

Parent Tips from American Swimming Coaches Association Executive Director John Leonard

Age Group Swimming

- Be a parent. Take care of the parental things and let the coach coach. This is equally true in practice and at meets.
- Support the total success of the team.
- Expect your coach to ask your child to swim all the events. Focusing on a few things they do well early in their career is shortsighted.
- Remember that the emphasis in the early years is technique.

Junior High and Early High School

- Understand that every athlete develops at a unique pace on an individual maturation cycle. Patience is needed to allow that to happen. Every swimmer should focus on great technique and consistent and persistent training through the extended developmental years.
- Understand that in the teen years and beyond, the swimmer will not be doing best times on almost every swim as they may have done at an earlier age. Improvement will be slow and best times may be seen only once or twice a season. This is entirely natural. It teaches the great life lesson that big rewards require concentrated, persistent effort.
- In these years, a shift will occur. The coach, rather than the parent, will become the primary focus and feedback unit in the athlete's team. Let the sport become their sport rather than "our sport." They're doing the swimming; let them own it.

Late High School

- The wise parent stays in the background at this stage. Attend practices rarely, if ever, and attend meets when asked by your child.
- Sit back and enjoy being a spectator