

FOR PARENTS:

This is an article I ran across from the United States Swimming “Parent’s handbook”. With our new enthusiasm of so many great swimmers, I thought this would be a good time to share this article. Swimming is such an incredible sport and has so many great life-skills for us to teach and discuss with young children. . I liked this article because it helps keep it all in perspective, as I have told many of you, we want our swimmers still racing when they are in High School. This is when the opportunities in our sport are the greatest and the need to have a sport is the greatest.

YOUR ROLE AS A PARENT

As a parent , your major role is to provide a stable, loving, and supportive environment. This positive environment will encourage your child to continue. Show your interest by ensuring your child’s attendance at practices, coming to swim meets, volunteering for your clubs program and at meets, participating in fundraising...

Parents contribute to the success experienced by the child and the team. Parents serve as role models and their children emulate their attitude. Be aware of this and strive to be a positive role model.

BE ENTHUSIASTIC AND SUPPORTIVE:

Remember that your child is the swimmer. Children need to establish their own goals and make their own progress toward them. Be careful not to impose your own standards and goals. Do not overburden your child with winning or achieving best times. Let them know that first they are the child you love, and second, a swimmer. Tell them you will love them whether they swim well or not and ask only that they give their best effort. Learning about oneself while enjoying the sport is the most important part of the swimming experience. Let the Coach judge the swimmers performance and technique. Let the Coach talk to your child about what they could have done better. Your role is to provide love and support regardless of the outcome. The coaches role will provide the critique and information for improvement.

In a survey of “why kids quit” USA Swimming developed the following guideline to help keep your child swimming and to keep the sport fun for him/her.

- 1.) Provide Support
- 2.) Don’t Push too much
- 3.) Learn “Optimal Push”
- 4.) Resist assuming the role of the coach

ARE YOU A PRESSURE PARENT?

The following survey is from the Amateur Swimming Association o 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 parent’s role is critical and should be supportive are all times to ensure a positive experience for your child.

1. Is winning more important to you than it is to your child?
2. 2.) When your child has a poor swim, is your disappointment, such as through body language or vocal tones, obvious?
3. 3.) Do you feel that you are the one to have to “psyche” your child up before competition?

4. 4.) Do you feel that winning is the only way your child can enjoy the sport?
5. 5.) Do you conduct ‘ post mortems’ immediately after competition or practice?
6. Do you feel you have to force your child to go to practice?
7. Do you find yourself wanting to interfere with coaching and instructions during practice or competition, thinking you could do better?
8. Do you find yourself disliking your child’s opponents?
9. Are your child’s goals more important to you than they are to your child?
10. Do you provide material rewards for performances?

We understand the parent role is one of the fundamental corners in the triangle of success. We understand it’s a hard role with many foggy lines. We just ask that parents try to follow the guidelines USA swimming has researched and studied over many years. We believe these guidelines will provide many great years in an absolutely great sport. We are looking forward to this great crop of young Lasers becoming the Leaders of the team, Swimming to their highest potential and becoming leaders in our community. With the help of the parents we know this will be possible.