Me, My Child, and the Water

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Me, My Child and the Water

The Swim Ireland 'Me, my Child and the Water' resource is aimed at parents and carers of children with disabilities. It will also help swimming teachers to support children in their lessons. This resource is a guide outlining how swimmers with a disability can plan their visit and access the pool safely.

It includes:

✓ Pool Visit Checklist.

✓ What to do if you are bringing your child to the pool yourself?

✓ What to do if you are bringing your child to a swimming lesson.

✓ Information and games on adaptations in the pool.

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The Staff at the swimming pool will be able to help you with some pre-visit checks.

Pre-visit poolside checks:

Is there designated disabled parking?

How do we enter and exit the building?

Is the route marked and accessible?

Is there disabled access to the pool?

Are the changing rooms specifically for a person with a disability?

Are the changing rooms mixed or open plan?

Does my child need help getting changed?

How do we get from the changing room to the poolside?

What help is there if my child requires assistance entering and exiting the water?

As a parent/carer, here are some poolside considerations:

1 Do I understand and know my child's ability/needs in the water?

2 Am I capable of physically supporting my child in the water without additional help?

3 If I require additional help is it available and can I seek advice and support from lifeguard?

4 Do I need to explain to the teacher/lifeguard how my child communicates distress?

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Considerations when bringing my child to a formal swimming lesson:

Here are some questions that a teacher may ask you ahead of a swimming lesson.

1 Does your child have any additional needs?

2 What is your child's previous experience in the water?

3 Have you sought the advice of a GP in relation to your childs participation?

4 Are there medical considerations that the swim teacher/lifeguard needs to be aware?

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When bringing my child to a lesson:

Here are some considerations.

Check that your child's teacher has a current Level 2 Swim Ireland Licence.

Where is the lifeguard(s) on duty positioned? Are they nearby?

How long is this lesson?

Arrange an introduction to the teacher and discuss the lesson plan.

What is my role as a parent during this lesson? Am I there to observe or support?

There are clear arrangements in place with the teacher for the handover and return of my child.
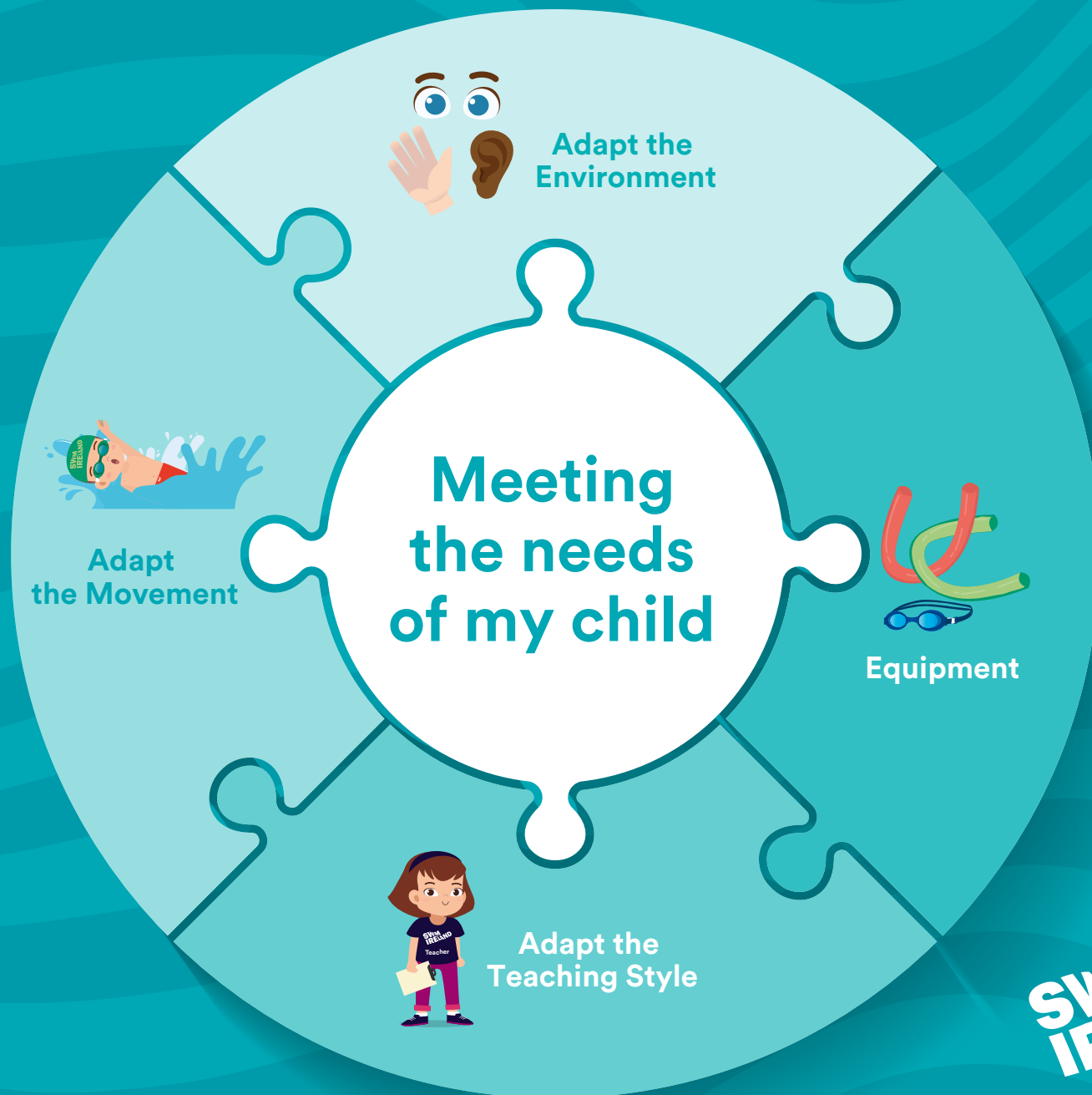
Arrange how communication will take place between you and the teacher should the need arise during the lesson.

Are the changing rooms accessible and will I be able to help my child if necessary?

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Some of the elements that may impact my child:

Environment

Hearing: Our hearing is distorted in the water. Pools can be very noisy when busy.
Seeing: Water in our eyes causes distortion.
Touch: In the water, our bodies are sensitive to the feeling of the water.
Taste: Do not drink the pool water.
Smell: The pool can have a strong smell.
Temperature: Warm enough to meet the childs needs

Equipment:

Floatation support, noodles, woggles, kickboards.

Aquatic Breathing, egg flips, musical toys, teaching swimmers to blow out.

Swimming Aids, caps and goggles.

Teaching Aids that might be used, kickboards, floatation discs.

Teaching style:

Lessons should be:

Adapted to meet the needs of the child.

Identifying the childs strengths/working with their ability.

Adapting Fundamental Movements and Core Aquatic Skills to meet the need of the child.

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Core Aquatic Skills

Discuss the Core Aquatic Skills with the Teacher if you need any more information. These are:

Entries and exits:
Getting in and out of the pool safely/possible use of supports, hoist.

Submersion & aquatic breathing:
Understanding the feeling of being under water and gaining confidence under water. Swimmers need to be happy with putting their face in the water and blowing bubbles (exhaling). Taking a breath (inhaling) is a coordinated activity in the water.

Rotation:
Learning how to turn around the axes, rolling from back to front, and front to back, rolling forwards, rolling backwards, regaining standing position.

Floatation:
It is important for swimmers to achieve a relaxed state of floating in the water/allowing the water to support the swimmer.

Streamlining:
Moving through the water with the least amount of resistance.

Sculling/Paddling:
Gaining a feel of the water to propel through the water easily.
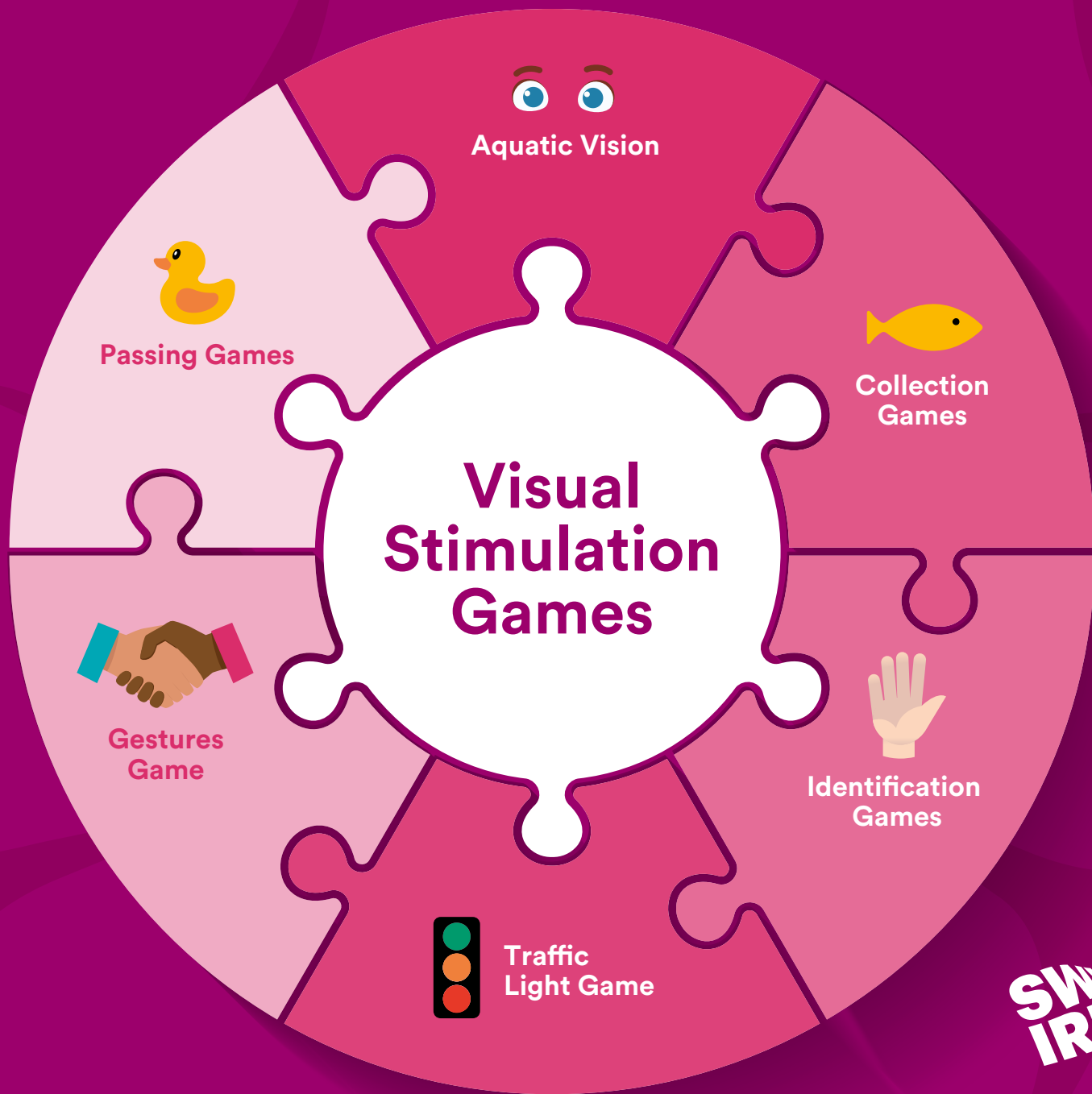
Movement and propulsion:
Encouraging different ways to move, upwards, downwards, backwards, forwards, side to side using the full 360 degrees possible in the water.

Coordination & balance:
Aligning the body parts to maintain balance in the water. Linking the body parts together to provide movement.

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Visual Stimulation Games

Aquatic Vision

Collection Games

Identification Games

Traffic Light Game

Gestures Game

Passing Games

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Aquatic vision:

Open your eyes under water with googles.

Open your eyes under water without goggles.

Submersion under the water with your eyes open.

Collection games:

Collecting items at the surface of the water

Collecting items that are sinking in the pool

Collecting items that have sunk under the water

Identification games:

Identifying gestures underneath the water; a wave, counting fingers under the water, shape of your hand closed and open under the water

Traffic light games:

Red means **STOP**

Orange means **GET READY**

Green means **GO**

Gesture games:

On your own: waving, asking people to stop or to come over

Group gestures: Hold hands, ring a rosey, shake hands

Buddy activities: Swimmers hold on to each others shoulders like a train and move through the water
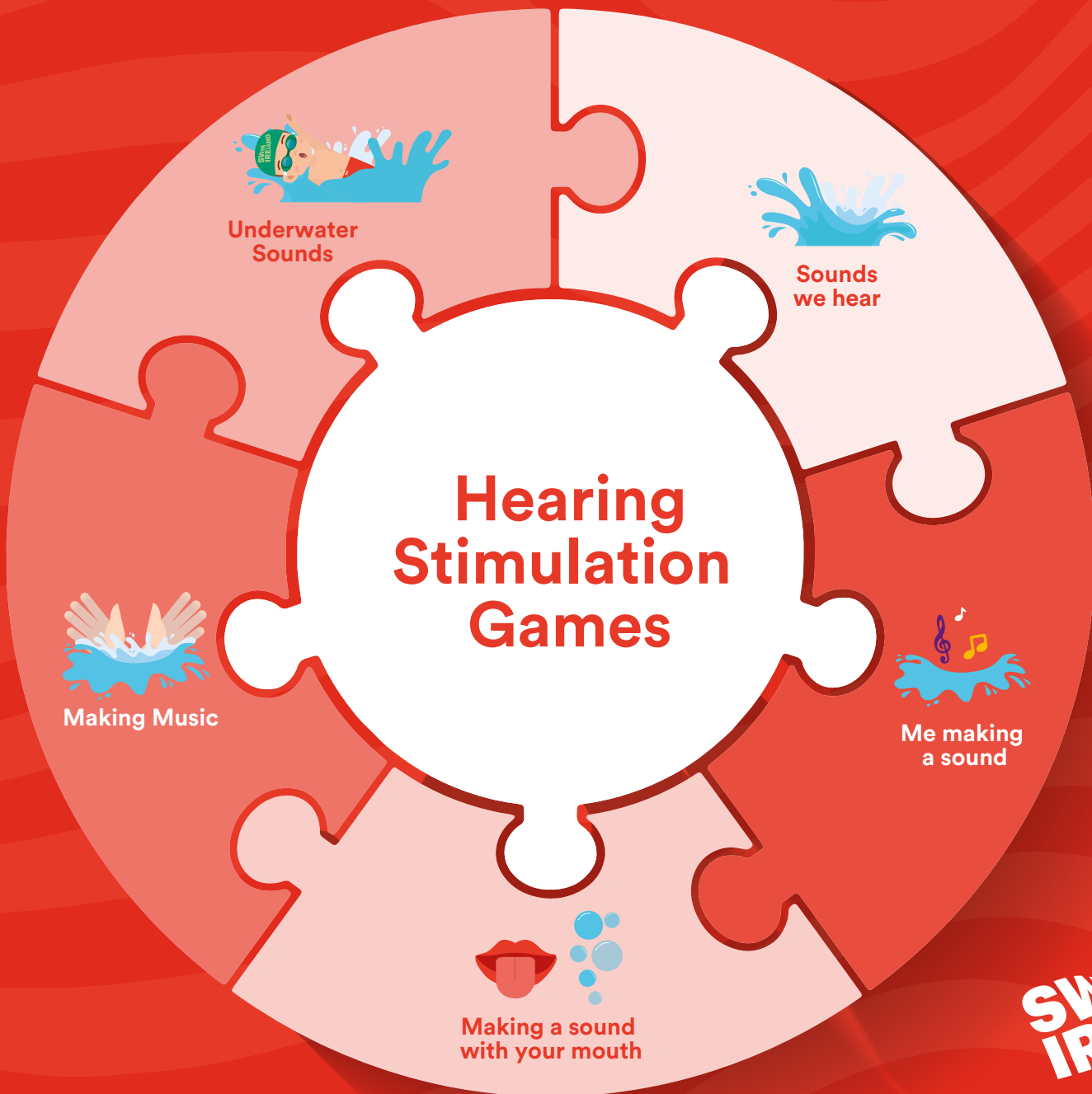
Passing games: Helps with movement and propulsion

Following the duck on the surface

Gathering more than one duck

Chasing the ducks around the pool

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Underwater
Sounds

Sounds
we hear

Hearing
Stimulation
Games

Making Music

Me making
a sound

Making a sound
with your mouth

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Splashing sounds we hear

Splashing the water with our hands
Splashing with our legs
Pouring water with watering cans over our heads
Using equipment to splash the water

Making sounds in the water

Submersion and attempting a whistle, a shout, pretend talk

Blowing bubbles

Making sounds with our mouths
Exhaling above the water
Exhaling below the water
Blowing out slowly, blowing out quickly and controlling our exhalation
Exhalation games: blowing the egg flips, blowing a baloon across the water, blowing a beach ball
across the water

Making music

Clapping above the water
Clapping underneath the water
Jumping, walking and hopping underwater

Underwater sounds: Sensory awareness

Sinking our body under the water and exhaling
Jumping in the water and exhaling

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Touch, smell and taste

- Taste
- Feel
- Submersion
- Move the water
- Objects in the water
- Smell

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Feel the water

Sprinkle the pool water over the swimmer; using a watering can, sponge, water pistol
Splash myself
Splash my friends

Submersion

Submerging my body parts
Supported submersion with a parent, carer, teacher
Independent submersion

Move the water

Moving through the water
Walking backwards, forwards, sideways
Running through the water
Submerging, and walking/running through the water
Pushing off the side or bottom of the pool

Objects in the water

Moving floating objects through the water: football, beach ball
Moving objects that sink in the water: sinkers
Moving objects that absorb water: sponges
Moving objects with various body parts, hands, feet, head, blowing

Smell

Above the surface of the water, get used to the smell of the pool.
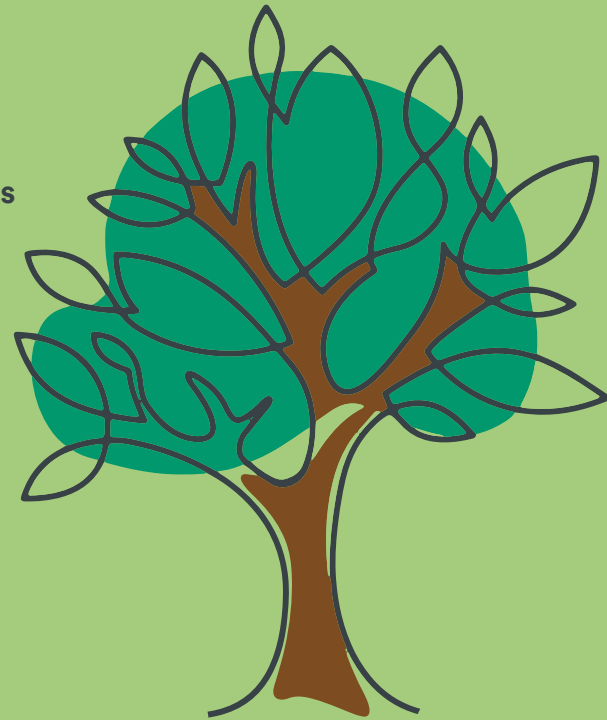
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The **TREE** Model

CARA's Tree Model is a useful model to use when modifying activities to make them more inclusive and accessible.

T Teaching Style:
you can adapt the way you communicate with the swimmer.

R Rules/Regulations:
you can simplify or change the rules and regulations to make your activities more inclusive.

E Equipment:
you can modify the equipment you use so that swimmer can access your activities.

E Environment:
you can adjust where and how long the activities happen and how they are structured to accommodate all ability levels.

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Contact the Swim Ireland Education Department (education@swimireland.ie) for information on accessing a range of Videos, Courses and CPD to support inclusion such as:

- Level 2 Additional Support Needs Swimming Teacher
- Level 2 Autism Spectrum Disorder Swimming Teacher
- Deaf Friendly Swimming CPD
- Visually Impaired Friendly Swimming CPD
- Introduction to Para Swimming CPD
- Adapted Aquatics CPD
- Working with ASN Children CPD
- Including swimmers with disabilities CPD
- Integrating swimmers with disabilities CPD
- Swim Ireland ISL Videos on Swim Ireland YouTube channel

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