



Merbabies

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*Dear parent,*

*We thought it would be nice to give you an idea of what to expect regarding the 'UrchinRock' photo-shoot hosted by Merbabies (that's us!)*

*If you have given an e-mail address you should hopefully have received your confirmed day and time slot, but if not, do not fear, the list is available at class.*

*My day is SATURDAY 28<sup>th</sup> October / SUNDAY 29<sup>th</sup> October 2006*

*My session is number \_\_\_\_, which is from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_*

*I need to be in the water at \_\_\_\_\_ (10 minutes before the shoot time) for singing and familiarisation.*

*For those not familiar with the pool or the area, there is a map and directions on the Merbabies website [www.merbabies.co.uk](http://www.merbabies.co.uk) which should ease your arrival and travel trauma.*

*Please arrive to allow fifteen minutes to get changed comfortably without hurrying. You don't really want yourselves and your baby arriving in a terrible rush to what might be an unfamiliar pool and an unusual situation. You want to be as relaxed as possible so you and your little one can really enjoy the experience and make the most of it.*

*On arrival make your way to see Jenny to be logged in and she will advise you when to get into the water etc. She will also give you your 'log-in' code to access your picture on the secure site afterwards.*

*Secure login code \_\_\_\_\_ (FYP code)*



Birthlight, Swimming Teachers Association, RLSS accredited



*David and myself will be in the water (or on poolside) together with the award-winning Lisa Payne of UrchinRock. Her profile is on their website if you are interested [www.urchinrock.com](http://www.urchinrock.com)*

*There will be a maximum of five families on each half-hour session and varying shots of each will be taken in rotation so everyone can have a brief 'play' between their moments of stardom. Be aware sessions do run on time, but if you are unavoidably delayed don't panic as we will do our best to fit you in a later session.*

*There won't be a class environment as such, but if you get in the water ten minutes prior to your session we will be singing "Hello everyone" etc to get the little ones off to a familiar start. You should also ensure you do one brief submersion prior to the start of the photos being taken to acclimatize your little one. "Humpty Dumpty" is a good idea to warm up your child for the solo shots.*

*We will also do "Twinkle, twinkle" after the photographs for familiar closure if you would like to join in.*

*I'm sure you will find the odd watering can on the side etc for playing with and having fun together but please put them back when you have finished so they don't accidentally float into a photo or create a shadow on the photos.*

*Generally, the first shots will be of baby on their own followed by the 'family', so for example, with siblings, mum and baby, dad and baby, whole family (don't get excited though – I don't think we could get them to fit families the size of the Waltons into the shot). Do have a look too at the Merbabies Gallery on the website [www.merbabies.co.uk](http://www.merbabies.co.uk) and have a think beforehand and have a look at the photos online to see if there are any specific styles of shot you would like and be sure to let Lisa know.*

*UrchinRock advise they aim to capture around eight to twelve shots of each child (they take more than one per submersion). They also have an array of costumes if you would like them including mermaids, fairies, superman, spaceman, pixie etc. It is worth noting that these will not be available in adult sizes on the day no matter how much pleading takes place beforehand 🙄👁️, so if you want to wear them, bring your own!*



*You will also have the opportunity for some great 'bare-bottom' shots but please be aware that David and I are of a rather nervous disposition and would prefer it was only the children who strip off!*

*I understand some people used the costumes to make great Christmas cards for favoured friends and relations last year (Christmas angels and pixies) as you can have your photos turned into cards. You can also get big canvases available for wall art (I've just ordered a couple), normal range of photo sizes and frames and CD/DVD of your photos etc. If you look on the 'display' page of the UrchinRock website it shows what is available (including re-touching).*

*Do have a look at some of the pictures on the gallery pages (via photo shoot page) on [www.merbabies.co.uk](http://www.merbabies.co.uk) who are some of our little stars from last year, or on [www.urchinrock.com](http://www.urchinrock.com) as they really are lovely and you can also see some of the costumes available. Bear in mind there is nothing to stop you creating an individual costume for your little one (or yourself).*

*I appreciate that make-up is likely to be worn – I will be a 'painted lady' myself for the day (make sure that mascara is waterproof!) - but can you please refrain from wearing perfumes, aftershaves, body lotions, deodorants etc if possible as they are what cause eyes to sting when underwater in the main, and can aggravate eczema, so, please be as considerate as possible to the children after you (and myself and David, come to that). You are, of course, free to 'slap it on all over' as soon as you get out. David will not be wearing make-up as he says he lost his favourite kohl pencil in the '80s.*

*For those with long hair; wear it loose! It looks great flowing free under the water. Contact lenses are best taken out and glasses are usually left off. Goggles are a matter of individual preference but most people like to be able to see eyes in photos, they can look rather 'cool-dude' though.*

*Please time feeds and drinks carefully if you can so as to avoid accidents of any kind in the pool to keep the water quality high. If your baby is showing signs of needing to poo on the day please ask to delay your start time to a later session – we won't penalize you for being considerate. I'm sure no-one wants to be responsible for a pool closure on the day of the photo shoot. By the way, there is a large grey nappy bin on poolside next to the toilet. There are additional toilets available in the school but not all of them have nappy bins.*



*We would also ask that poolside watchers be kept to a minimum so as not to distract the children. It is best that the only people there are the ones who will be in the water, as if favourite grandma/granddad etc comes to watch your child may want to be over there with them, or end up focused on them instead of you. The last thing you want is a crying child wanting to spend their time at the bar with them and missing out on getting your beautiful pictures.*

*Also, please remember that acoustics are very strange in swimming pools so you may think you are chatting really quietly waiting for your turn in the pool but it can seem really noisy and distracting to those in the water.*

*There will of course be the normal array of swim nappies and related items available on the day, including matching 'daddy and son' board-shorts style trunks which might be quite nice for the photos (see website for some pictures of all the current items available). So, there is a safety net for daddies, boys and girls forgetting their costumes, but if mums' forget their swimwear there will only be some spare tatty old costumes of mine knocking around for emergencies as we've never stocked ladies costumes – sorry!*

*Afterwards feel free to have a play and a chat in the school hall where there are balls, hoops etc but please return them to where you found them after use. Some people bring a picnic to eat in the hall or on the school playing field if it's not too cold. We shall make sure there are some black bin bags available on the day in the hall (that is my not-so-subtle way of saying David and I have to clear up the toys, rubbish, sweep up and litter pick at the end of the day).*

*For those who are travelling there is a small Co-op directly opposite the school for snacks and drinks and the nearby Burger King is lots of fun for mobile children, as it resembles a giant rotastak. Mothercare and Toys'r'us are on the same industrial park, as is Tesco and Pizza Hut while you are in the area!*

*To access your pictures after the shoot go to [www.urchinrock.com](http://www.urchinrock.com) and click on 'your pictures'. From there you need to enter your secure log in code (FYP code) to access your pictures on the secure site. Pictures can be purchased directly from the web site and prices are listed on there. Merbabies do not take any commission on the photos.*



*The photos last year were available about a week to ten days after the shoot but I'm sure they will give you the exact date on the day. I believe there is 20% discount for ordering in the first two weeks but the photos are actually available for two years from the date of the photo shoot. They are great to get or request for Christmas presents, both for yourself and for others.*

*Lastly, remember the five golden rules;*

- ◆ Remember submersion protocols and give your little one lots of praise
- ◆ Don't blow bubbles underwater from either your mouth or your nose
- ◆ Make sure you have your eyes open & you are looking at your child, not at the camera
- ◆ Relax, look natural and enjoy yourself
- ◆ Smile – go on, show us your teeth!

*Have a wonderful time and look forward to some beautiful and unique photographs from a top class photographer. I know I can't wait to see those of my boys.*

*Best wishes and happy bubbles,*

# Maria

