

SLSNSW Junior Activity Information Bulletin 2024/25 Season

Background

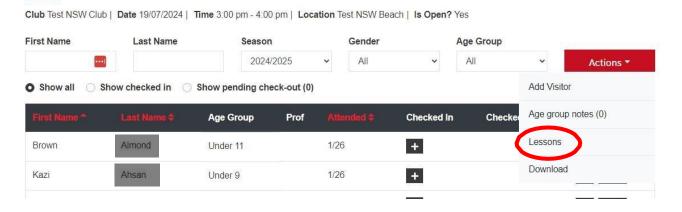
In 2021, a reviewed suite of Junior Development Resources was released, including a revised Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation.

All resources are still available in an interactive, one-stop format on the SLSA Learning Management System which can be accessed via the <u>eLearning tab</u> on the SLSA 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 SLSA Members Area Document Library in PDF format.

From this season, all lesson guides from Stage 1 (U6's) through to Stage 3 (U13's) can also be accessed via the SLSA Nipper App (see below graphic) and viewed on any phone or portable device when on the beach.



NIPPERS SESSION





MAJOR CHANGES for the 2024/25 season

The Age Manager now has an annual proficiency, completed by watching the SLSA Age Manager Video via the eLearning Platform. Your Age Manager award will be updated automatically in SurfGuard once you watch the video. See page 5.

Age Managers who have **not been active for five years** or more will need to complete the full Age Manager course.

The Age Manager **no longer requires the third party 'on the beach' assessment paperwork**, yet these practical mentoring sessions will remain, and be coordinated at a club level. The removal of this administrative step does not remove the need for this practical and ongoing mentoring. *See page 5*.

The **Age Manager Assistant Award is now only available to members aged 13-15 years.** Existing Age Manager Assistants who are 16+ years will not be able to complete their Skills Maintenance until their Award has been upgraded to Age Manager. SLSNSW has undertaken this step and please contact memberservices@surflifesaving.com.au should you wish to check any member record.

Junior Surf Sport competitors (U/8-U/13) are **no longer required to have the relevant Age Award prior to 31 December to compete in Championship events.** The Age Awards remain a key educational component of Junior Activities and this change enables clubs to deliver surf education to members throughout the season. *See page 4.*

Children in the Nippers program are allowed to **move down any number of age groups** by completing the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation and program for the desired age group. They can also **move up by only one age level**, but they must meet the requirements for the higher age group. Refer to the Surf Sport Manual – 37th Edition for competition age guides as these have not changed. *See pages 7 and 8*.



Junior Age Groups and Awards

Listed below are the age groups members will be in for the 2024/25 season. These age groups are determined as at midnight on 30 September 2024.

Age Group	Age as of 30 September* 2024	DOB Date range	Award Name
U6	5	1/10/2018 – 30/09/2019	Surf Play One - U6
U7	6	1/10/2017 – 30/09/2018	Surf Play Two - U7
U8	7	1/10/2016 – 30/09/2017	Surf Aware One – U8
U9	8	1/10/2015 – 30/09/2016	Surf Aware Two – U9
U10	9	1/10/2014 – 30/09/2015	Surf Safe One - U10
U11	10	1/10/2013 – 30/09/2014	Surf Safe Two - U11
U12	11	1/10/2012 – 30/09/2013	Surf Smart One - U12
U13	12	1/10/2011 – 30/09/2012 Surf Smart T	
U14	13	1/10/2010 – 30/09/2011	Surf Rescue Certificate

^{*}unless ageing up or down applies in individual cases

A child may join as soon as they turn five years of age. Under existing insurance arrangements, no club is to accept membership of a child until they reach five years. Should clubs have a demand to run programs for children under five years of age, they must organise their own insurance to run the program.

A child who reaches five years old after 30th September may join nippers for the rest of the season; however, this child must remain in the U6 nippers age group again the following season.

Note: Proof of age must be sighted for all new children joining a club.

Conducting the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluations

Preliminary Evaluations must be completed before starting nippers each year. This is not a proficiency process, but a skills evaluation process to enable clubs to determine the level of water safety required 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 returning members, where knowledge of their ability is known, a 1:5 water safety ratio 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.



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

- Has a minimum of two (2) years' experience as an Age Manager
- Minimum 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
- None of the above, but a qualified Australian Swimming Coach*

*In instances where evaluations cannot be completed by a SLS member and to increase flexibility for clubs, a qualified and accredited swim coach can complete the evaluation. In this instance, refer to Appendix 4 for a template with the required information for this evaluation.

Appendix 1 outlines the national standard for the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation. Branches and/or clubs 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 who does not meet the required preliminary evaluation level will require more supervision when involved in water-based activities at the club's discretion.

Any child that completes their 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 (which have been ascertained after a 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 (water safety personnel: activity 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 who wish to compete have the required ability, strength, and fitness to compete, they must be able to complete the 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

Junior Surf Sport competitors (U/8-U/13) are **no longer required to have the relevant Age Award** prior to 31 December to **compete in Championship events**. The Age Awards remain a key educational component of Junior Activities and this change enables clubs to deliver surf education to members throughout the season.

U/14 members are still required to obtain their SRC for championship events as per the Surf Sports Manual.



To streamline administrative processes and ease pressure on clubs, SLSNSW has extended the cutoff date for Age Award Processing. Please see table below for timeline on certificate issuance, aligning with end-of-season awards presentations.

Date Received by SLSNSW for Allocation / Processing	Date Awards will be distributed
2nd January 2025	Late January
30th January 2025	Mid-February
27th February 2025	Mid-March
28th March 2025	Mid-April
28th April 2025	Mid-May

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 <u>SLSA Members Area</u>. These two 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 must manage all facets of their age group on the beach with the help of Age Manager Assistants. The Age Manager: Nipper ratio in NSW is 1:20 for on land activities. Often, an Age Manager will commence in the U6 age group and will stay with this group until they reach U14's. Their own child may also be a participant in their age group.

There is a course for Age Managers available online, with face-to-face and virtual sessions offered in some Branches and by SLSNSW (dates TBC). An important component of the Age Manager course is the practical session on the beach which is organised by your club's Junior Activities Coordinator. While the *Age Manager* will have been awarded once the course is completed, the individual should be supervised until the practical session is completed as this involves putting the new skills into practice.

Requirements to be an Age Manager are:

- Minimum 16 years old
- Completion of the *Child Safe Awareness* online course
- Successful completion of the online *Age Manager* course (or face to face equivalent) OR have completed the Age Manager Skills Maintenance (watched the annual Age Manager video)
- Hold a NSW Working With Children Check unless they have an exemption.



Age Manager Assistant

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 to 15 years to become an Age Manager Assistant to help with activities on the beach and build on their instructing skills. Once members turn 16 years, they can be upgraded to an Age Manager if they are proficient.

Requirements to be an Age Manager Assistant are:

- Aged 13 to 15 years*
- Completion of the Child Safe Awareness online course
- Successful completion of the online Age Manager Assistant course (or face to face equivalent) OR have completed the Age Manager Assistant Skills Maintenance (watched the annual Age Manager Assistant video)
- Hold a NSW Working With Children Check unless they have an exemption.

*Existing Age Manager Assistants who are 16+ years will not be able to complete their Skills Maintenance until their Award has been upgraded to Age Manager by their State/Territory. Contact your Junior Activities Chair if you are having issues.

Age Manager Mentor

An Age Manager Mentor Course has been created by SLSA to provide more support for Age Managers. Developed by SLSA 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.

Gear and Equipment

Please ensure that all gear and equipment used during Nipper programs is safe for aquatic use. It should not be badly worn or have degraded material and must be checked regularly. It is also important to check that the equipment used is covered under your club's insurance.

Risk Management

Reminder to all JACs to ensure that the Surf Risk Rating App is completed by the appropriate personnel, i.e. Water Safety Supervisor or similar before any Nippers session is conducted on the beach. Remember that it should be used prior to any other out-of-regular 'Nipper time' training sessions eg coaching. Please refer to the <u>Water Safety Risk Assessment Guide</u> or <u>SRR User Guide</u>.

SLSA Nipper App enhancements for this season

- Access SLSA Nipper App User Guide HERE
- Any member holding the Child Safe Awareness award will have access to the SLSA Nipper App, however clubs will still be required to allocate age groups before access is available. This will allow these members to help mark off attendance and competency completion for evaluations. Age Managers will still need to 'approve' all competency completions.
- Within the App, terminology has changed from 'Age Manager Admin' to 'Nipper Activity Admin'.
- Ability to view all members from multiple age groups, reducing the number of clicks to check in/out.
- Added the option to name sessions as 'nippers' or 'nipper training'. Training sessions are not counted in the attended field.
- Can generate certificates on all pages e.g. if U10 has 3 pages, can print all 3 pages with one click.
- Telephone icon on the session screen to tap and dial the emergency contact number
- Ability to add a visitor to a Nipper group, so long as they are a financial member and in the same age category.
- Improved filtering options to view who is checked in and out.



Games Library

A key element of Nippers education is the Junior Development Resources. This year the focus is to build on those resources with fun and engaging games to create a Games Library. Please share the games and fun activities you use on the beach with your Nipper groups so that a resource library can be shared with clubs nationally and made available through the Members Area. Send your contributions and any other ideas for resources to development@sls.com.au, and if you have videos or photos of the games in action these would also be appreciated.

Water Safety Policy

Policy 1.01 – Water Safety has been reviewed for implementation in the 2024/25 season as part of the periodic policy review cycle. There have been several changes to the Policy and Procedure, and once this has been endorsed by the SLSA Board we will communicate how this will affect the Junior space.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Where can the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation take place?

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

2. 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 Nipper sessions each week.

3. 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 about conducting the junior activities preliminary evaluation in the previous section.

4. 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 4 for this purpose.

5. 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.



6. 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 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.

7. What does reasonable adjustment in Nippers mean?

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

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

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

Capacity – did many of the nipper's struggle?

Solution - increase ratios, adjust timing/lengths

Program – was the assessment suitable to run?

Solution - increase ratios, adjust timing/lengths

8. What happens when a child does not pass the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation?

Any child who does not meet the required preliminary evaluation level will require more supervision when involved in water-based activities (at the club's discretion). 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 is provided 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. Another option may be to suggest that this child moves down an age group.

9. Can children wear goggles and a wetsuit?

Yes, 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 can 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.

10. 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 must be undertaken as part of the Age Manager Training through the SLSA e-learning section in the SLS Members Area. Read more in the Age Manager Award section above.

11. How do I become an Age Manager Assistant?

Age Manager Assistants are a vital component on the beach in assisting Age Managers each week. They are aged 13-15 years and must complete the online Child Safe Awareness and online component of the Age Manager course.



12. Will my Age Manager and Age Manager Assistant course expire?

Both courses have an annual skills maintenance completed online by watching a video accessible through the SLS Members Area (all Age Manager courses are free). Your award will be automatically updated for another 12 months once you watch the video online, and if you watch it face to face as part of a group, this can be arranged to be updated manually by the JAC.

13. Do I need a Working with Children Check if I am working with my own child's age group? Possibly! In NSW Working with Children Checks are required for members who work with Children. Refer to the 2024 WWCC Requirements to see if you need a WWCC.



APPENDIX 1 – Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation

Stage One: Under 6, Under 7, Under 8

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.	onds, minimum of 10 seconds, Back or front float for a minimum of 15 seconds,	
Submersion	Submerge to touch the bottom with hands.		ttom with hands.
Propulsion	Push and glide from wall (distance 1-2 metres) & recover to stand.	Push and glide from wall, kick (distance 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 float – 5 seconds each side. culling 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 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke and/or bac 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 through water 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 – Junior Activities Competition Skills Evaluation

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 that are not enclosed by land or not within a river, bay, harbour or port. They include coastal and ocean waters.

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

- <u>SLSA Policy 5.04 Competition Eligibility Policy</u>
- SLSA Surf Sports Manual



APPENDIX 3 - National Junior Board Guide

A National Junior Board Guide has been produced to provide an easy reference to the approved board size(s) that can be used for each nipper age group from U8's-U14's. No board usage is permitted in the U6-U7 age groups.

Please see the next page for the Junior Board Guide. This guide can also be accessed separately in the SLS Members Area Document Library.





APPENDIX 4 - 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.		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.	Submerge to touch the bottom with hands.	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.	Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, recover to surface, 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 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	Swim on front any stroke for 75 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke for minimum 50 metres.	
Under 13		hands.	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			- Date co	nducted: