

PARENT-COACH-SWIMMER RELATIONSHIP

Cooperation and understanding among parents, swimmers and coaches are what makes a successful program. The progress made by your swimmer depends to a great extent on this three-way relationship.

Parent/Guardian Guidelines

You, as a parent/guardian, have done a great deal to raise your child. You create the environment in which they are growing up. Your child is a product of your values, your structure, and your example. When it comes to the development of your child as a swimmer, the following guidelines may help you keep that development in proper perspective and help your child reach his/her full potential:

- **Every individual learns at a different rate and responds differently to the various methods of presenting skills.** The slower learner obviously takes more time to learn. This requires more patience on the part of the coach. Both parent and coach must remember that a child's ultimate swim potential may be as great as or greater than that of the faster learner.
- **Be patient.** It is possible for swimmers to see no immediate improvement, when they first start practicing with the team. This is because emphasis is placed on stroke technique. It takes a great deal of the swimmers energy and attention to master these skills. These new sets of habits are the basis for later improvement. As training proceeds, additional strain is put on the muscles. The muscles will, at first, break down under the demand of additional work. This can explain the initial lack of improvement. As the need for improvement is realized, the muscles will gradually strengthen and the athlete's performance will improve.
- **Plateaus are normal** and can occur at any time during a swimmer's career. Plateaus can occur in competition or in training. A plateau can occur for many different reasons, but growth and physically maturing seem to be the most common culprits. The best thing you can do is focus on different events for a while. The more successful athletes are those who work through this momentary delay in improvement, and go on to achieve greater performances and approach their personal potential.
- **Ten and under age swimmers are the most inconsistent swimmers,** and this can be frustrating for a parent, coach and swimmer alike. We must be patient and permit these youngsters to learn to love the sport.
- **Slow development of a competitive drive at an early age is normal** and perhaps more desirable than precocious or forced. It is important that everyone learns to compete and develop some competitive spirit. It is also important for children to learn to adapt to reasonable levels of emotional stress. The small disappointments they must learn to handle as youngsters prepare them for the larger ones they are certain to experience as adults.
- It is the coach's' job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance.

- It is the parent's job to supply love, recognition and encouragement necessary to help the young athletes feel good about themselves.
- **No parent should behave in such a way as to bring discredit to the child, the Club or the sport of competitive swimming.** Any disagreement with a meet official should be brought to the attention of the coaching staff and resolved by the coaches.
- **Be sure that your youngster swims because he/she wants to.** People tend to resist things they "have to do". Self-motivation is the stimulus of all successful swimmers.
- The word competition goes back to the Latin words, "comc" and "petere", which mean together to strive. Please avoid "playing" your child against their nearest competitors, thereby creating vendettas within the team and swimming community. Close competition provides two great services for the athlete: it brings out the best in them and shows where improvement is needed.
- **The communication between swimmer and coach is very important.** A two-way relationship must exist daily at practice. It is for this reason that we ask parents not to participate in coaching at any time and to remain in the bleachers during practice.

Please remember, particularly in the case of the younger swimmers, the attitude and behavior of the parents in regard to their outlook on the sport has an important effect on the child. In swimming, as in life, nobody can win or succeed all the time – there will always be some disappointment. Every youngster can gain from his/her experience whether or not he/she wins a single race. The important thing is to keep striving to do better next time. The secret is not only to produce great swimmers, but also to produce great young people.

Questions/Issue Resolution Procedure

- All of your questions should be directed to those who can answer or solve your problem.
- Avoid negative talk and rumors completely. If you have a concern, please contact the coach immediately.
- If, or when concerns/problems arise, they must be addressed at an appropriate time and in a proper manner with the coach. Please refrain from approaching coaches on deck during practice hours. Respect the coach's responsibility to focus on the swimmers during practice and swim meets. (VJO Parent & Family Code of Conduct)
- Email will not be used for issue discussion or resolution.

If or when a parent has a concern regarding their swimmer, the following steps should be taken:

- The parent will set up an appointment to meet with their child's coach. Coaches are available in person before or after practices and swim meets. Coaches can also be reached via email or phone to set up an appointment.
- The parent may set up a meeting with their child's coach and the VJO head coach.
- If not satisfactorily settled, the parent may set up a meeting with their child's coach, the VJO head coach and the VJO Board of directors.

Please do not leave questions or concerns unanswered. VJO 's goal is to promote open communication between parents, swimmers and coaches.