

SLSNSW Junior Activity Information Bulletin 2023/24 Season

Background

In 2021 a reviewed suite of Junior Development Resources was released by SLSA, including the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation. All resources are available in an interactive, one stop format on the SLSA Learning Management System which can be accessed via the eLearning tab on the Members Area (select the 'course' SLS – Junior Development Resources). Age Manager information, how to use the lesson plans and other useful information is housed in this area, along with easy to download age guides, worksheets, and frameworks. All these resources are also available for download in the [SLS Members Area](#) Document Library in PDF format.

Junior Age Groups

Listed below are the age groups members will be in for the 2023/24 season. These age groups are determined as at midnight on 30 September 2023.

Birthdate between these dates	AGE GROUP
1 st October 2017 to 30 th September 2018	U6 (Surf Play One)
1 st October 2016 to 30 th September 2017	U7 (Surf Play Two)
1 st October 2015 to 30 th September 2016	U8 (Surf Aware One)
1 st October 2014 to 30 th September 2015	U9 (Surf Aware Two)
1 st October 2013 to 30 th September 2014	U10 (Surf Safe One)
1 st October 2012 to 30 th September 2013	U11 (Surf Safe Two)
1 st October 2011 to 30 th September 2012	U12 (Surf Smart One)
1 st October 2010 to 30 th September 2011	U13 (Surf Smart Two)
1 st October 2009 to 30 th September 2010	U14 (SRC)

Note: Proof of age/birth certificate must be sighted for all new children joining a SLSC.

A child may join a SLSC as soon as they turn five years of age. No SLSC is to accept membership of a child until they have reached the age of five years to comply with insurance requirements. A child who reaches five years of age after 30th September may join nippers at that time for the remainder of the season; however, this child will be required to stay in the U6 nippers age group again the following season. It is the SLSC's responsibility to explain this to the parents of the child.

Conducting the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluations

Preliminary Evaluations are required to be completed prior to starting nippers each year. This is not a proficiency process, but a skills evaluation to enable clubs to determine the level of water safety to provide for participants.

All new junior members should be supported by a 1:1 water safety ratio (water safety personnel: activity participant) when completing the evaluation. For all junior members returning from the previous season where a knowledge of their ability is known by the club, a 1:5 water safety ratio (water safety personnel: activity participants) may be used (refer to SLSA Water Safety Procedure 1.01a).

Evaluations should be conducted in a low-risk environment. The Risk Rating function of the SLSA Operations App is used to determine the risk level for a location and activity. Further information on using the SLSA Operations App for risk assessments can be found in the [Water Safety Risk Assessment User Guide](#).

Removal of the Continuous Skills Sequence requirement from the Preliminary Skills Evaluation process will make it simpler to conduct evaluations either in the pool or in the ocean environment.

It is recommended that a member who is delegated to assess Junior Evaluations:

- Has a minimum of two (2) years' experience as an accredited Age Manager
- Is a minimum of 18 years old
- Holds a proficient Surf Rescue Certificate or proficient Bronze Medallion
- Is approved by their club and noted at a club meeting OR is a qualified Australian Swimming Coach*

*In instances where evaluations cannot be completed by a Surf Life Saving member and to increase flexibility for clubs, a qualified and accredited swim coach can complete the evaluation. In this instance, swimming coaches are required to provide their Australian Swimming Teachers and Coaches Associate (ASTCA) number, their name and email address and the name of the children who have successfully completed the evaluation. Appendix 3 has a template for this evaluation.

Appendix 1 outlines the national standard for the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation. Branches may set distances and/or requirements above this standard, yet requirements cannot fall below the national standard. Please ensure that you liaise with your respective Junior Activities Coordinator for confirmation of the specific requirements for your members.

Following the Evaluation

Any child that does not meet the required evaluation level will require a higher level of supervision when involved in water-based activities at the discretion of the club.

Any child that does complete the Preliminary Skills Evaluation competently can progress to water based junior activities noting a 1:5 water safety ratio (water safety personnel: activity participants).

For still water / pool activities or low-risk conditions (ascertained after a formal risk assessment) the ratio may be expanded to 1:10 water safety ratio (water safety personnel: activity participants) as per SLSA Water Safety Procedure 1.01a.

A maximum supervision ratio of 1:5 (WSP: participants) applies as per SLSA Water Safety Procedure 1.01a to ensure the evaluations are conducted in a safe aquatic environment.

Junior Activities Competition Evaluations

From the age of 7 (Under 8) juniors can begin to compete in intra-club, inter-club, branch and state competition. To ensure that all junior members that wish to compete in any inter-club, branch, state and national events/championships have the required ability, strength and fitness to compete they must be able to complete Junior Activities Competition Evaluation for their age group. Please refer to Appendix 2 for a copy of the Evaluation.

Branch and State Competition Requirements

Any competitor wishing to compete at Branch or State carnivals (water and/or beach events) must have successfully completed:

- Junior Preliminary Evaluation
- Junior Competition Evaluation
- Appropriate Surf Education award for their age group by 31 December 2023.

Junior Activities members (i.e. members comprising Under 14 and below), are not required to perform patrol hours to compete in junior activities competitions. However, if eligible members wish to compete in Under 15 competitions, they must fulfil their patrol hour obligations as set out in SLSA Policy 5.04 – Competition Eligibility. This Policy can be found in the [SLSA Members Area](#).

These three components must be entered into SurfGuard prior to close of entries. For assistance in uploading this information into SurfGuard please contact the SurfGuard helpdesk on 1300 724 006 or ithelp@slsa.asn.au.

Age Manager Award

An Age Manager plays the lead role in the journey of nippers from U6's through to U14's. Age Managers are required to manage all facets of their age group on the beach in conjunction with Age Manager Assistants. Usually, an Age Manager will commence in the U6's and stay with this group until they reach the U14's. Often their own child may be a participant in the age group they are managing.

There is an online theory course for NSW Age Managers which is available via Members Area eLearning and can also be offered face to face. The Age Manager course consists of three modules, following which a practical session on the beach will need to be completed to be signed off for the Age Manager Award. This will be organised by your club's Junior Activities Coordinator and involves putting your new skills into practice. A pre-requisite for the course is the Child Safe Awareness online course. This will take 20-45 minutes to complete. Please refer to SLSNSW [Age Manager Process and Resources Factsheet](#).

The minimum age to be an Age Manager is 16 years old, however members who are 13 years can still complete the online course for Age Managers however, they are unable to become a fully qualified Age Manager. This is a useful course for those young club members who are SRC qualified and wish to be Age Manager Assistants.

Age Manager Assistant Award (NEW in 2023/24 season)

Being an Age Manager is an important role, so having an Assistant to help is vital This season we are encouraging members from the age of 13 years to become an Age Manager Assistant to help with activities on the beach and build on their instructing skills. The requirements are:

- Minimum age 13 years
- Complete the Child Safe Awareness online course
- Successfully complete the online Age Manager course component

Members should speak with their JAC if they are interested in becoming an Age Manager Assistant as opportunities may not be available in all clubs.

SLNSW have introduced a mandatory annual Age Manager Proficiency Video. Introducing a yearly expiry date for Age Manager proficiency ensures that our Age Manager database is up-to-date, and that key information and changes can be shared directly with current Age Managers. The annual video includes an online component and questions. To provide more support for Age Managers, an Age Manager Mentor Course has been created. This course has been developed to encourage Age Managers to upskill in a leadership role as an Age Manager Mentor on the beach. The Age Manager Mentor Course in SurfGuard is **not** required within NSW. For further information contact your Club Junior Activities Coordinator or State/Territory Staff.

Frequently Asked Questions

[Where can the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation take place?](#)

These can take place in the ocean, rock pool, or local indoor/outdoor swimming pool.

[Why do we do Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluations?](#)

To record the baseline level of a child's competency in the water before they can commence junior activities. It also assists with determining water safety numbers for these sessions each week.

[Who can assess the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation?](#)

It is recommended that an 18+ Surf Life Saving member who is approved by their club, has a minimum 2 years' experience as an Age Manager and holds a proficient SRC/Bronze Medallion, or is a qualified Australian Swimming Coach.

Read more in the Conducting the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation section above.

How does a Swim Coach become endorsed to assess children for their Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation?

There is no need for a Swim Coach to seek endorsement to complete the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation. They must provide their Australian Swimming Teachers and Coaches Associate number, their full name and email address, along with the names of the children that they have assessed. *A template form is provided in Appendix 3 for this purpose.*

Can children move down in Nipper age groups?

Yes, this is permitted however, they must complete the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation and program for this age group. They will also receive the certificate of completion for this age group. E.g., a child who is eligible to be in U9's, can move down to the U8 age group if they would like to. This child will only complete the U8 Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation and program and, they will receive the U8 certificate of completion. Refer to the Surf Sport Manual – 37th Edition for competition age guides.

Can children move up in Nipper age groups?

Yes, however they can only move up by one age level, and this undertaking requires that the child completes the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation for the age group that they are entering. E.g., a child who is eligible to be in U9's can move up to the U10 age group if they have satisfactorily achieved the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation for the U10's age group. Refer to the Surf Sport Manual – 37th Edition for competition age guides.

What does reasonable adjustment in Nippers mean?

It means considering the impact of factors which could influence the ability of the nipper to reasonably complete the evaluation, for example:

a) Environment – swell, wind, waves, temperature, timing.

Solution – deliver assessment in pool, closed water, reschedule, increase rest time between sessions

b) Capacity – did many of the nipper's struggle?

Solution - increase ratios, adjust timing/lengths

c) Program – was the assessment suitable to run?

Solution – Increase ratios, adjust timing/lengths

What happens when a child doesn't pass the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation?

Any child that does not meet the required preliminary evaluation level will require a higher level of supervision when involved in water-based activities (at the discretion of the club). E.g., if you have a nipper who doesn't meet the requirements for the propulsion component of the evaluation, you will need to ensure that this child was provided with additional water safety when completing in-water activities. You may also wish to have this child wear a coloured wristband so they can be easily identified. Remember that this is not a Skills Maintenance/Proficiency, but an evaluation of competency.

Can children wear goggles and a wetsuit?

Of course! They can wear a wetsuit and goggles anytime they wish. Please note that during competition, a wetsuit can only be worn if the water temperature drops below 16 degrees. Goggles are permitted to be worn in the water at any time. And a high vis rash vest must always be worn as the outer layer! Refer to the Surf Sport Manual – 37th Edition for further information.

How do I become an Age Manager?

Contact your Club Junior Activities Coordinator (JAC) or equivalent to express an interest in becoming an Age Manager. Online learning courses are required to be undertaken as part of the Age Manager Training through our e-learning section in the SLS Members Area.

Read more in the Age Manager Award section above.

How do I become an Age Manager Assistant?

Age Manager Assistants are a vital component on the beach in assisting Age Managers each week. Age Manager Assistants can join from 13 years of age and upon completion of the online component of the Age Manager course prior to taking on the role of Age Manager Assistant.

Do I have to renew my Age Manager Award?

Age Manager awards have an annual skills maintenance, including an online component that can be accessed through the SLS Members Area (all Age Manager courses are free of charge).

Do I need a Working with Children Check if I am working with my own child's age group?

SLSNSW members who work directly with children under the age of 18 must complete a WWCC, though some exemptions do apply.

Refer to the SLSNSW [WWCC Requirements](#) for further information.



APPENDIX 1

Aquatic Play and Fundamental Aquatic Skills (FAS)

Recommended depth of safe aquatic environment – 1 metre

	Under 6	Under 7	Under 8
Flotation	Back or front float for a minimum of 5 seconds, recover to stand.	Back or front float for a minimum of 10 seconds, recover to stand.	Back or front float for a minimum of 15 seconds, recover to stand.
Submersion	Submerge to touch the bottom with hands.		
Propulsion	From standing position in waist deep water, perform a front glide (1-2 metres) & recover to stand.	From standing position in waist deep water, perform a front glide (2-3 metres) & recover to stand.	Swim on front any stroke (distance 20 metres) followed by swim underwater (distance 2-3 metres).

Stage Two: Under 9, Under 10, Under 11

Applied aquatic skills

Recommended depth of safe aquatic environment – 1.5 metres

	Under 9	Under 10	Under 11
Flotation	Front to back float or back to front float – 5 seconds each side. Tread water and/or any stroke sculling for a minimum of 1 minute.		Front to back float or back to front float – 5 seconds each side. Tread water and/or any stroke sculling for minimum of 2 minutes.
Submersion	Submerge to touch the bottom with hands.		Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, recover to surface, submerge to touch the bottom with hands.
Propulsion	Swim on front through water any stroke for 25 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke and/or back sculling for minimum 10 metres.	Swim on front through water any stroke for 25 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke and/or back sculling for minimum 25 metres.	Swim on front through water any stroke for 25 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke and/or back sculling for minimum 50 metres.

Stage Three: Under 12, Under 13, Under 14

Junior/trainee lifesaver – pathway to SRC

Recommended depth of safe aquatic environment 1.8 metres

	Under 12	Under 13	Under 14
Flotation	Front to back float or back to front float – 5 seconds each side. Tread water and/or any stroke sculling for minimum 3 minutes.		
Submersion	Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, recover to surface, submerge to touch the bottom with hands.		Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, do not recover to surface, submerge to touch the bottom with hands.
Propulsion	Swim on front any stroke for 75 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke for minimum 50 metres.	Swim on front any stroke for 100 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke for minimum 50 metres.	Swim on front any stroke for 100 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke for minimum 100 metres.

APPENDIX 2

AGE GROUP	COMPETITION EVALUATION
U6	Nil
U7	Nil
U8	Nil (no water competition, except for wade which takes place in waist-deep water)
U9	Minimum 150m open water swim (any recognised stroke)
U10	Minimum 150m open water swim (any recognised stroke)
U11	Minimum 200m open water swim (any recognised stroke)
U12	Minimum 200m open water swim (any recognised stroke)
U13	Minimum 200m open water swim (any recognised stroke)
U14	Minimum 200m open water swim (any recognised stroke)

Note: The definition of 'Open Water' is sourced from NSW Maritime and refers to 'navigable waters' which includes beaches. It does not include inland and coastal rivers, lakes and enclosed bays, harbours or rock pools. For example, open water may not mean you can complete the evaluation in a rock pool.

For more information on SLSA Surf Sport competition eligibility and requirements refer to:

- [SLSA Policy 5.04 – Competition Eligibility Policy](#)

- [SLSA Surf Sports Manual](#)



APPENDIX 3 - Template form for swim coach to complete

Junior Preliminary Evaluations

Child's Name: _____ Age Group: _____ Club: _____

Instructions for Evaluation: Based on the child's age group, please ensure they can complete the tasks outlined in the table below.

Age Group	Flotation	Submersion	Propulsion	Task Complete/Comments
Under 6	Back or front float for a minimum of 5 seconds, recover to stand.	Submerge to touch the bottom with hands.	From standing position in waist deep water, perform a front glide (1-2 metres) & recover to stand.	
Under 7	Back or front float for a minimum of 10 seconds, recover to stand.		From standing position in waist deep water, perform a front glide (2-3 metres) & recover to stand.	
Under 8	Back or front float for a minimum of 15 seconds, recover to stand.		Swim on front any stroke (distance 20 metres) followed by swim underwater (distance 2-3 metres).	
Under 9	Front to back float or back to front float – 5 seconds each side. Tread water and/or any stroke sculling for a minimum of 1 minute.	Submerge to touch the bottom with hands.	Swim on front through water any stroke for 25 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke and/or back sculling for minimum 10 metres.	
Under 10			Swim on front through water any stroke for 25 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke and/or back sculling for minimum 25 metres.	
Under 11	Front to back float or back to front float – 5 seconds each side. Tread water and/or any stroke sculling for minimum of 2 minutes.	Swim on front through water any stroke for 25 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke and/or back sculling for minimum 25 metres.	Swim on front through water any stroke for 25 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke and/or back sculling for minimum 50 metres.	
Under 12	Front to back float or back to front float – 5 seconds each side. Tread water and/or any stroke sculling for minimum 3 minutes.	Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, recover to surface, submerge to touch the bottom with hands.	Swim on front any stroke for 75 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke for minimum 50 metres.	
Under 13			Swim on front any stroke for 100 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke for minimum 50 metres.	
Under 14		Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, do not recover to surface, submerge to touch the bottom with hands.	Swim on front any stroke for 100 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke for minimum 100 metres.	

Swim Coach's Name: _____ Australian Swimming Teachers and Coaches Association Number: _____

Swim Coach's Email: _____ Swim Coach's Signature: _____ Date conducted: _____