

For the Parents

The parent's role in age group swimming should be one of a cheerful, informed observer. You should be supportive but not meddlesome. You must be patient. Progress at times is deceiving. Sometimes it takes years to make a champion. Parents are the backbone of any swim club; they drive swimmers to workouts, work at the swim meets, feed and take care of swimmers and do many other things to support the club. Parents ideally encourage their swimmers and constantly give positive support.

Our professional coaching staff is aware of and employs all the latest training and coaching techniques available to help and benefit our swimmers. Let the coaches do their job. Please do not offer your child, and others, coaching tips. Sometimes that confuses the swimmer and tears down the confidence which the swimmer has placed in the coach.

If your child asks you a question, reverse it and ask them what they think. Give an answer only if you are qualified. Suggest that your child talk it over with the coach and perhaps together the two of them can find the answer.

When someone compliments you on your swimmer, a simple "thank you" suffices.

Always offer encouragement; never lecture your child about a poor race. You will make the swimmer feel even worse. Let your swimmer discuss the situation with the coach and do your job to give support and encouragement to do better the next time. Events and meets are selected to benefit both your swimmer and the team. Never look for more meets to enter. This should be discussed by the coach and the swimmer. The coaches will advise your swimmer of the events to be entered; the best events for the swimmer to place and help the team. Never offer rewards for good swims. Your child will eventually perform for "gifts" rather than personal achievement.

Offer assistance whenever possible with out of town meets. Be concerned about who will drive and who else will travel in the car.

Remember that the coach cannot watch all the swimmers at a meet. It is the coach's job to take care of the team's performance.

A coach and the program can be supported or ruined in the eye of a swimmer by parents. Never complain about car pooling or traffic or the number of hours of practice that your swimmer logs each day. Rather, make them feel that it is worthwhile and if this is what the swimmer wants, then you will help. Anything worthwhile usually means sacrifice and hard work.

Parents are not allowed on the pool deck. This can be very distracting, particularly for young swimmers learning skills. If you must discuss something with the coach, do so before or after practice.

Use good manners at a swim meet. After the Referee has blown the whistle to call for silence, remain silent until the race has started, then shout your encouragement.

Officials are human and they can make mistakes. Remain non-committal if your swimmer feels wronged by a judge or official. The coach knows how to handle protests, and will do what he/she feels is best. Try to teach respect for officials to your swimmers, swimmers learn from our examples.

Please help when asked, even though your swimmer may not be involved. We need help from everyone as officials and workers.

Much of the primary motivation for children is the praise of their parents. The manner of administering this praise is important. Praise should not be in the form of bribes or extra rewards that are based on extra requirements of the swimmer. One of the goals of our program is to teach the rewards of hard work and realizing success from the hard work. Often feelings of success that a child could have are tarnished or completely destroyed by the failure to meet an outside requirement placed on the performance by well meaning parents. If you choose to reward performances materially, do so, not on the basis of a task which you believe the swimmer should be able to do, but rather as the result of solid effort. There is plenty of pressure to do well without adding to it with a "if you do this, then you will get this," type of statement.

ARE YOU A PRESSURE PARENT?

The following survey has been taken from the Amateur Swimming Association of Great Britain. If you answer yes to one or more of these questions, you may be in danger of pressuring your child. It is important to remember that the parents' role is critical and should be supportive at all times to ensure a positive experience for your child.

1. Is winning more important to you than it is to your child?
2. When your child has a poor swim, is your disappointment obvious?
3. Do you feel that you have to "psyche" your child up before competition?
4. do you feel that winning is the only way your child can enjoy the sport?
5. Do you conduct "post mortems" immediately after competition or practice?
6. Do you feel that you have to force your child to go to practice?
7. Do you find yourself wanting to interfere during practice or competition thinking you could do better?
9. Are your child's goals more important to you than they are to your child?

Why Some Kids Listen

While meant for families, it impacts a team too!!!

1. Talk less
2. Avoid heated words
3. Give kids a fair hearing
4. Talk at the right time
5. Say it with affection & concern
6. Value a child's opinion