

The

F.A.S.T. Lane

New Parent Special Issue



Everything You Wanted to Know About Swim Meets But Were Afraid To Ask - (Excerpt from USA Swimming's Sample Club Handbook)

Swim meets are a great family experience! They're a place where the whole family can spend time together. Listed below are some very in-depth guidelines geared to help you through your first couple of swim meets. It may seem a little overwhelming, but we tried to be as specific and as detailed as we possibly could. If you have any questions, please ask your coach.

Before the Meet Starts:

1. Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be listed in the meet information posted on the web site and in team handouts.

2. Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer's blankets, swim bags and/or sleeping bags. The team usually sits in one place together, so look for some familiar faces.

3. Find the check-in place. Usually, parents are not allowed on deck so this may be a responsibility of your swimmer or your swimmer's coach. Make sure your swimmer checks in with his or her coach!

Check for special posted instructions in the check-in area. Most meets only require a swimmer to check in for distance events. Usually one will need to circle the swimmer's name or "#" before each swimmer's name, or highlight the swimmer's name on a list, in each event he or she is swimming, that day. If this is not done, the swimmer will not be allowed to swim that event. Check-in is required so that the people running the meet know who is actually at the meet. After check-in, the meet administrators "seed" the swimmers into heats. Heat and lane assignments will be posted, so be sure your swimmer knows where to look!

Sometimes the meet is "pre-seeded" and no check-in is required. You and your swimmer can find heat and lane assignments by purchasing a program.

4. Once "checked in", write or have the swimmers write each event-number on his or her hand in ink or a sharpie. This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number to listen or watch for.

5. Your swimmer now gets his/her cap and goggles and reports to the pool and/or coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. A swimmer's body is just like a car on a cold day-he/she needs to get the engine going and warmed-up before he/she can go all out.

6. After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her team is sitting and wait there until their first event is called. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink, or just gets settled in.

7. The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over.

8. According to USA Swimming rules (because of insurance purposes), parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to a coach. He or she in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.

9. Psyche Sheet or Heat Sheets. A psyche sheet is usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time". When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time (up to the date that the entry was submitted) in that event is listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a "no-time" or "NT". A "no-time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event. A Heat sheet may be available close to the start of the meet that lists the actual heat and lane a swimmer will be competing in.

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... "The race starts long before you step onto the block."

-Anonymous

Meet Starts:

1. It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he/she is swimming (again, why they should have the numbers on their hand). He/she may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.

2. Generally, girls events are odd-numbered and boys events are even-numbered. Example: "Event #26, 10-Under Boys, 50 freestyle"

3. Most meets are computerized. There are generally two ways a swimmer gets to his/her lane:

A swimmer usually reports directly to his/her lane for competition a number of heats before he/she actually swims. Each swimmer should check in with his/her coach before each swim for any last minute instruction before their event.

In some novice meets, a swimmer's event number will be called, usually over the loudspeaker, and he/she will be asked to report to the "clerk of course" or "bullpen". Swimmers should report with his/her cap and goggle. The "Clerk of Course" or "bullpen" area is usually where all swimmers checked in before the warm-up.

The clerk will usually line up all the swimmers and take them down to the pool in correct order. You can expect at least 4-8 heats of each event.

4. The swimmer swims his or her race.

5. After each swim:

Depending on the coaches instructions, the swimmer may be asked to do some recovery swimming if a "warm down" pool or lanes are available.

The swimmer should then go immediately to his or her coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer. Some coaches may wish to talk with the swimmer before her recovery swim.

6. Generally, the coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims:

- Positive comments or praise
- Suggestions for improvement
- Suggestions for next event

7. Things you, as a parent, can do after each swim:

Tell him how great he/she did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with them. You need to tell them how proud you are and what a great job he/she did.

Take him/her back to the team area and relax.

This is another good time to check out the bathrooms, get a drink or something light to eat.

The swimmer now waits until the next event is called and starts the procedure again.

8. When a swimmer has completed all of their events he/she and parents get to go home. Make sure, however, you, as a parent, check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and he/she is not there.

9. Results are usually posted somewhere in the facility. Awards are often gathered for a team and given to the coach at the end of the meet. The coach will give the awards to the swimmers at a later time.

What Happens If Your Child has a Disappointing Swim?

If your child has a poor race and comes out of it feeling badly, talk about the good things. The first thing you say is, "Hey, that is not like you. I know you are disappointed, but it's not the end of the world!" Then you can go on and talk about the good things the

child did. Don't talk about the negative things and don't keep talking about the race. Drop it and get your child to focus on the next race or something enjoyable coming up after the meet! Limit the "post mortems!"

If your child comes up to you and says, "That was a bad race, don't tell me it wasn't," there is nothing wrong with a swimmer negatively evaluating a race. The important thing is for the child not to dwell on it. You should move the swimmer on to something good. "All right, you have had a bad race. How do you think you can do better next time?" Immediately start talking about the positive things.

What To Take To The Meet:

1. Most important: Swim Suit, Team Cap--and goggles (if your swimmer uses them).

2. Baby or talcum powder--To "dust" the inside of swim cap. This helps preserve the cap and makes it easier to put on.

3. Towels--Realize your swimmer will be there awhile, so pack at least two.

4. Something to sit on. Oftentimes the swimmer area may be located in a gym or cafeteria. Example: sleeping bag, old blanket, or anything that will be comfortable to sit on. The swimmers will be spending a lot of time on it.

5. Sweat suits: bring one. Each swimmer may want to bring two because they can get wet and soggy.

6. Team T-shirts: Two or three. Same reason as above.

7. Games: travel games, coloring books, books, anything to pass the time.

8. Food: Each swimmer is usually allowed to bring a small cooler. It is better to bring snacks. They usually have snack bars at the meet, but the lines are long and most of the time they only sell junk food. Suggestions for items to bring:

Drinks: Water, Fruit juice, Gatorade

Snacks: Granola bars, Fun fruits, yogurt, cereal, jello cubes, sandwiches

Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become very routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any other parent for help or information!

These meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers! He/she gets to visit with his/her friends, play games, and meet kids from other teams. He/she also gets to "race" and see how much he/she has improved from all the hard work he/she has put in at practice. Special Parent's Note:

The pool area is usually very warm. Therefore, you need to make sure you dress appropriately. Nothing is worse than being hot at a swim meet. It makes the time pass very slowly! At some of the meets, the parents are allowed to sit with the swimmers at the blanket area. If you don't think that a gym floor is comfortable, feel free to bring folding chairs to sit on. Better yet, become an official and get involved! You get to be close to the action and take the focus off of your own child!



Swimming Is An Investment

With time at a premium in the two-career family, many parents are now asking "Is the sacrifice and expense of joining an age group program worth it?" Here are some thoughts on why it is.

Age group swimming is much more than just swimming back and forth, day in and day out - the occasional swim meet and winning ribbon. Of course the swimmer gains from the physical activity of swimming, by becoming more fit...and there is involvement in an after school activity at a time when working parents can't be with their kids. But age group swimming is an investment in the health, fitness, and overall growth and development of the youngster.

From the physical standpoint, swimming helps improve cardiovascular fitness, strength, flexibility, and neuromuscular coordination. In addition, swimming is a lifelong fitness activity that is relatively easy to pursue, low in injury risk, and helps reduce stress. It can be enjoyed recreationally long after it has ceased competitively.

Beyond the physical benefits, swimming in both practice and meets contributes greatly to the psychological and emotional development of the young athlete. As an activity, swimming requires the development of specific and complex motor patterns. Swimming well requires not only hard physical work, but also intelligent application of learned skills and the ability to THINK while performing. From concentration on performing stroke skills correctly to executing race strategies, the athlete learns early to concentrate and perform under pressure. In addition nutrition education is an ongoing and essential part of the athlete's overall development and success.

Age group swimming also requires consistent dedication, discipline and long-term commitment to goals, learning the habit of persistent application of lifestyle adaptations of goal achievement. Young swimmers also learn to accept success and failure with equal grace. In life as in swimming, one often fails several times on the way to success, and it is essential and difficult life-lesson to learn. The ups and downs of competition and training expose the young athlete to the realities of success and failure and force them to deal with the living experience.

Age group swimming, both directly and indirectly, teaches the athlete to develop: goal-setting strategies, time management skills, relaxation and imagery techniques, positive attitudes, and generally enhances the athlete's overall self-image. Competitive swimming is both social and fun, and by virtue of the athletic nature of the activity, reinforces positive social values and beliefs. Athletes are taught to value their hard work in training and steer clear of drug and alcohol abuses.

To be an athlete is a very special and wonderful thing. To be a competitive swimmer is special, wonderful, and difficult; but the benefits of the persistent dedication and application of efforts, along with the benefits of facing and dealing with the emotional and psychological experiences associated with the demands of training and competing for success, are well worth whatever personal and/or financial investments are required.

Age group swimming is much more than it first appears.

Nutrition for Meets

From: cms.westport.k12.ct.us/cmslmc/resources/swimfood.htm

One thing that all of us coaches noticed at these meets was that many of the swimmers were . . . how should I put this . . . not eating in a manner which would benefit their swimming optimally.

Or in other words: EATING JUNK!

When at a meet, keep in mind that the more food in your stomach, the more blood that has to go there to digest it. If blood and oxygen are going there, then there's less going to the muscles to make them work. But if you are at a meet for most of the day, you have to eat something, right? So what to eat . . . Here's a little plan of things to eat and when to eat them. Notice that there is NO ROOM for hot dogs, fries, hamburgers, or any other chow from McDonald's in this outline.

The biggest generalization is to avoid things with fat, and go with things that have carbohydrates and are easily digested.

Nutrition Guidelines

Preparation and Recovery for Competition

The week leading up to the Event

Ensure a high-carbohydrate eating plan. Include more rice and pasta: they have more carbohydrate than potato. Include nutritious carbohydrate-based between-meal snacks (see list "Top Snacks" on next page). As your

training will be tapered pre-event, you won't need to eat more! Eating the right balance of increased carbohydrate and less fat is the key.

The Pre-Event Meal

Eat this meal about 2-3 hours before competition (approximately 2-3 hours before warm-up). This meal should top-up your blood sugar levels after the night's rest. The meal does not have to be large, but should fill you up for the next few hours. High-carbohydrate foods are the best options: e.g., bread, cereals, fruit, pasta, rice, etc. Ensure that the meal is low fat, this speeds up digestion. Eat breakfast before you get to the pool, this leaves time for the carbo fuel to get in! Have a drink to optimize hydration: try sports drink, juice, or best of all, WATER! Avoid the caffeine in cola drinks, coffee, chocolate, and tea - it is dehydrating. If you feel too nervous to eat, try a liquid meal (see later in this article). Practice with your pre-event meal prior to THE BIG MEET to fine tune this eating strategy

After the Warm-Up - Recover for the Heats

After the warm-up, replace fluids immediately (have your drink bottle at pool side, and drain it). Sports drinks have their benefits as they replace fluids and carbohydrate simultaneously, but make sure they're not sweet like Kool-Aid if you're mixing your own. If there is less than 1 hour between races, just keep to fluid

replacement. If there is more than 1 hour between the warm-up and your first heat, try to eat a little. The best approach is to eat a little and often during the day. Eating too much at once can make you feel heavy and lethargic.

Drinking and Eating

In longer breaks of at least 90 minutes, have something to eat. In shorter breaks, use a sports drink or water to replace fluids. The indoor pool environment is humid and dehydrating, so DRINK, DRINK, DRINK! Adequate fluids are essential all day to keep your blood and energy pumping. If there is a longer break (a few hours) through the day, use it to eat a bit more. Take your own high performance foods and drinks with you (don't rely on the canteen). A cold pack and thermos helps to keep foods and drinks cold, which aids in absorption. Record your food and fluid intake to keep count of when you last ate and drank. To monitor hydration check that your urine output is regular and "looks clear." Monitoring body-weight change over the day is another way to check hydration. In general, crackers are bad! - they tend to be high in fat and salt, which makes you retain water

Recovery After a Hard Day's Competition

Have something to drink and eat immediately after your last swim. Avoid the "fast food" chains on the way home - their high fat foods will delay recovery. Have some high-carbo food prepared so you can eat as soon as you arrive home. If possible take a thermos with a meal inside so you can eat even earlier. Check your body weight to ensure you are rehydrated. The worst thing you can do is wait a couple of hours, then stop at McDonald's or KFC or the like, and fill up on whatever they're serving - very low in carbohydrates, and much too high in fat and salt!

Top-Up Snacks Between Events (1-2 hour breaks)

Snack fruits (small cans of fruit) or canned baby fruits. Bananas. Fruit that is peeled and cut up (easier to eat this way). Plain bread rolls (white bread may be less heavy) - try pita bread! Fruit buns (e.g., hot cross buns) or raisin bread. Rice cakes (you can top them with honey, jam, or banana). Rice pudding or bread pudding (use reduced-fat milk). Instant noodles (varieties that do not contain oil or the flavor packet). Jam or honey sandwiches (NOT with peanut butter) Plain boiled pasta with a little tomato sauce. Low-fat breakfast or plain (non-chocolate-covered granola bar) Fruit fingers (see baby food selection at supermarket). Plain crackers (not high-fat types). Low-fat puddings or jello. Small amount of reduced-fat yogurts. PowerGel (or imitations) PowerBars (or imitations)

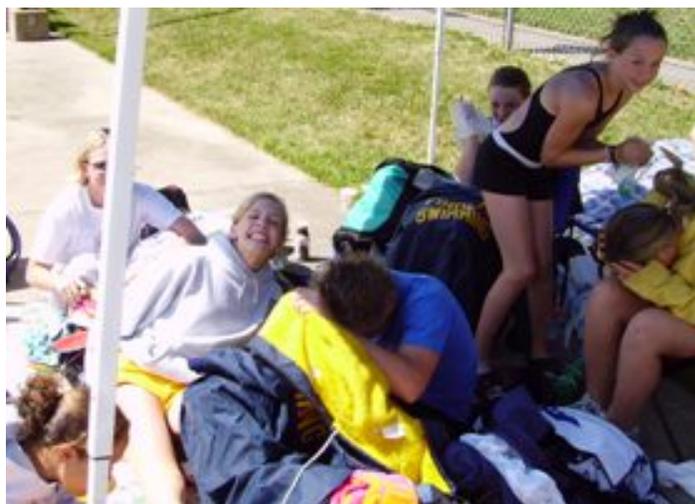
Note 1: A quick way to tell if something really is

"low fat" is to check the nutrition label. If there are more protein grams than fat grams in a serving, it's probably OK. If there's more fat, then it's probably better to go with something else.

Note 2: Choose smaller amounts if you only have just over 1 hour. In longer breaks you can afford to eat a little more, but don't eat constantly. Items in bold might be better for middle length breaks as they are smaller and perhaps easier to digest.

Longer Breaks or After the Competition

Sandwiches with low-fat fillings (avoid butter and tuna- or egg- "salad" as the "salad" is mostly high-fat mayonnaise). Pasta or rice with tomato pasta sauce (a little chicken or very lean meat in sauce is okay). Probably the most important thing to remember is that while you need to eat some food, **you will swim better being a little hungry than a little full.** So drink lots, eat a little, and you should be well on your way to swimming success.



Scrip + Meets = \$\$\$\$\$

Away meets are a perfect opportunity to generate money through the scrip program. With a little planning, you could see a big return on expenses that you will be paying anyway. Hotels, restaurants, gas, and many other places can be paid for by using the scrip program.

All you have to do is look at your upcoming meet schedule and first decide if you are going to stay overnight while at the meet. Check the scrip vendor list and see what hotels you can stay at near the pool. Second, check for restaurants and other eating places around the pool where the meet is being held. Most "Map and Directions" websites give an option to find various locations near the address that you type in. I like the Rand McNally website and use it quite often.

Remember, you must do this in advance so you have enough time to order your scrip gift certificates and receive them before the meet actually starts.

The Basics

Skills: The five competitive swimming strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and individual medley.

Competition: Each swim meet offers a variety of events and distances, depending on the age group and classification. Each swimmer will have a limit to the number of events he or she may swim each day, depending on the meet rules.



In freestyle events, the competitor may swim any stroke. The stroke most commonly used is sometimes called the crawl, which is characterized by the alternate stroking of the arms over the water surface and an alternating (up-and-down) flutter kick. On turns and finishes, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. Most swimmers do a flip turn.

Backstroke consists of an alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick while on the back. On turns, swimmers may rotate to the stomach and perform a flip turn and some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. The swimmer must finish on the back.



The breaststroke, which is the oldest stroke dating back hundreds of years, requires simultaneous movements of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The hands are pressed out from in front of the breast in a heart shaped pattern and recovered under or on the surface of the water. The kick is a simultaneous somewhat circular motion similar to the action of a frog. On turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water surface.



Some consider the butterfly to be the most beautiful of the strokes. It features a simultaneous recovery of the arms over the water combined with an undulating dolphin kick. In the kick, the swimmer must keep both legs together and may not flutter, scissors or use the breaststroke kick. Both hands

must touch the wall simultaneously on the turns and the finish. (The butterfly is the newest stroke and was developed in the early 1950s as a variation of the breaststroke. It became an Olympic stroke in 1956 in Melbourne.)



The individual medley, commonly referred to as the I.M., features all four strokes. In the IM, the swimmer begins with the butterfly, then changes after one-fourth of the race to backstroke, then breaststroke and finally freestyle.

In the medley relay, all four strokes are swum. The first swimmer swims backstroke, the second breaststroke, the third butterfly, and the final swimmer anchors the relay with freestyle.

The freestyle relay events consist of four freestylers, each swimming one quarter of the total distance of the event.

Starts: In the start, the swimmer is called to the starting position by the starter who visually checks that all swimmers are motionless. When all swimmers are set, the starting horn is



sounded to start the race. If the starter feels that one of the swimmers has moved, left early or gotten an unfair advantage, the guilty swimmer may be disqualified after the race for a false start. Under USA Swimming rules, one false start disqualifies the swimmer.

Rules: The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each swimming stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that no swimmer gets an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer.

The Course:

Competition pools may be short course (25 yards or 25 meters), or long course (50 meters).

The international standard (as used in the Olympics) is 50 meters. World records are accomplished in 25 and 50 meter pools. USA Swimming maintains records for 25 yard, 25 meter and 50 meter pools.



Teams: USA Swimming is made up of approximately 2,800 teams from all over the country. Of these clubs, nearly half have 80 swimmers or less, and a handful of teams have over 500 swimmers. A team may be comprised of any number of swimmers, parents and coaches. Participants compete in different age groups and meets depending on their achievement level and how old they are on the first day of the meet. Traditionally recognized age groups are 10 and under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18. Many local meets feature 8 and under, single age groups, or senior events. Team practice groups are usually determined by age and/or ability.

Officials: Officials are present at all competitions to enforce the technical rules of swimming so the competition is fair and equitable. Officials attend clinics, pass a written test and work meets before being certified. All parents are encouraged to get involved with some form of officiating.



What is USA Swimming?

USA Swimming Headquarters provides a variety of services and programs for its membership. Among the many services are publications, educational programs, fund-raising activities, sports medicine programs, resources and general information about swimming related activities. USA Swimming staff are available to assist you in answering questions or providing additional information about USA Swimming.

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Background:

USA Swimming is the National Governing Body for competitive swimming in the United States. USA Swimming was conceived in 1978 with the passage of the Amateur Sports Act which specified that all Olympic sports would be administered independently. Prior to this act, USA Swimming was the Competitive Swimming Committee of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) located in Indianapolis, Indiana. USA Swimming Headquarters office was established in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in 1981 and is located at the Olympic Training Center.

As the National Governing Body for the sport, USA Swimming is responsible for the conduct and administration of swimming in the United States. In this capacity, USA Swimming formulates the rules, implements the policies and procedures, conducts the national championships, disseminates safety and sports medicine information and selects athletes to represent the United States in international competition.

USA Swimming Mission Statement:

USA Swimming is the National Governing Body for the sport of swimming. We administer competitive swimming in accordance with the Amateur Sports Act. We provide programs and services for our members, supporters, affiliates and the interested public. We value these members of the swimming community, and the staff and volunteers who serve them. We are committed to excellence and the improvement of our sport.

USA Swimming Vision Statement:

To inspire and enable our members to achieve excellence in the

sport of swimming and in life.

USA Swimming Core Objectives

Build the base

Promote the sport

Achieve competitive success

How Is USA Swimming Organized?

International - The international federation for the aquatic sports is the Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur (FINA). USA Swimming is affiliated with FINA through United States Aquatic Sports (USAS), made up of the four aquatic sports – swimming, synchronized swimming, diving and water polo.

National - USA Swimming is a Group A member of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) and has voting representation in the USOC House of Delegates.

Zone - We are divided into four separate zones – central, eastern, southern and western. Each zone elects two representatives to the national Board of Directors. Map of the zones

Local - Within the United States, there are fifty-nine (59) Local Swimming Committees (LSCs). Each LSC is responsible for administering USA Swimming activities in a defined geographical area and has its own set of bylaws under which it operates. A House of Delegates with representation of athletes, coaches, members of the Board of Directors and clubs is responsible for managing the business affairs of the LSC.

How USA Swimming Operates

USA Swimming is a non-profit organization made up of very dedicated volunteers and support staff. Interested volunteers donate their time, energy and expertise at every level from the national Board of Directors to the local swimming clubs. There are over 30 standing committees. Staff liaisons, along with these committees, create, implement and evaluate USA Swimming programs. The House of Delegates meets annually to determine the rules and regulations for the following year. Between yearly meetings of the House of Delegates, an elected USA Swimming Board of Directors is charged with the responsibility of making decisions for USA Swimming. A support staff at Headquarters in Colorado Springs implements the policies and provides service to members.

10 Commandments for Swimming Parents

by Rose Snyder, Managing Director Coaching Division, USOC
Former Director of Club Services, USA Swimming

(adapted from Ed Clendaniel's 10 Commandments for Little League Parents)

I. Thou shalt not impose thy ambitions on thy child.

Remember that swimming is your child's activity. Improvements and progress occur at different rates for each individual. Don't judge your child's progress based on the performance of other athletes and don't push him based on what you think he should be doing. The nice thing about swimming is every person can strive to do his personal best and benefit from the process of competitive swimming.

II. Thou shalt be supportive no matter what.

There is only one question to ask your child after a practice or a competition - "Did you have fun?" If meets and practices are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate.

III. Thou shalt not coach thy child.

You are involved in one of the few youth sports programs that offers professional coaching. Do not undermine the professional coach by trying to coach your child on the side. Your job is to provide love and support. The coach is responsible for the technical part of the job. You should not offer advice on technique or race strategy. Never pay your child for a performance. This will only serve to confuse your child concerning the reasons to strive for excellence and weaken the swimmer/coach bond.

IV. Thou shalt only have positive things to say at a swimming meet.

You should be encouraging and never criticize your child or the coach. Both of them know when mistakes have been made. Remember "yelling at" is not the same as "cheering for".

V. Thou shalt acknowledge thy child's fears.

New experiences can be stressful situations. It is totally appropriate for your child to be scared. Don't yell or belittle, just assure your child that the coach would not have suggested the event or meet if your child was not ready. Remember your job is to love and support your child through all of the swimming

experience.

VI. Thou shalt not criticize the officials.

Please don't criticize those who are doing the best they can in purely voluntary positions.

VII. Honor thy child's coach.

The bond between coach and swimmer is special. It contributes to your child's success as well as fun. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child.

VIII. Thou shalt be loyal and supportive of thy team

It is not wise for parents to take swimmers and to jump from team to team. The water isn't necessarily bluer in another team's pool. Every team has its own internal problems, even teams that build champions. Children who switch from team to team find that it can be a difficult emotional experience. Often swimmers who do switch teams don't do better than they did before they sought the bluer water.

IX. Thy child shalt have goals besides winning.

Most successful swimmers have learned to focus on the process and not the outcome. Giving an honest effort regardless of what the outcome is, is much more important than winning. One Olympian said, "My goal was to set a world record. Well, I did that, but someone else did it too, just a little faster than I did. I achieved my goal and I lost. Does this make me a failure? No, in fact I am very proud of that swim." What a tremendous outlook to carry on through life.

X. Thou shalt not expect thy child to become an Olympian.

There are 250,000 athletes in USA Swimming. There are only 52 spots available for the Olympic Team every four years. Your child's odds of becoming an Olympian are about .0002%.

Parent & Athlete

Competitive swimming programs provide many benefits to young athletes including self-discipline, good sportsmanship, and time management skills. Competition allows the swimmer to experience success and to learn how to treat success and failure as two sides of the same coin, while becoming healthy and physically fit. As a parent, your major responsibility is to provide a stable, loving and supportive environment. This positive environment will encourage your child to continue. Show your interest by ensuring your child's attendance at practices, by coming to swimming meets and volunteering for your club at swim meets, or by participating in fundraising, etc.

Parents contribute to the success experienced by the child and the team. Parents serve as role models and their children emulate their attitudes. Be aware of this and strive to be positive role models. Most importantly, show good sportsmanship at all times toward coaches, officials, opponents and teammates. Remember that you are teaching your child at all times.

Be Enthusiastic and Supportive! Remember that your child is the swimmer. Children need to establish their own goals, and make their own progress towards them. Be careful not to impose your own standards and goals. Do not over burden your child with winning or achieving best times. Let them know that first they are the child you love, and second, a swimmer. Tell them you will love them whether they swim well or not, and ask only that they give their best effort. Learning about oneself while enjoying the sport is the most important part of the swimming experience. The swimming environment encourages learning and fun, which will help your child develop a positive self-image.