

## Build Self-esteem and a Positive Self-image



Learning about oneself while enjoying the sport is one of the most important aspects of swimming. The swimming environment encourages learning and fun, helping your child to develop a positive self-image. Athletes who find their self-worth through winning will go through tough times when they lose, and everyone, even Michael Phelps, will lose sometime!

It is not healthy for your child to compete only in those events where he/she can “win.” When the coach enters your child in new events, encourage them. He/she needs the experience of trying (and perhaps failing) so that he/she can learn how to handle defeat and develop improvement goals. He/she will learn that losing does not make them a failure as a person, a big step in building self-esteem.

It takes more than just encouragement on your part. When your child fails, you must show the same unconditional love and approval as when they succeed. Don't praise dishonestly. Children see through that. Just show love and approval for the child, not for his performance. Continue to encourage your child to take on new challenges.

To learn more about being a great swim parent, visit the Parents Section at [usaswimming.org/Parents](http://usaswimming.org/Parents)