



STEPDive NVD Webinar Answers

During the webinar, a number of participants asked questions or had a comment about the risks that are still present with STEP Dive, and of course this is true. STEP Dive is not a toy for kids, but a tool that requires guidelines and training. These guidelines and training are in fact very similar to those presented for SCUBA during the webinar, while being even more conservative for depth. Surface use below 8yrs, max 2m 8yrs, 10yrs+ for the full 5m depth. The attachment shows the full guideline. The system is not designed to shortcut safety and training!

However, the system *is* designed to innovate around some of the key considerations brought up for children diving – and improve upon them. Many were mentioned in Guy Thomas’s comprehensive presentation. In particular he mentioned: consider the weight and fit of equipment, consider limited depths, consider the complexity of diving, and consider the relatively short time to evaluate the child.

Weight and fit of equipment – we have eliminated the tank for them to carry, we have eliminated the BCD to wear and fit, and our regulator hose is fully adjustable cm by cm to even the smallest child so there is no excess hose over the shoulder to get snagged and pull the regulator out of their mouth.

Limited depths – the air hose is attached on their back via a harness. The depth control buoy can be attached anywhere along the 7m hose to limit their depth. If the buoy is 50cm away from their back, they can dive only 50cm deep. Because they are not wearing any bulky equipment, it is actually surprisingly comfortable & natural to do a full 10 - 20 minute dive at 50cm depth, and we actually advise all kids to start with 50cm or 1m for the first few open water dives, or any time the conditions are different than what they are used to.

Complexity – there are a lot of complex topics in a full SCUBA course. With STEP Dive, we break up the complexity into manageable pieces. STEP Surface can be done with kids 5-8 and teach proper behavior: staying calm, no panic, staying together, “dive the plan”, and regulator recovery. STEP 2m can be done 8+, and teach safety techniques: equalization, barotrauma risks, proper descent and ascent, and mask clearing. STEP 5m teaches skills like proper fin technique and buoyancy control (by proper control and awareness of your breathing). From those 3 steps, the kids have an excellent foundation to proceed into a JOWD to cover the remaining topics for full SCUBA.

Relatively short evaluation time – instead of having only the brief time of a single course to observe and evaluate a child, and having to decide to sign off on a certification or not, STEP Dive gives the opportunity for 4 separate evaluation events, with plenty of time in between. It is not an all or nothing situation. If the maturity or skill is not ready yet for the STEP 5m course, they can still go diving with their parents on their holidays – they just have to stick to the STEP 2m and build up a bit more experience.



When my oldest son was 10 years old, I had all the concerns Guy presented, and also thought it was too young for him for the JOWD. I designed STEP Dive to still have fun together, and to prepare him with a foundation of skills to take into his JOWD. He completed his JOWD last year at age 14, after 80-100 dives on STEP Dive in a large variety of open water conditions. Even on his very first SCUBA dive, his calmness, comfort, safety, swimming, and buoyancy techniques were already on par with an advanced, experienced diver.

Tiemen van Dillen

Founder & Inventor

STEPDive