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# News for Swim Parents

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## Forming a Partnership With Your Child's Coach

Guy Edson, ASCA Staff

Our ASCA Staff travels all over the country presenting coaching education courses. One of the topics frequently presented is "Working Successfully With Swimming Parents" and part of that presentation is a section entitled "Forming Partnerships with Parents." Here is a summary of what we talk about.

Forming Partnerships with Parents:

It is actions that speak the words "Let's do the right things for the child."

(operative words here are "Let's" – Let *US*...)

Coaches should proactively approach the parent to learn more about the child.

Keys to Forming Partnerships with Parents

Approachability

Parental Involvement

Common Goals

Good Communication Skills

Mutual Respect

Humility

Trust from accountability, consistency, dependability

Learning to ask, not tell

Parent Education

Patience

Friendliness without friendship

As you were reading the above I am hoping you were thinking that these concepts work equally well BOTH ways – not only from coach to parent, but from parent to coach.

In the world of education the concept of a parent forming a partnership with the teacher is well written about from many sources. Below is a short article from PBS Parents on [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org).

(<http://www.pbs.org/parents/goingtoschool/nuturing.html>) As you will read, the principles apply to us in the swimming world very well.

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### *Nurturing the Relationship*

Try these strategies to build a positive relationship with your child's teacher.

**Approach this relationship with respect.** Treat the teacher-parent-child relationship the way you would any really important one in your life. Create a problem-solving partnership, instead of confronting a

teacher immediately with what's wrong. "Meet with a teacher to brainstorm and collaborate ways to help your child, instead of delivering a lecture," recommends Susan Becker, M. Ed.

**Let your child develop his own relationship with the teacher.** "This is one of the first relationships with an adult your child may have outside the family unit. If you take a back seat and let the relationship develop without much interference, a special bond may develop," advises guidance counselor Linda Lendman. "For young children, the teacher-child relationship is a love relationship," adds Michael Thompson, Ph.D. "In fact, it may be their first love relationship after their parents and it can be pretty powerful and wonderful."

**Try not to brag.** Of course you think your child is brilliant, but bragging over her many accomplishments may send a message to the teacher that you think he may not be good enough to teach your child. "You don't need to sell your child to the teacher," notes Michael Thompson Ph.D., "you have to trust that your teacher will come to know what's important herself. Telling a teacher that your child loves to read will thrill the teacher. But challenging your teacher with statements like 'Susie read 70 books over the summer' or 'Matthew is a whiz at math,' may backfire."

**Remember how you liked (or disliked) your teachers.** Your experience at school is likely to affect your attitude toward your child's teacher. "It's important to leave your own baggage at the door, so you can talk about your child with the teacher (and not about you!)" adds Michael Thompson, Ph.D.