

Recommendations for children diving



All water activities require special knowledge and skills from the person in charge, whereas special attention should be paid to children's scuba diving lessons and children diving. The scuba diving organisations and professional associations are keen to meet this challenge with the help of newly developed concepts.

The underwater world is fascinating for kids; weightlessly, they can watch the colourful fish. According to present knowledge, aqua med and leading diving organisations such as PADI, SSI and CMAS are of the opinion that scuba diving is absolutely acceptable with children who feel comfortable in the water and are good swimmers.

As there are very few scientific studies on children's diving, the recommendations are based on the physiological and psychological characteristics of childhood.

Age-appropriate diving depths and times should not be exceeded.

The absolute minimum age is 8 years (some experts set this limit at 10 years). The individual physical and mental development of the child or young person must always be taken into account. In some cases, this may mean that a child is not yet suitable even at the age of 12.

For children aged 8 to 12 the depth is up to 5 metres – with a maximum of 8 metres (in a swimming pool or similar conditions) – and for children aged 12 to 14, up to a maximum of 12 metres. The immersion time should be less than 30 minutes and can be reduced even further according to the water temperature. At temperatures below 15 degrees, children should not scuba dive at all. It may be that the various organisations have slightly different rules as far as this is concerned. However, there is a common

consensus about the fact that children must not undertake dives requiring decompression; drift, cave, night and wreck dives should also be avoided.

It goes without saying that children should only dive with appropriate children's diving equipment. This also entails not using any plumb as far as possible and putting on the dive equipment in shallow water instead of on land. In addition, special attention should be paid to children's fun and curiosity-oriented behaviour as well as their considerably reduced concentration capacity during dives. Therefore, complex dives should not be allowed and children should only be trained by diving instructors qualified to teach this age group (this can also be a parent, of course).

Before the beginning of a diving course, each child should undergo a thorough medical examination, where his or her individual intellectual maturity is also considered.