

What is expected from a SWAT parent?

Swimming, above all, should be an exciting and rewarding learning experience for your child. It should be seen, for the most part, as a fun activity from which your child gains self-respect, self-discipline, good mental and physical health, companionship, good sportsmanship, and great memories.

Toward these ends, the job of the coach is to coach and the job of the parent is to be a parent. Here are some expectations for the swimming parent.

1. ALWAYS BE SUPPORTIVE, NO MATTER WHAT

The coaches' job is to tell swimmers what they did wrong so that a correction can be made. It's the parents' job to give them love and support. Leave the criticism and correction to the coach, and leave the swimming at the pool.

2. ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO HAVE FUN

Childhood only happens once, and swimming should be an enjoyable activity. If you literally have to drag your child to each practice and it causes more tears than cheers, perhaps you should set up an appointment with the coach and discuss the situation. There may be a way to solve the problem. There are always days when any child is going to need a parents influence to get to practice, be positive, be creative, be supportive, but be firm. It is helpful to have your child make out their own practice schedule days, and then it is easier to hold them to it. If not, perhaps you should reevaluate the role of swimming in your child's activities. Swimming is not for everyone.

3. NEVER IMPOSE YOUR OWN AMBITIONS ON YOUR CHILD.

Remember that swimming is your child's activity. Improvements and progress occur at different rates for each child. Don't compare your child's progress to others, and don't push them based upon what you think they ought to be doing. Most importantly, don't base your own self-esteem upon your child's swimming.

4. DON'T COACH YOUR CHILD.

That's the job of the coaches; they spend thousands of hours trying to do it right. There is a great deal going on with your swimmer and their swimming beyond their arms and legs. Over the hundreds of hours of practice, meets, and activities, coaches are working with your swimmer for certain goals and achievements. The coaches spend all that time getting them faster, more interested in the sport, and training all the many techniques necessary to improve. That is more than enough. Be supportive, be interested, but let the coaches do the coaching. If you have a concern, bring it up to the coaches and they will work with the swimmers in the context of everything that is going on in their swimming career.

5. NEVER CRITICIZE OTHER SWIMMERS, THE OFFICIALS OR THE COACH.

Another swimmer's progress or failures is none of your business. When you put another person's child down, that does not raise your own child up. Second, if you do not have the time or desire to volunteer as an official, don't criticize those who are giving their time and doing the best that they can. Lastly, by criticizing the coach in front of the child, you are only hurting your child's chances to improve. The child will either be confused by the criticism or will not listen to the coach after

your criticism. If you have a problem with the coach, discuss it directly with him or her. Remember that the coaches and the officials are there to work with your child, not take abuse from you.

6. NEVER HUMILIATE YOUR CHILD OVER A SWIM PERFORMANCE.

A child will derive no joy from swimming if his/her parent is denigrating him/her or yelling at him/her in front of others regularly. Just put yourself in the child's shoes, how would you feel if someone did that to you? It is a rare child that purposefully will "tank" a race. Are you at your best everyday?

7. DON'T SPECULATE. ASK QUESTIONS.

Never hesitate to ask your child's coach any questions. Again, you are paying the team to provide coaching for your child, and you have a right to ask about your child's progress or direction. Don't sit in the stands and complain and sulk. Remember to choose times that do not interfere with the performance of the coach's job on deck. The coaches like the input, in order to be more responsive to each and every swimmer's needs.

8 GET INVOLVED.

Volunteer to help with a meet. Help organize a fund-raiser. Learn how to officiate, or just raise the spirits of the team in some way. By getting involved with your child's team, you meet a lot of other great people, and you show your child that you care about what she/he is doing.

9 STAY IN TOUCH--- KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON

The Waves try to send out information in emails to keep everyone informed on a regular basis. Schedules, info, meets, entries, are all broadcast emailed to every email address you supplied on the registration form. Read them and take care of them as soon as possible (especially meet entries). Check the website for information also: www.spokanewaves.org

10. WHEN A CONCERN ARISES: When concerns or "issues" arise that are under the coaches area of authority (wet side), parents are expected to follow this procedure:

- A. Make an appointment to speak with the coach. Do Not air your frustrations in an email or make accusations, without first discussing your concerns. If concerns are satisfied, end of issue, and you are expected to keep it between yourself and the coach.
- B. If your concerns are not satisfied, make an appointment with your coach and the head coach to discuss the concerns. In the case of the head coach, you may request the presence of the board president.
- C. If the concerns have not been met, you may request a meeting with the board president or executive committee and the head coach.
- D. If the concerns have not been satisfied, you may request a meeting with the full board and the coach to have your concerns heard.

If after the grievance process, you are not satisfied, you will be expected to drop the issue, and or be excused from the team. If a parent leaves as a result of this process, the parents will be released from further financial obligation to the team.

A FINAL NOTE: The effort of swimming is a fantastic reward in and of itself. Recognize and honor that!

There are all kinds of achievement to be gained that have nothing to do with winning.

There are around 225,000 athletes currently registered with United States Swimming. There are only about 52 spots available every four years for the Olympic Swim Team. Your child's odds of becoming an Olympic swimmer are very difficult, but our goal is to try. Keep that in mind when you are asking yourself: "What do I want my child to get out of US Swimming?" There are many other great benefits besides winning. The odds of them being a State Champion are much better, the odds of being a Conference champ really improve, the odds of dropping time at the next meet are truly great, the odds of these swimmers becoming great people are downright fantastic.