

5 SWIM PARENT TIPS ABOUT A NEW COACH

By [Elizabeth Wickham](#)

We had a long-time head coach leave our team several years ago. He was so respected and well-liked that many swimmers in his group were devastated. A few swimmers quit and some who kept swimming didn't give the new coach a fair chance.

A new coach is a guarantee. Coaches come and go and our kids grow, improve and advance into new groups. Eventually, your child will move on to college and have a whole new coach, team and environment.

Change can be good and we can help our kids prepare for the inevitable. Here are a few tips on how to work with a new coach:

ONE

Be open minded.

As a Masters swimmer, I'm nervous when someone new comes to coach us. I'm afraid the new coach won't know what a weak swimmer I am and will give me more yards and faster intervals than I can handle! I understand how my children feel with a new coach because I've experienced it first hand. We as parents—and our kids—need to give new coaches a chance. Of course, they'll be different from what we're used to, but don't jump in with your mind made up against them.

TWO

Coaches are unique.

Some coaches are talkative, funny and connect well with kids. Others may be quieter or strictly business. Our kids have different personalities, too. They'll click with one coach and perhaps not another. Learning to deal with different people will help them throughout their lives. Some coaches may be technique gurus and others great at conditioning. Kids can learn and gain different things from different coaches.

THREE

Listen and learn.

Your kids may be upset when they no longer swim for their favorite coach. That's normal and we can help by being good listeners. Sometimes, all they need is to have us listen—rather than tell them. Understand that it's okay for them to grieve the coach they've lost. Some kids may take longer than others to trust and believe in a new coach.

FOUR

Be supportive.

Support our kids, the new coach and team. Ask the new coach if there is anything you can help with. Try not to complain because things aren't the way they used to be. Please don't complain to other swim parents about a coach. We all know that change is one thing we can count on. Our kids will learn how to handle change by observing us.

FIVE

Keep on swimming.

One coach told my son that he was going to have a number of coaches in his life. He shouldn't let any coach determine his love of the sport. He shouldn't swim because or for a coach, nor should he quit because of a coach. It comes down to ownership. It's our kids' sport. Coaches are there to guide them along the journey.