

News For

SWIM PARENTS

Published by The American Swimming Coaches Association
5101 NW 21 Ave., Suite 200
Fort Lauderdale FL 33309

On Ageing Up and Expectations

We interviewed a former age group national record holder who is now in her 20's. She set a national age group record in the 9-10 age group. When she turned 11 she joined a group of excellent nationally ranked 11 - 12 year old girls. She continued to improve but struggled emotionally and was not happy. Just before turning 13 her mom and dad decided she needed to be swimming in a different environment with a nationally prominent team and moved the mom and her to a new team out of state while the dad stayed behind. Unfortunately, she didn't enjoy her new surroundings, didn't swim well, and mom and daughter moved back but joined a different team.

She told us in the interview that the reason why she had a difficult time as an 11 and 12 year old was that "everyone" expected her to continue being great. We asked her who was included in "everyone" and the answer was...everyone -- coaches and parents and friends. .

When swimmers age up, whether it is B swimmers or national record holders, it is time for communication between the coach, swimmer, and parents. Don't assume that the swimmer knows and understands that the coach and parents aren't expecting a ribbon in the very next meet. Give swimmers special support and encouragement when they age up.