

Splash About interview questions for Blossoms Legacy Answered by Splash About CEO Bernadette Spofforth



Hi Bernadette. Why don't you tell us a little bit about Splash About before we begin?

Splash About designs and develops some of the most advanced safety swimwear for babies, toddlers and children on the market today. We are an award-winning British brand, and we sell to over 34 countries internationally.

Splash About is passionate about keeping babies and children safe in and around water, and this includes ensuring babies swim in the cleanest water possible.

We are best known for our Happy Nappy; a reusable neoprene swim nappy. Over 150,000 UK babies swim each week wearing a Splash About Happy Nappy; it's the only brand insisted upon by 95% of UK swim schools and recommended by British Standards Guidelines for baby swimming because it's so effective at preventing unwelcome faecal leaks in the pool.

In time for summer, we have redesigned our much-loved swim nappy and have introduced the new and improved Happy Nappy. This has a unique ergonomic shape to prevent any gaping it offers the best protection ever against unwelcome leaks in the pool.

We very much believe that practical should be fun and stylish; our swimwear collection comes in a great range of designs to suit all tastes - from classic animal stories with Nina and Noah's Ark to cheeky Geckos, exotic garden birds, sharks and whales!

A lot of your products are designed to help kids be safe in the water. Which would you recommend for families going on holiday?

Our products are perfect for the pool at home or abroad, but there are a couple of swimming essentials, which are on our holiday checklist.

We mentioned our new Happy Nappy, this is a travel must-have, not only does it offer UPF50+ sun protection, it's space-saving in your suitcase - there's no need to pack bulky disposable swim nappies, so it's good for the environment too! After care is simple, with quick-drying neoprene just rinse, roll and reuse!

We have also introduced Splash Jammers – these are aimed at just potty-trained toddlers, who according to statistics are the biggest cause of faecal accidents in pools. Splash Jammers have all the great design features of our new Happy Nappy but are fashioned in a more grown up style. Wearing a swim nappy can seem like a backward step for potty-trained toddlers, but Splash Jammers uniquely bridge the gap between swim nappy and swimwear for stress-free toddler swimming.

Children advance their swimming skills quickly on holiday especially with daily pool practice so a FloatSuit or Jacket is a good investment. With floats centred round the child's chest and back, they are not restrictive like armbands, allow more freedom in the water and put your child in a natural learn-to-swim position.

Our Go Splash Swim Vest is ideal for travel because it's slim, compact and lightweight. It packs almost flat in a suitcase yet it's been technically designed to be robust and deliver the levels of buoyancy required to provide a safe, learn-to-swim experience for children aged 1-6years.

With all Splash About products you can be assured of UPF50+, the highest sun protection found in fabric and we take great care we use quality materials which don't fade in the sun or after prolonged use in chlorine.

You actively promote teaching children to swim. How important do you think it is that kids learn this skill at a young age?

Do you have any other water safety tips to share with parents?

Teaching children about water safety is such an important life lesson and you can't start early enough. We often forget that babies spend the first nine months of their life in amniotic fluid and so have a natural affinity with water, which is why many swim schools encourage early swimming classes from birth, in fact floating in a warm pool will feel more familiar to a newborn than being on dry land!

From a young age babies have a confidence in the water - which can diminish as babies get older, possibility leading to fear. The benefits of baby swimming are well documented, it teaches water safety, promotes bonding, it is great for physical strength and helps to develop coordination and learning skills.

That said, around 45% of children aged between 7-11 years cannot swim 25m unaided, despite a statutory requirement for all pupils to achieve a minimum standard of swimming ability, including being able to swim 25m before they reach secondary education. Learning-to-swim as a life skill from as young an age as possible should be a mandatory right of every child. If this could be achieved, this would make a significant contribution to reducing the number of accidental deaths through drowning.

There are a couple of insights that I have learnt from swimming teachers and working in the baby swim industry, which have helped to shape our business, which I think would be helpful to share with parents.

It is quite normal for a water baby who has been enjoying swimming lessons for months to have a sudden attack of the water wobbles - reluctant swimmers can present themselves when you least expect it, but don't give up sometimes there is a very simple explanation.

First swimming experiences can sometimes be a shock and many babies and toddlers will cry and fuss for the first few lessons, this is a case of persevering and talking to your swim teacher.

However nine out of 10 babies cry because they are cold, even in warm water as young babies aren't as active. A warm baby is a happy baby, so it's time to invest in a baby wetsuit.

Sometimes distraction techniques can be helpful for reluctant swimmers. The baby swim mirror is a concept that has rapidly gained momentum since its introduction into a number of international swim schools. A wet smiling reflection provides a welcome distraction for babies who are not yet relaxed in the water and it's a fun way to stop worried tears.

Babies learn through play so investing in a few great CE marked toys is also a must, but be careful about non CE marked toys because the paint tends to flake off after exposure to chlorine and this can be dangerous when mouthed by teething babies.

Toys such as Splash Pals are manufactured from natural rubber, hand-painted with a high-grade vegetable based paint and don't have an air hole to allow water to enter and create a build-up of mould, so they're safe for teething babies. Above all, you know your baby best so when you decide it is the right time to introduce your baby to swimming lessons don't give up at the first hurdle, review the situation with your swim teacher and do be patient - sometimes having fun takes practice!

