

# Your First Swim Meet Guide

*(Rebecca Dark – MARS Parent 2003)*

Here are a few tips for going to a swim meet from some experienced swim parents.

## What to Bring:

1. Team suit, caps and goggles
2. Water bottles or sports drinks and healthy snacks such as fresh fruit, energy bars, bagels, sandwiches etc. (Candy and sodas are not good snacks for your swimmer.)
3. Sunscreen if it is an outdoor meet or if you are not sure whether it is out or in
4. A black sharpie, a highlighter, and a pen
5. Several towels
6. Sweats, t-shirts or a deck coat for a cold, wet swimmer
7. Whatever toiletries and clothing your child may need for changing after the meet
8. Whatever medication (such as inhalers) your child may need during the meet
9. Cards, Gameboys, crayons, whatever your child may want to do to pass the time between events

## What to wear:

1. You should dress in layers. Many swim facilities are **very hot** even in winter, but occasionally they are cold. If the meet is outside, you will probably be glad for a hat.
2. Your child should have layers to put on or take off, as well. See #6 above

## What to do:

1. Do not skip the warm up. It is important, and important things happen during that pre-meet time.
2. Check in. At almost all meets you must do a positive check in for each of your child's events. There will be a check in sheet for boys and one for girls somewhere on the wall. Put a check mark beside your child's name for each event he or she is entered in. Do not "scratch" (i.e. put an X indicating your child does not want to swim the event) without the coach's permission.
3. Find the team and try to sit together. It's always a good idea to have lawn chairs in the car in case you need them. There isn't always enough bleacher space, or you may prefer to sit in the shade. If you have a "pop-up" tent, you may want to bring it for outdoor meets. Shade can be hard to come by.
4. Send your child to find the coach and to warm up. It is very important for the coach to know what swimmers are present so that he or she can plan for relays.
5. Buy a "Heat Sheet." They are usually about \$5.00. Find your child's event numbers, etc. Some people write their child's event, heat and lane assignments on the child's arm or leg with the sharpie. It helps the child to find where he or she is supposed to be.
6. Find out where heat and lane assignments are going to be posted. A little before each of your child's events he or she will have to go and find out his or her heat and lane assignment off the wall.
7. Encourage your swimmer, but don't coach him or her. Let the coach critique the swim; your kid doesn't need to hear it from you! What he or she needs from you is cheering, lessons in positive attitudes, congratulations for a good effort, and an example of good sportsmanship.
8. Volunteer to time. All meets need timers, and it can be a good way to pass the time at a meet if your child doesn't need you.
9. Keep your child (and yourself) hydrated with plenty of water.
10. Ask questions. You won't learn how a meet works very quickly unless you ask a lot of questions. Other swim parents, even those from other teams, are happy to answer and help. Get one to teach you the ropes, and by your second or third meet you'll be the old pro helping out the newcomers.

## One final note:

**All of our coaches are more interested in healthy kids than fast swimmers, and here is a bit of advice that really helps on both fronts. A child who eats right, drinks plenty of water, and gets the right amount of rest all the time is going to swim better in practice and at meets.**