers.



Let's play... What's the Time Mr Wolf?

Everyone lines up on one side, with Mr Wolf on the other side facing away from them. Then they all keep asking him "What's the time Mr Wolf?" and he/she shouts back the time. They move forward the number of paces he says in the time, e.g. 5 paces for 5 o'clock, until he shouts "Dinner time!" and tries to catch someone. Then it's their turn to be Mr Wolf.

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Watch
the Swim4Life Videos now

swim4life games



Let's play... Over and Under

All the players should stand in a line facing the person in front, then pass the small object over and under all the players. Once the player at the back has the object, they must swim (or walk) around the players to the front of the line and carry on until the person who started at the front gets all the way back there again.



Let's play... Swimming Through Legs

For this game, one person stands in the water in a star shape while another tries to swim through their legs. If they can do that, you can have two people standing in the water standing slightly apart and they have to now swim through both sets of legs.



Let's play... Roly-poly

Players tuck themselves into balls and see if they can do 1, 2 or even 3 rolls without touching the bottom of the pool. Next they can try the log roll by laying straight on their backs and twisting over to do a full turn.



Let's play... Deep Dive

This game shows people that they can have lots of fun under the water as well as on the surface. Get them to see if they can touch the bottom of the pool with one hand, and then with both hands. They can then try sitting on the bottom and watching their bubbles float to the surface.

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swim4life games



Let's play... Shark Attack!

For this game of 'It', there is one shark and the rest of the group are fish. On the first count the fish are free to escape, and after 10 seconds someone shouts 'Fish' and the shark tries to catch the fish. The first fish to be caught now becomes the shark!



Let's play... Stepping Stones

Everyone tries to cross the pool in as few steps as possible, as if they are walking across stepping stones on the bottom. If there are different coloured tiles on the pool floor, they could try to get across by only treading on a certain colour of tile, swimming to get to the next one.



Let's play... Simon Says

This is the classic playground game, but this time they're all things you can do in the water. Simon says: do a headstand, touch the bottom, do a roly-poly etc. Of course, if anyone does an action that didn't start with "Simon says...", they're out.



Let's play... Ring a Ring o' Roses

Everyone stands in a big circle and holds hands. Then you all start singing "*Ring a ring o' roses, A pocketful of posies, a-tissue, a-tissue, We all fall down!*", and at the same time everyone skips round in the same direction. When you get to the end of the rhyme, everyone falls down by ducking under the water.

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swim4life games



Let's play... Fishy in the Middle

Two players are 'stuck' in the water and have to pass the ball to each other without the third player in the middle catching hold of it. When the person in the middle gets the ball, the person who let them catch it is now the fishy in the middle.



Let's play... Kicking Duel

This is a gladiator-challenge game that starts with two players floating on the surface facing each other. They both hold the woggle (one of those long polystyrene things) out in front of them and then kick as hard as they can to try and get the other person to go backwards (or even get them to put their feet down).



Let's play... Bike Riders

This game involves tying the woggle in a knot and the players swimming around with it in front of them like bike handlebars. They can swim in all directions and at different speeds with their partner (or the whole group) trying to follow their path and keep up.



Let's play... The Balancing Game

This game tests their balancing skills by asking them to sit on a float or woggle and see how long they can stay on without falling off.

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swim4life games

You can go onto the website and see videos of some of these fun games being played. Watch the videos [here](#).



Let's play... Silly Hats

Get everyone in the pool to balance a float on their forehead and swim on their back, making sure it doesn't slip into the water. Then they can try swimming sideways or walking across the pool and balancing the float on top of their head.



Let's play... Treasure Hunt

Let items of 'treasure' sink to the bottom of the pool and then ask each player to collect them one by one. If you have numbered or coloured objects, one person can call out a number or colour and their partner has to go and fetch that object.



Let's play... Splash a Duck

In this game, players try and splash their toy duck from one side of the pool to the other without touching it. You can even turn it into a duck race!



Let's play... Mermaid Bingo

Firstly, place numbered objects floating in the water. Then one person starts calling out numbers and the other players have to go and collect the toys with those numbers on them one by one. You can adapt the game by using different colours or animals instead.

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swimming for babies

During pregnancy, babies have been in fluid for nine months, so are comfortable in the water almost from the minute they are born. Below is some guidance on the best way to introduce babies to swimming and help them feel safe in the water.



Fun at bath time

You can use bath time as a way of getting your baby used to the water. Keep bath time short, reassure your baby by smiling, talking to them and maintaining eye contact.

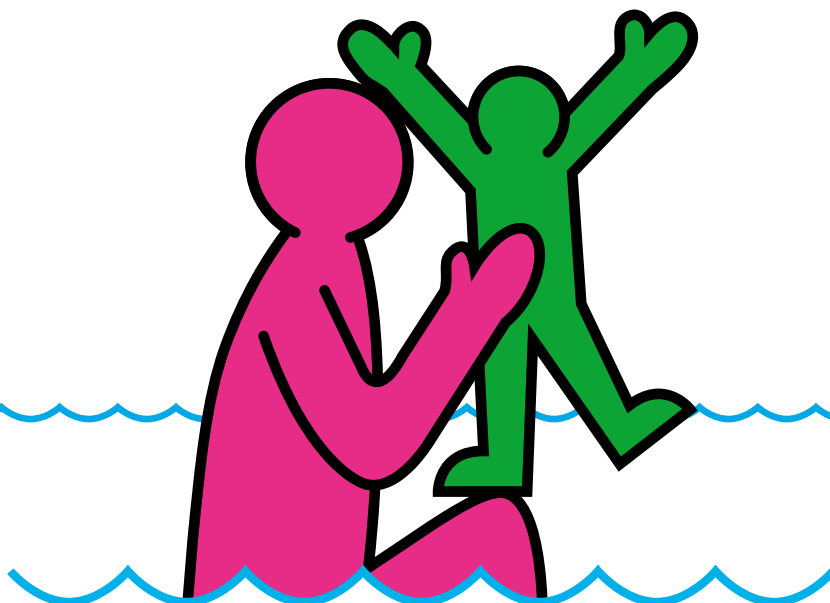
From an early age, babies will instinctively move their arms and legs when immersed in water, and you can use this to make them familiar with feeling supported and feeling water on their face.



Moving to the swimming pool

The best age for babies to start pool activities is around four to six months. If you take them swimming before four months they can become cold very easily, so it's best to check with your health visitor before you start any adult and child programme.

For more information on swimming with babies, see the 'Useful links' section.



splash about without splashing out!

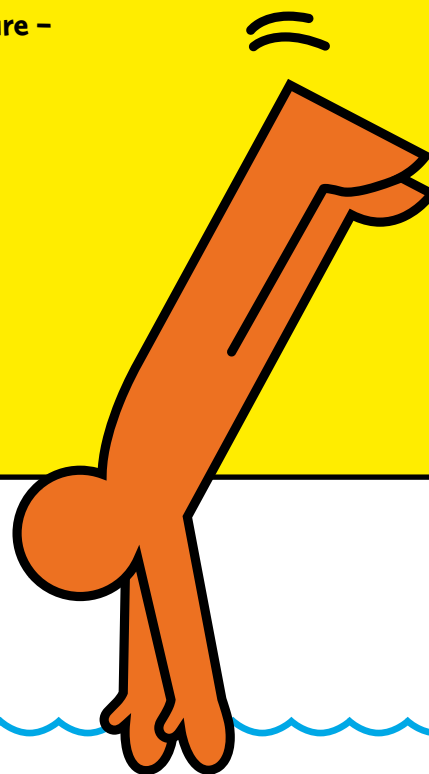
From 1st April 2009, almost 300 local councils are providing swimming free of charge for people aged 60 and over – and more than 200 are offering free swimming to those aged 16 and under too.

This Government initiative, which Swim4Life works alongside, is an important part of plans to make sure there are long-term benefits from London hosting the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games – and to get two million people more active and healthy.

Here are some things you can do to find out more:

- Check if your council is offering free swimming on our list of [participating local authorities](#).
- Local authorities own and are responsible for running the pools taking part, so [check with them](#) for more details.
- Find out [which council covers where you live](#) if you're not sure – just by typing in your postcode or address.

So find out where your nearest participating pool is and help kids swim for free!



swim
free

60 & over
16 & under

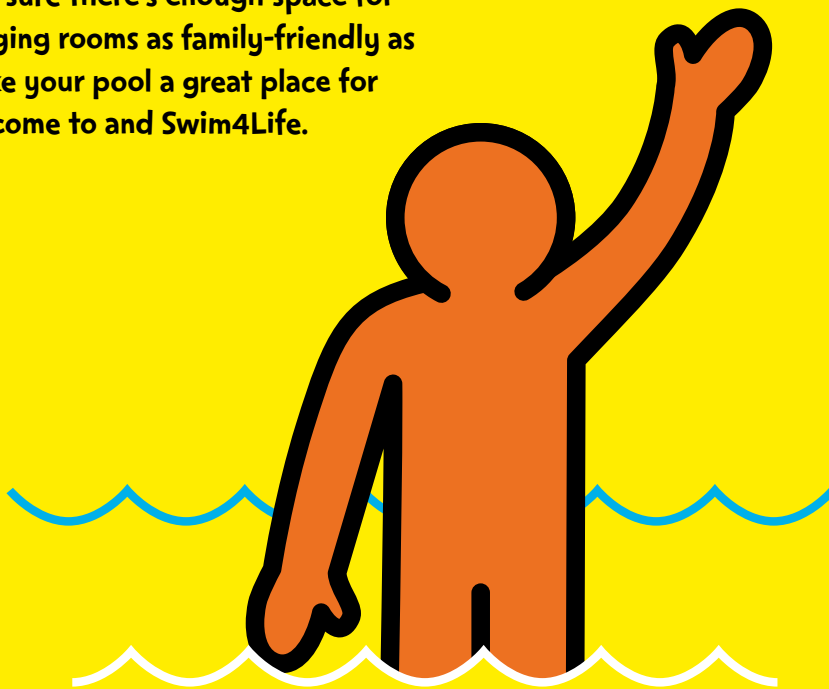
swim
4 life

do you run a local pool?

If your job involves running a swimming pool or being responsible for organising activities or sessions for specific groups, then there are some simple things you can do to get people involved in Swim4Life.

Working with volunteers, community group leaders, mums and other local supporters to help them play the games outlined in this guide is a great way to start. This could mean allocating pool time to these groups and advertising Swim4Life to them on your noticeboards.

There are also things like making sure there's enough space for pushchairs and making the changing rooms as family-friendly as possible. Things like this will make your pool a great place for kids and their parents/carers to come to and Swim4Life.

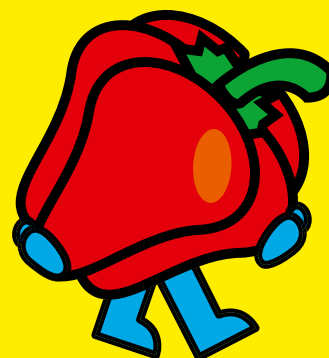


For more tips on how you can help kids be more active and make a Change4Life, have a look at our 'Swim4Life Top Tips for pool providers' by clicking [here](#).

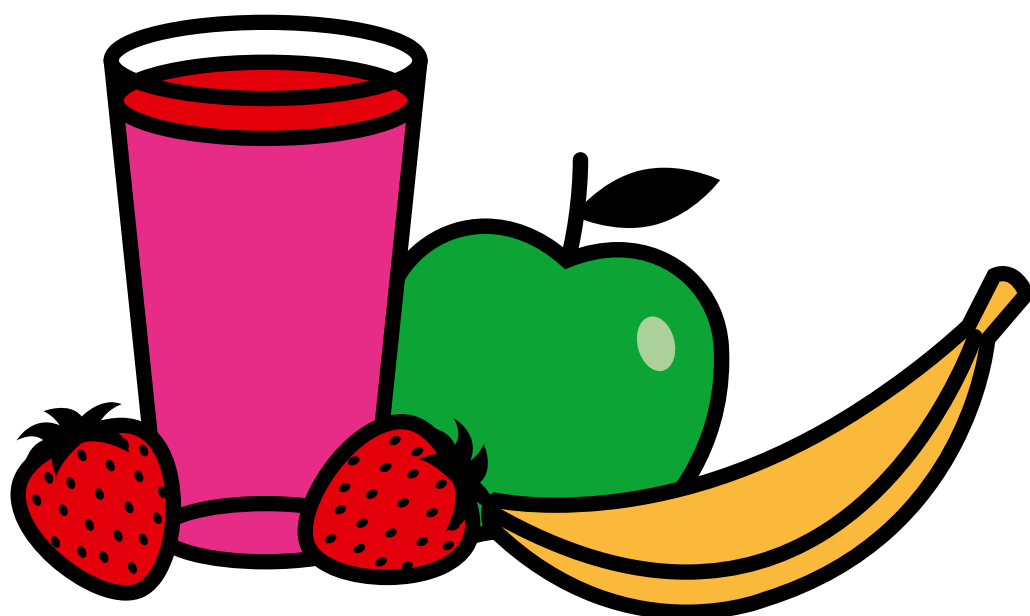
don't forget to talk about eating healthily too!

Medical evidence suggests that we all need to keep an eye on what we eat as well as how much energy we burn (through being active) if we want to prevent fat building up in our bodies. So when you talk to families about Swim4Life, it's a good idea to remind them of the importance of eating healthily too.

Don't worry if your usual work or activities focus on one area and you don't feel confident talking to parents about the other. You don't need to become an expert in a new subject – all we ask is that you tell families that both activity levels and diet are important, and sign-post them to where they can find out more.



A good place to suggest they look is the Change4Life website:
www.nhs.uk/change4life

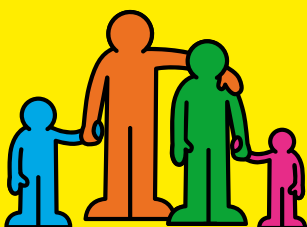


finding more information

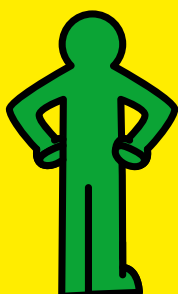
There are lots of Change4Life resources that you may find useful. They're all available online, but some are also available as a printed pack for those who don't have internet access.

You can also visit the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) website [here](#) to find information, news and details of qualifications from the National Governing Body for swimming. And to find out about where you can swim, prices and opening times, visit the website of your local pool or leisure centre.

Making a Change4Life

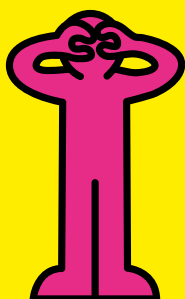


Change4Life encourages families to make 8 changes around diet and physical activity, to give themselves a healthier future. Read more about these changes, why they're important and tips on helping parents make them in the Change4Life Local Supporter's Guide by clicking [here](#).



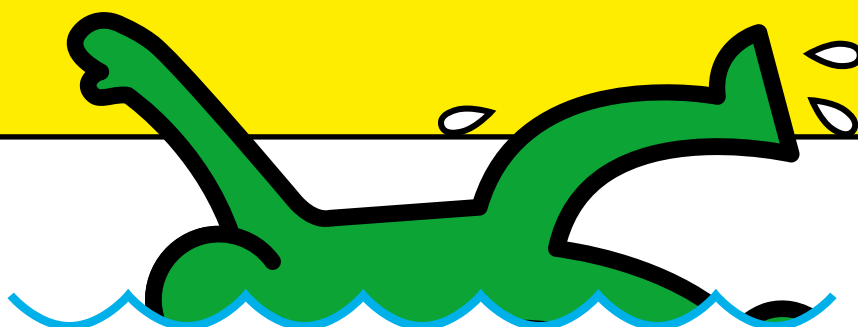
Talking about Change4Life

Our research shows that some ways of talking about the issues surrounding Change4Life go down better with parents than others. Get tips on how to explain things to parents, plus more ideas for ways you can support the campaign, in the Change4Life Local Supporter's Guide by clicking [here](#).



The research behind Change4Life

Read more about the research behind Change4Life in the Department of Health's Consumer Insight Summary by clicking [here](#).



free change4life resources

Lots of colourful resources are already available for you to use with parents, including posters, leaflets and activity sheets. Download the ones you want (in colour or black and white) by clicking [here](#).

We are releasing more toolkits like this one to support different activities. Look out for Breakfast4Life, Cook4Life, Bike4Life, Walk4Life, Play4Life and Dance4Life by clicking [here](#).

Alternatively, you can [register](#) as a local supporter and we will tell you when new toolkits are available.

Useful links

www.britishswimming.org – Amateur Swimming Association

www.sta.co.uk – Swimming Teachers' Association

Official Change4Life brand assets

Once registered as a local supporter you're also allowed to use the Change4Life and sub-brand logos, typefaces and illustrations on your own materials. If you're not already registered, click [here](#).

The use of the Department of Health trademarks does not constitute or imply endorsement or recommendation by the Department of any product or service of the user.

Contact us

The 'partners & supporters' area of the website has information, ideas and resources for local supporters including:

- case studies
- partner tools
- FAQs
- useful links

Go to www.nhs.uk/change4life and click on 'partners & supporters'.

Not online? Call the local supporter helpline on 0300 123 3434*.

*Calls to 03 numbers should cost no more than geographic 01 or 02 calls, and may be part of inclusive minutes subject to your provider and your call package. We're open from 9am to 8pm, 7 days a week.

