

Sonoma Sea Dragons Parent's Guide

The role a parent or guardian plays in the lives of their children cannot be understated. This same role you play in their lives as swimmers is also crucial to their longevity and love for the sport.

The lifespan of a competitive swimmer can be quite long, and unfortunately, it can also be quite short. It is your job as parents to understand your role in the careful maintenance of their enjoyment of the sport, helping to foster their self-confidence and to work with, and learn from the coaching staff to ensure success in these areas.

Your children will learn how to set goals, be dedicated to something, develop self-discipline, how to inspire others, and become team players. Your role in this is paramount. Without you being there as an emotional boost, chauffeur, personal assistant, private chef and friend, there would be no swimming to speak of!

But, at the same time, as a parent, we sometimes fall into the trap of putting unnecessary and burdensome pressure on our children. You cannot care about their success more than they do. It is THEIR success.

Read through the following questions

1. Do you know your child's best times and time standards better than they do?
2. Do you show disappointment if they don't improve?
3. Do you try to pump your child up before races?
4. Do your comments show a questioning of their effort after competition?
5. Do you find yourself trying to coach your son/daughter during competition or training, thinking that you can do it better?
6. Do you find yourself comparing your child to others on the team/other teams?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may likely be putting unnecessary pressure on your child, which will strain your relationship with them, and most often jeopardize their success and longevity in the sport.

Remember, ***"Your child's success or lack of success in sports does not indicate what kind of parent you are. But having an athlete that is coachable, respectful, a great teammate, mentally tough, resilient and tries their best is a direct reflection of your parenting!"***

Foremost, your goals should be to aid your child in seeing the highlights in their performances, not the result (time). Never belittle or punish your child for making errors in their races. Help to reinforce positive messages like good sportsmanship, character, respect (for officials, coaches, and other athletes), and a love for the sport. Use proper language and always respect your child's coach when they give advice regarding the sport of swimming to your children.