



Breath control progressions for children that are working on closing their mouth in the water and learning to only use their mouth to blow bubbles:

Starfish and Angelfish 1

1. **Close their mouth:** Use a cup or another container to pour water over their face. Their mouth should be closed, and they should be comfortable with water going over their eyes.
2. **Puckered lips:** Above the water practice forming an “O” with their mouth to blow. You can use a straw to blow bubbles, blow on hot food, blow out a candle, or say “Moooo”. Once they understand how to pucker their lips, start practicing blowing in the water. Have them practice blowing a floating toy across the top of the water.
3. **No nose:** The nose should only be used to blow boogies out. Ensure they are not sniffing or inhaling the water. If they understand how to blow their nose in a tissue, use a cloth to have them blow their nose in the cloth in the water to connect blowing their nose in a tissue is the same in the water. Pinch their nose closed (only above the water; we prefer not to have them pinch their nose IN the water) and have them breathe in through their mouth, blow out with their mouth. Have them try it again without you pinching their nose to see if they understand the feeling of only breathing in with their mouth.
4. When blowing bubbles with their mouth, look at their nostrils and ensure they are not using their nose to breathe. If they are starting to inhale through their nose when blowing bubbles with their mouth, they may need to start placing their nose in the water to understand that they can't blow bubbles and inhale at the same time. You can also teach them to close their mouth and hum. This will create nose bubbles.
5. Work toward longer amounts of time to be able to blow bubbles in the water. (Ex. 2, 3, 4, 5 seconds at a time) The bubbles should be continuous blowing, not a short puff.
6. The goal is to be able to place their whole face in the water (forehead down toward the bottom of the tub) and comfortably blow bubbles for at least 3-5 seconds.
7. Just make this a game every time they get into the bathtub, so this is one less thing they need to think about in the pool.
8. Tip: While you are practicing bubbles, also ensure they are comfortable placing their ears in the water. The goal is to be comfortable leaning back in the water with their ears under the water.

This progression is for children that understand how to close their mouth in the water and not inhale through the nose: Angelfish 2 & above

They can wear goggles to place their face in the water if they choose.

1. Have them take a breath above the water with their mouth (no nose; place a finger under their nose to ensure they aren't exhaling through their nose when you ask them to hold their breath). Ensure the breath goes to their ribs and isn't shallow stopping at their chest.
2. Have them place their face in the water. (whole face, including forehead)
3. If they are having trouble at first getting water in their mouth, start with continuous bubbles and work toward the holding of breath before bubbles. The nose should only be used to blow boogies out. Don't let them breathe in with their nose around water because they will end up sniffing/snorting the water when they get nervous.
4. Have them hold their breath in the water and give them a number to count to. Ex) 3 or 4 or 5
5. Once they get to that number, tap their head to have them slowly exhale bubbles. The bubbles need to be slow and not a quick release, so they have more control of their lungs. Ex) exhale counting to 3.
6. Once they are comfortable with the above steps: Have them wait 1 or 2 seconds with their face in the water before they turn for a breath after exhaling. This is to simulate the time it will take them to roll to their back in the water after exhaling in the water in the Jellyfish 1 level.
7. Just make this a game every time they get into the bathtub, so this is one less thing they need to think about in the pool.