

## Role As A Parent

As a parent we have many jobs to fulfill for our children. We are always looking for ways to help our children with their problems and their success. Below are some guidelines to help you and your child have a great time in the sport of swimming. Please feel free to discuss these items below with a coach if needed.

### Parent & Athlete

Many parents have lots of questions about swim practice, especially when their child or children are new to the sport. It is sometimes difficult to know what to expect of your child. Your child may talk about swim practice, but you may not even understand the new "swimming vocabulary" your child is using.

Many children improve rapidly during the developmental stages due to growth and improved technique. It is difficult to resist the tendency to push young athletes at this stage. However, the emphasis should be placed on technique and not intense training. The training schedule for developmental swimmers should be flexible enough to provide them with enough time to participate in other activities. Since swimmers' careers can extend well into adulthood, swimming at the youngest levels needs to be fun, pressure free, and filled with learning experiences. This will ensure that swimming remains fun throughout their lives.

You should certainly ask questions at swim team parents' meetings or schedule an appointment with your child's coach to clarify things

### What is Fun for Swimmers?

Before reading any further, think for a moment about what you believe to be 'fun' for your swimmer(s); the factors you think they would identify as fun. Oftentimes, coaches assume that when swimmers talk of fun, they are talking about playing games, goofing around, unstructured practices, which would detract from productive, focused practices. However, a recent poll of swimmers related a much different concept of what is fun regarding their experiences in

swimming. A la David Letterman, let us present to you the Top 10 sources of fun in swimming. As you read each factor, reflect on whether or not it is something that is present for your athlete(s) as well as if you can influence this source of fun.

#### TOP 10 REASONS SWIMMING IS FUN FOR AGE GROUP SWIMMERS

1. Being with friends
2. Coach compliments and encourages me
3. Being known as a good swimmer
4. Winning races
5. Getting in shape
6. Varied workouts
7. Relays where the team comes together
8. Feelings of accomplishment
9. Cheering for each other/cheering together as a team
10. Trying to improve my times; being on a team

#### **Parent & Coach**

A key component to an athlete's healthy swimming experience is the building of a positive relationship between a parent and a coach. Both the parent and the coach have important roles in supporting a swimmer. A coach is there to teach and judge a swimmer's performance and technique while a parent should love and support the child regardless of the outcome. It's helpful for a parent to realize some key things about a coach.

A lot more comes with coaching than the athletes, practice and competition. Beyond the initial hours at the pool, a coach's time is spent planning for workouts, understanding the long term-term nature of the sport and each individual swimmer's performance, doing key administrative duties, and providing emotional support for many athletes.

Ultimately a coach loves the sport and is willing to make countless sacrifices to foster swimming and its athletes in and out of the pool. Keeping this in mind,

there are key things parents can do to support their child's coach and ultimately help their child achieve swimming success.

#### **HOW A PARENT CAN HELP**

- Trust and listen to the coach
- Respect and support their decisions
- Stay in the background
- Be there to support your child and not add additional pressure