



YOUR GUIDE TO SWIMMING IN COLLEGE



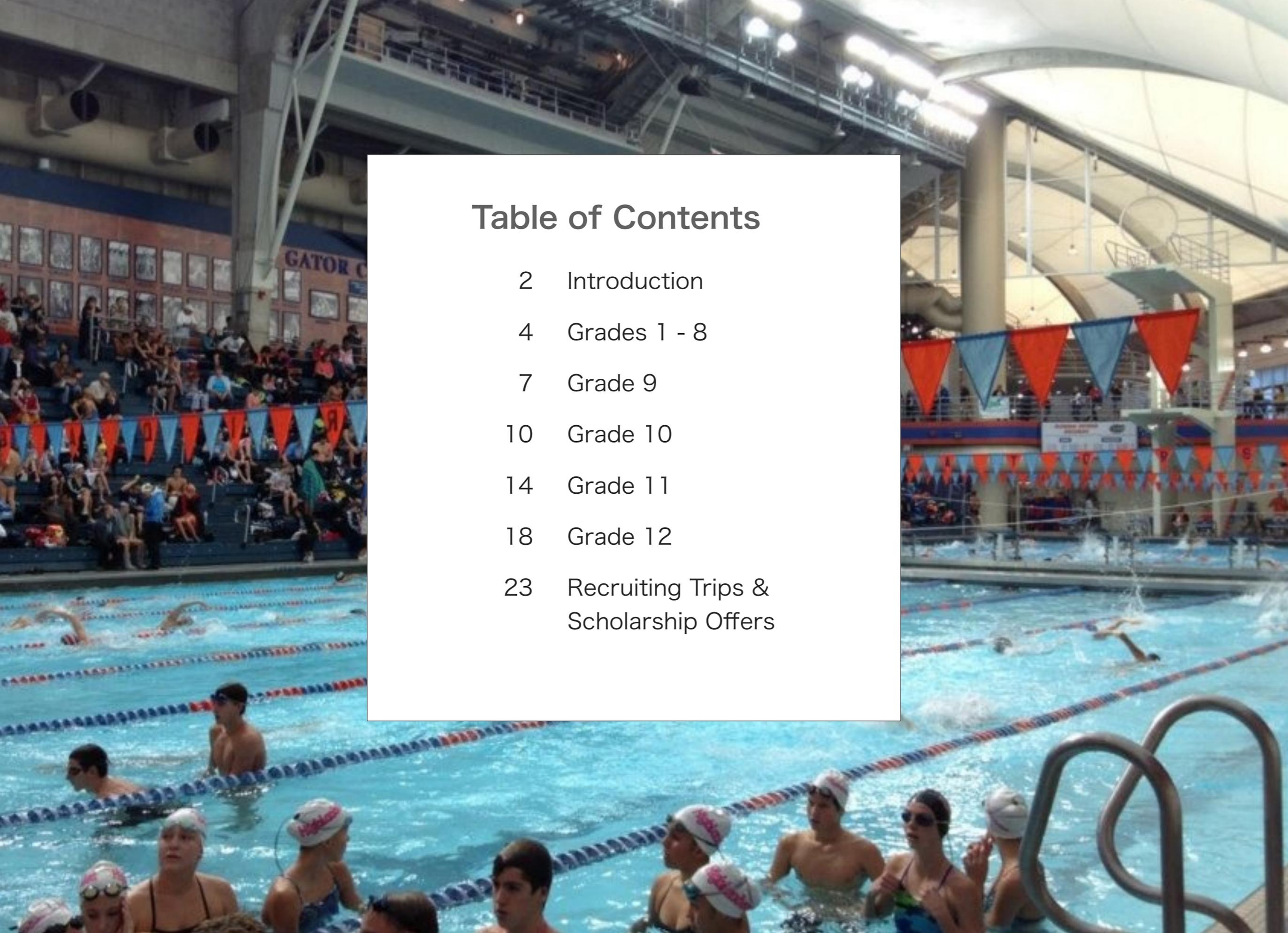
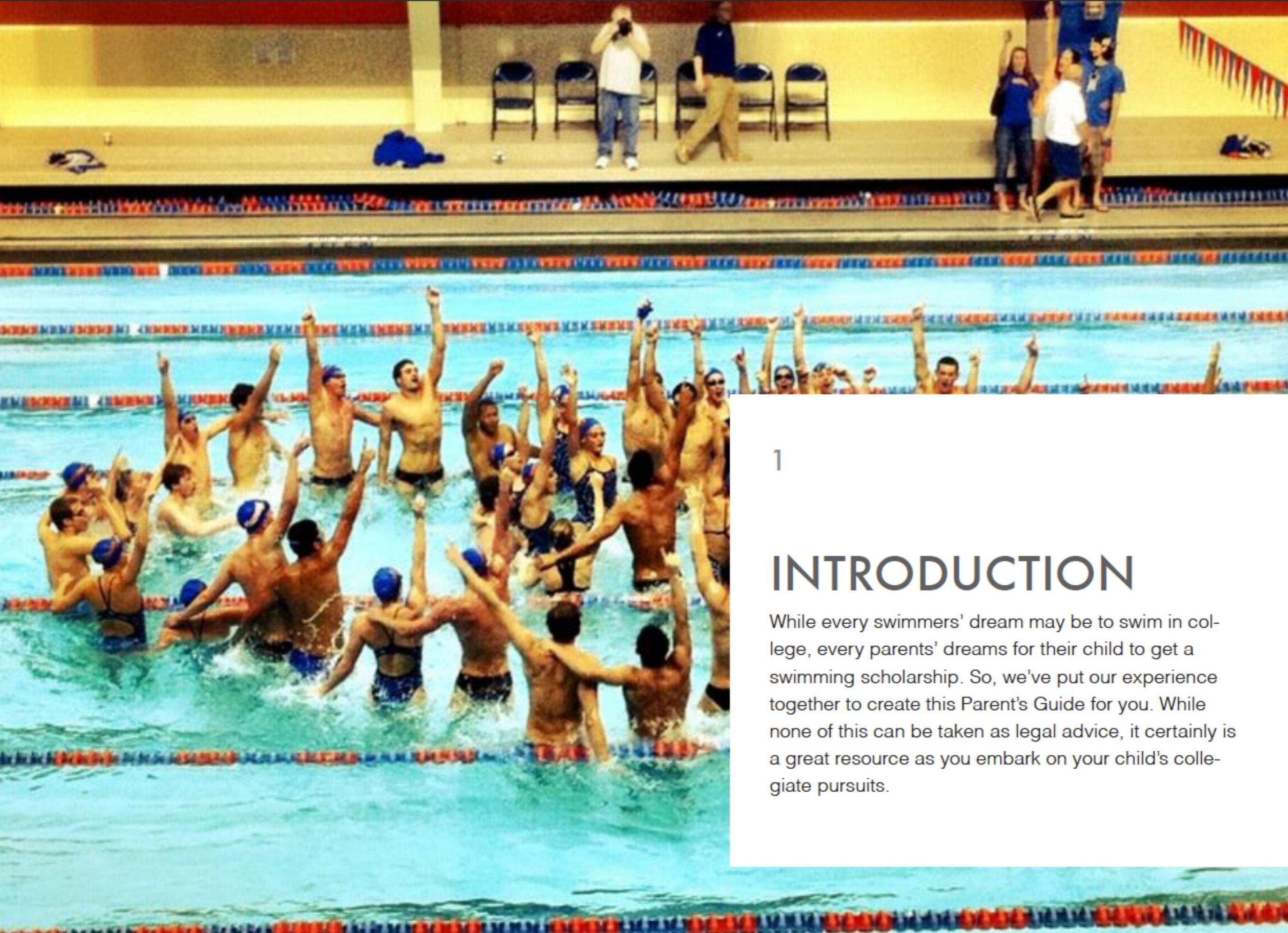
The background image shows an indoor swimming pool facility. In the foreground, several swimmers wearing swim caps and goggles are in the water. The pool is divided into lanes by blue and red lane lines. In the background, a large crowd of spectators is seated in bleachers. A banner with the word "GATOR" is visible on the wall behind the bleachers. The pool area is decorated with red and blue triangular bunting. The ceiling is high with industrial lighting and structural beams.

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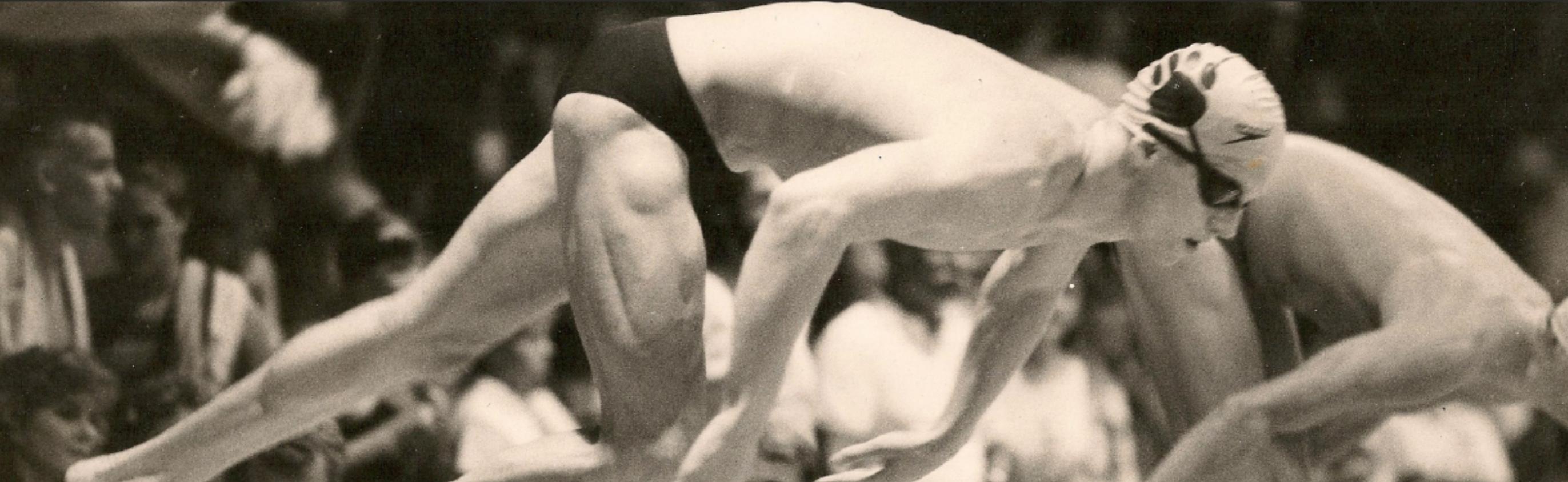
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INTRODUCTION

While every swimmers' dream may be to swim in college, every parents' dreams for their child to get a swimming scholarship. So, we've put our experience together to create this Parent's Guide for you. While none of this can be taken as legal advice, it certainly is a great resource as you embark on your child's collegiate pursuits.



SwimmerJoe at his high school state meet his senior year, before going to swim at the University of Florida.

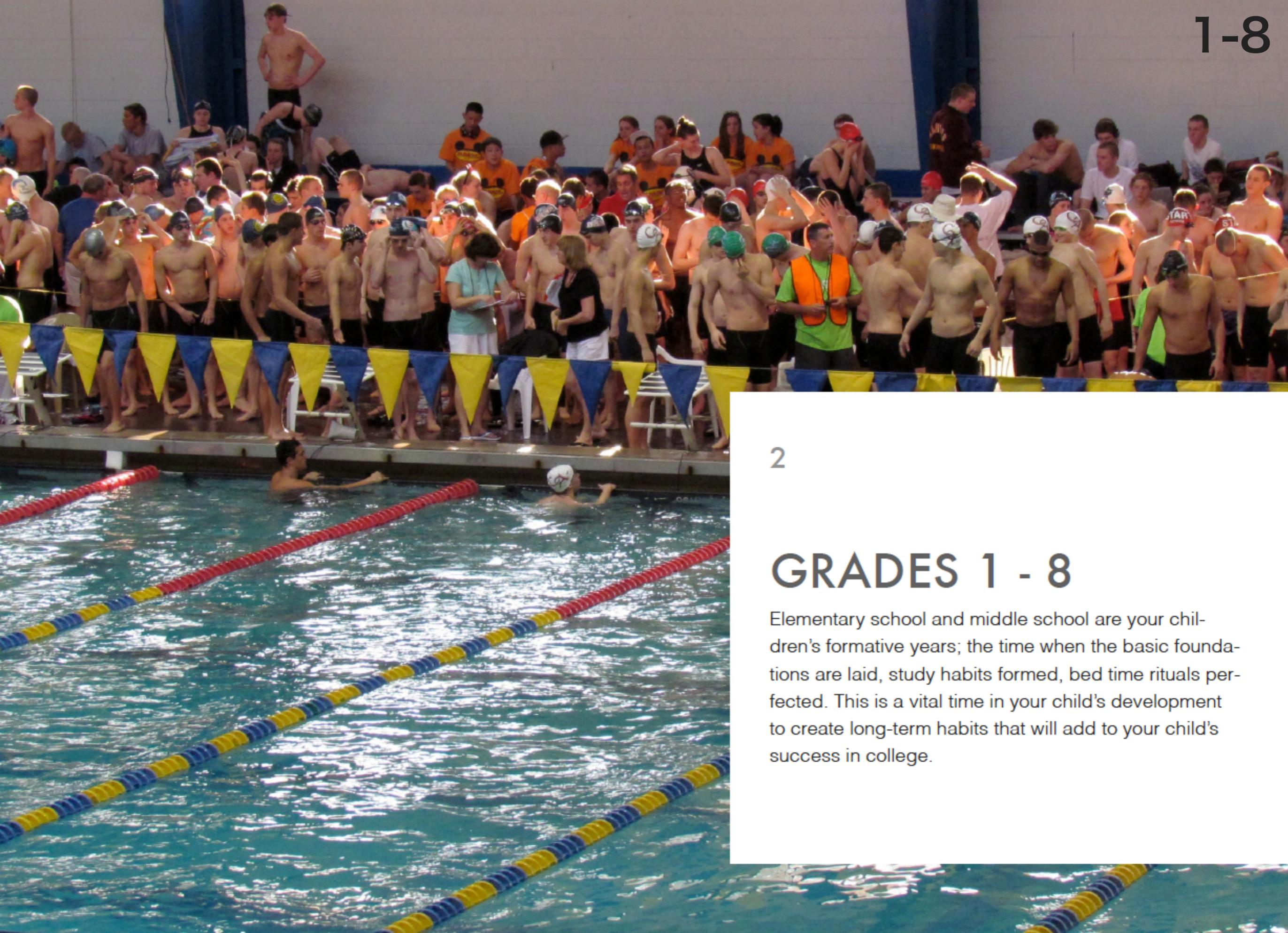
ABOUT THIS GUIDE

We here at Florida Swim Network realize how overwhelming the process of choosing a college can be, and that's even without the added pressure of finding a swim program that will be a good match, too. So, we decided this introductory guide should be a complete package to walk you through the process from first grade and first strokes to accepting a college scholarship.

As a compilation of advice by current swim coaches and educators, some of us have been through the process firsthand, having swum at nationally-ranked Division I schools, while other of us have children who have gone through the process.

We believe in an "it takes a village" approach and strongly encourage you to actively engage and involve your child's current swim coach, teachers, and college counselor. We advise you to discuss everything we cover in this guide with all parties to gain further insight and knowledge. No single resource will have everything you need and cover every situation, but this will give you a good start.

If you find this book helpful, explore the rest of our Swim in College site at Florida Swim Network. We have a searchable directory of over 500 collegiate swim programs and valuable academic resources to aid your journey.



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GRADES 1 - 8

Elementary school and middle school are your children's formative years; the time when the basic foundations are laid, study habits formed, bed time rituals perfected. This is a vital time in your child's development to create long-term habits that will add to your child's success in college.



**"Kids don't remember what you try to teach them. They remember what you are."
- Jim Henson**

SCHOOL

- Help your child learn to love reading by reading books for fun together - a love of reading is one of the most important factors in finding success at college according to Parent Guide Magazine
- Encourage mastery of the basic math facts and problem-solving
- Build strong study skills - create a consistent period of time each day for studying/reviewing
- Be sure to emphasize a regular bedtime routine - sleep is important for success at school

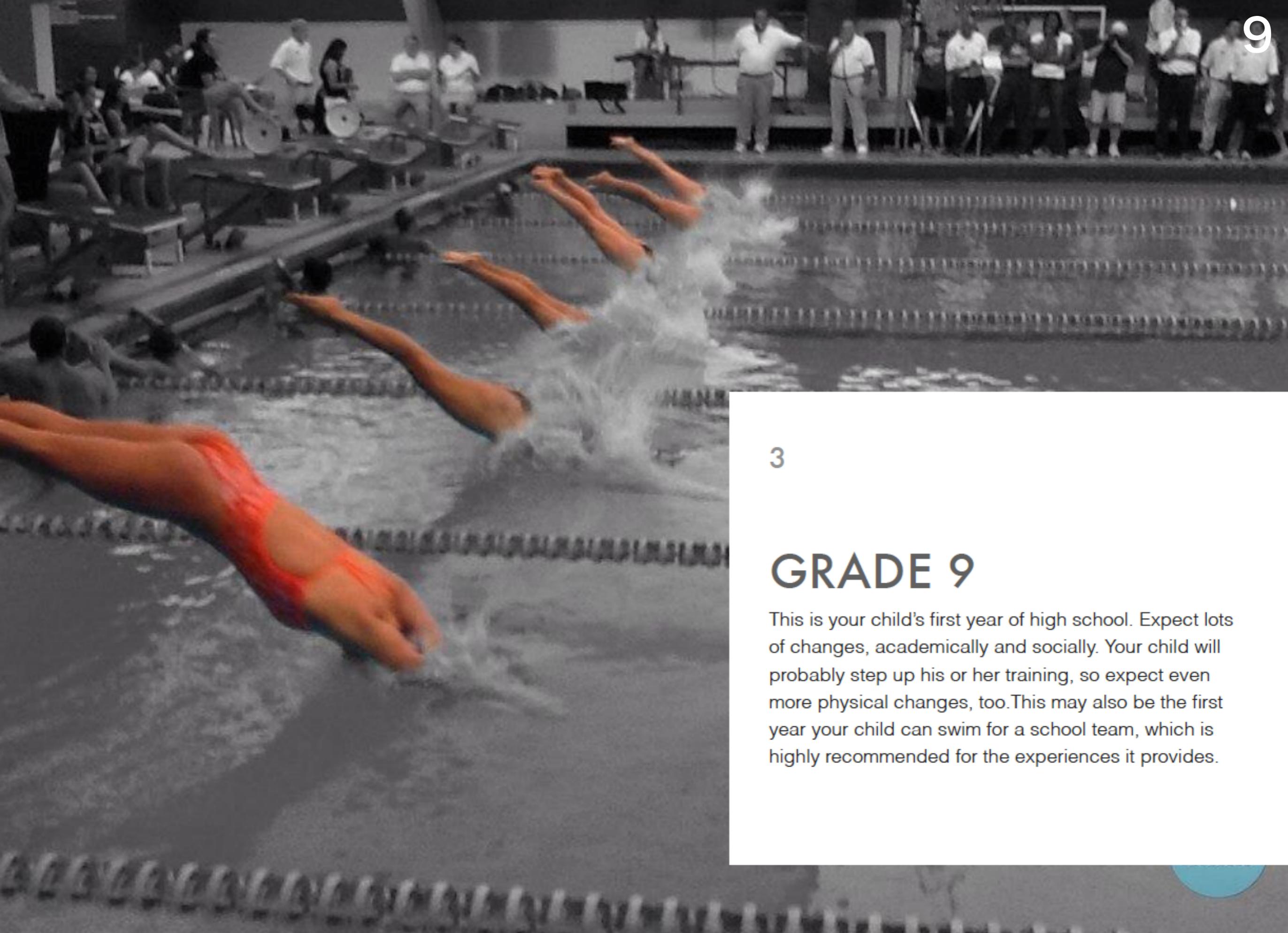
"Reading aloud with children is known to be the single most important activity for building the knowledge and skills they will eventually require for learning to read." - Marilyn Jager Adams



“If you fail to prepare, you’ve prepared to fail” -Mark Spitz

SWIMMING

- Find a swim club and coach that is a good fit for your child
- Master all four strokes
- Be supportive of the coach, rather than overbearing as a “parent-coach”
- Develop a consistent, regular pattern of swim practices each week
 - by minimizing the number of practices missed, you are demonstrating the importance of swimming
- Take appropriate breaks when the coach does - a week off after the big meet of the season, etc. This is just as important as consistency!
- Work on general conditioning through outdoor playing



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GRADE 9

This is your child's first year of high school. Expect lots of changes, academically and socially. Your child will probably step up his or her training, so expect even more physical changes, too. This may also be the first year your child can swim for a school team, which is highly recommended for the experiences it provides.



"Children must be taught how to think, not what to think." - Margaret Mead

SCHOOL

- Remind your child that grades now count toward college admission
- Continue to emphasize reading for fun
- Continue to provide consistent study time each day
- Continue to insist on a reasonable bed time
- Don't stress over little hiccups in the road - there's still a long way to go to college!





“Remember that coach who took a real interest in you as a human being and changed your life - whose lessons you still remember even 20 years later? That’s the type of coach you want for your kids!” - Swim Coaching Brain

SWIMMING

- Talk with the coach to be sure he understands your child's goal to swim in college
- Make sure to continue to race in all four strokes and events to become well-rounded - colleges like this!
- Discuss with your coach whether more dryland or weightlifting is appropriate for your child at this time - it may be too soon yet
- Strive to qualify for the bigger races, but do not stress over missed cuts
- Be at practices - Consistency is still the key
- Be sure to compete for the high school team if one is available - this creates great racing conditions on a weekly basis and provides good recognition for your child
- If possible, see if your child can continue practicing with his or her club coach for consistency of coaching, yet swim meets for the school team.



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GRADE 10

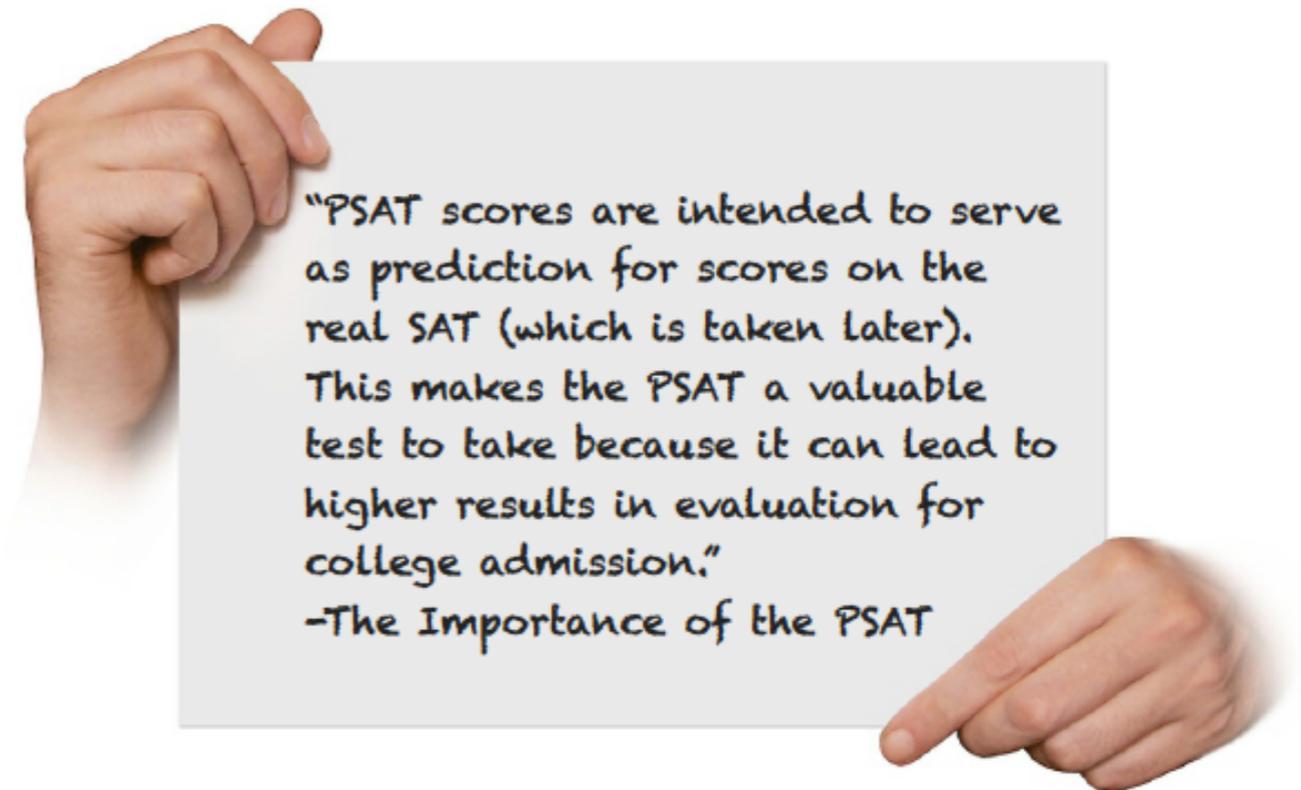
Your child now has a year of high school down, and is now finding his or her groove. Ideally, he or she is really starting to focus on the future. Your child may have even received a few letters from colleges, showing an interest in his or her swimming. Save these letters and be sure to fill out the forms in response, even if you don't think it may be the place your child will ultimately go.



"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." -W.B. Yeats

SCHOOL

- Continue to strive for a strong GPA and take the PSAT
- Plan out which courses will be the best fit for your child - AP, Honors, etc.
- Speak with your child's college counselor for guidance
- Update any academic awards or honors your child receives
- Encourage your child to join a few key organizations if eligible, such as Spanish Honor Society, etc.



"PSAT scores are intended to serve as prediction for scores on the real SAT (which is taken later). This makes the PSAT a valuable test to take because it can lead to higher results in evaluation for college admission."
-The Importance of the PSAT



"Athletes need to enjoy their training. They don't enjoy going down to the track with a coach making them do repetitions until they're exhausted. From enjoyment comes the will to win." - Arthur Lydiard

SWIMMING

- Continue to race in all four strokes
- Discuss with your coach whether more dryland or weightlifting is appropriate for your child at this time - it may be time
- Strive to qualify for the bigger races
- Be at practices - Consistency is still the key
- Be sure to race for the high school team
- Update the list of any swimming honors or outstanding swims for your child
- If your child has found he has begun to specialize in a particular stroke, discuss with his coach how best to maximize this
- Encourage your child to occasionally swim "off" events and different distances in order to continue improving his times across the board - most colleges will ask about all of your child's times, not just the best

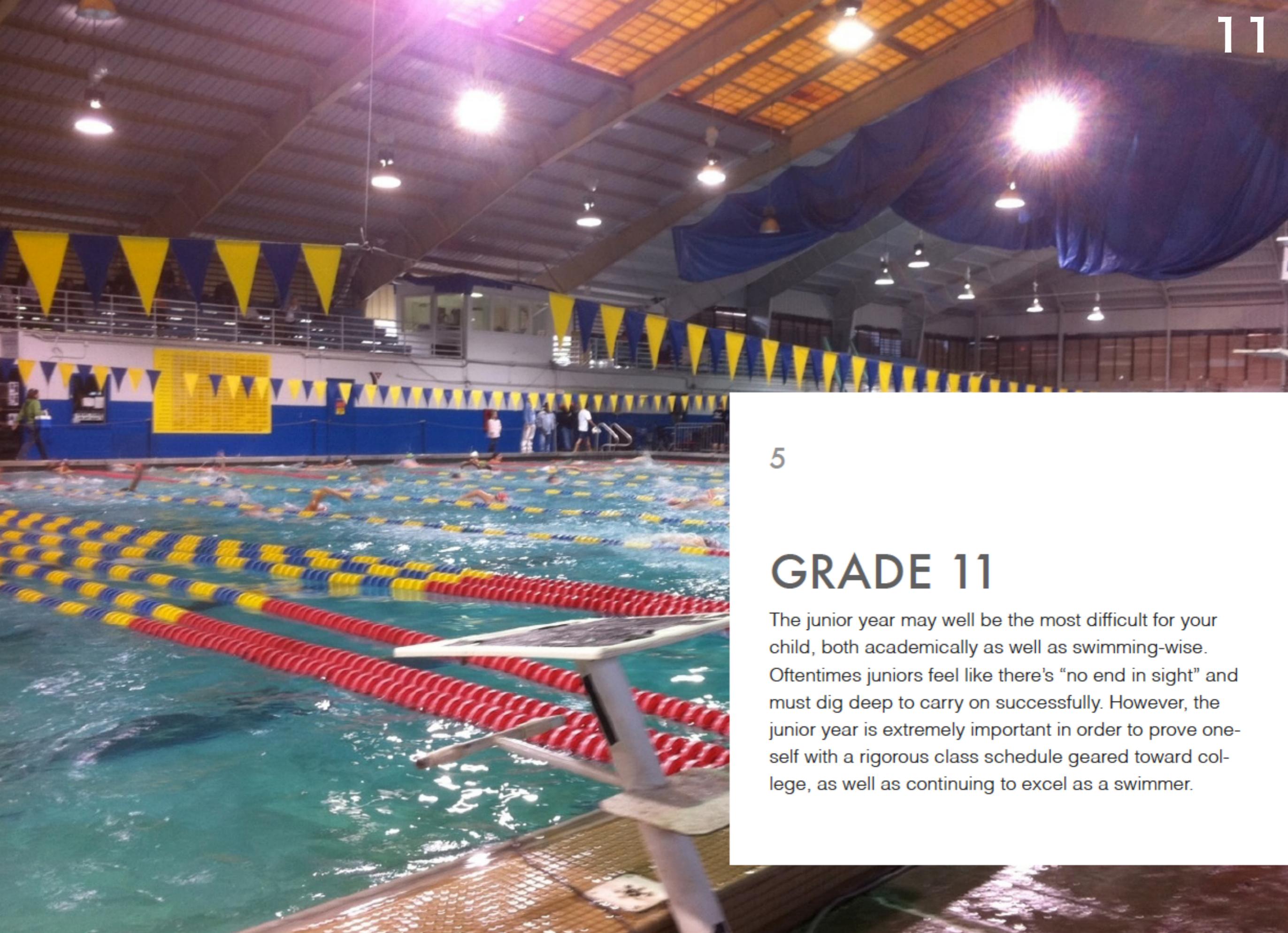


“The American Dream is one of success, home ownership, college education for one's children, and have a secure job to provide these and other goals.” - Leonard Boswell

COLLEGE-ORIENTED

- Register your child with the [NCAA Clearinghouse](#) to make sure your child is eligible to swim in college
- Begin researching colleges and their swim programs - we've got a great guide right here on our site
- Fill out at least 20 College Prospect forms, letting these schools know your child is interested
- Notify both your current swim coach and college counselor of the colleges chosen
- Your child may begin to receive brochures for camps and questionnaires
- You may visit as many colleges as you like but may have no contact with the college swim coach

You must register your child with the NCAA Clearinghouse as a first step to being recruited!



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GRADE 11

The junior year may well be the most difficult for your child, both academically as well as swimming-wise. Oftentimes juniors feel like there's "no end in sight" and must dig deep to carry on successfully. However, the junior year is extremely important in order to prove one-self with a rigorous class schedule geared toward college, as well as continuing to excel as a swimmer.



"Instruction does much, but encouragement everything." - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

SCHOOL

- Continue to strive for a strong GPA and PSAT
- Continue to carefully plan out which courses will be the best fit for your child
- Stay in-touch with your child's college counselor for guidance
- Update any academic awards or honors your child receives
- Leverage volunteer work to help your child stand out - the required hours to graduate high school varies by state

*"If a PSAT score is below 50, consider a tutor or a prep course to help improve it."
- Kaplan Test Prep*



“Take a limitation and turn it into an opportunity. Take an opportunity and turn it into an adventure by dreaming BIG!” - Jo Franz

COLLEGE-ORIENTED

- Take the PSAT as a measure of where your child is - this year's PSAT can lead to Merritt Scholarships
- Narrow down the list of colleges interested in to 10
- Have your child email the coach at each college swim program to show interest - be sure to cc your child's current swim coach so he or she is kept in the loop
- Notify the college counselor of the colleges narrowed down to
- If possible, go visit the potential colleges in person - this may eliminate some colleges when they are not what was expected in person
- Your child can begin to receive recruiting material and information from the coach on September 1st
- AFTER YOUR JUNIOR YEAR - Your child can receive one call per week from a college coach and can meet with a college coach off-campus starting July 1st

THE COMMON APPLICATION

For Undergraduate College Admission

APPLICATION TIPS

- Over 500 colleges use the Common App as their main application
- Many students begin to start the Common Application the summer after their junior year
- You can make changes as often as you like up until the time you submit it
- Don't rush to finish -- ideally you have months to consider your answers

Volunteer Work

Many colleges like to see volunteer work dedicated to a single cause over a significant period of time.

Consider this when planning your volunteer time. Find a cause you truly believe in and then work to support it.



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GRADE 12

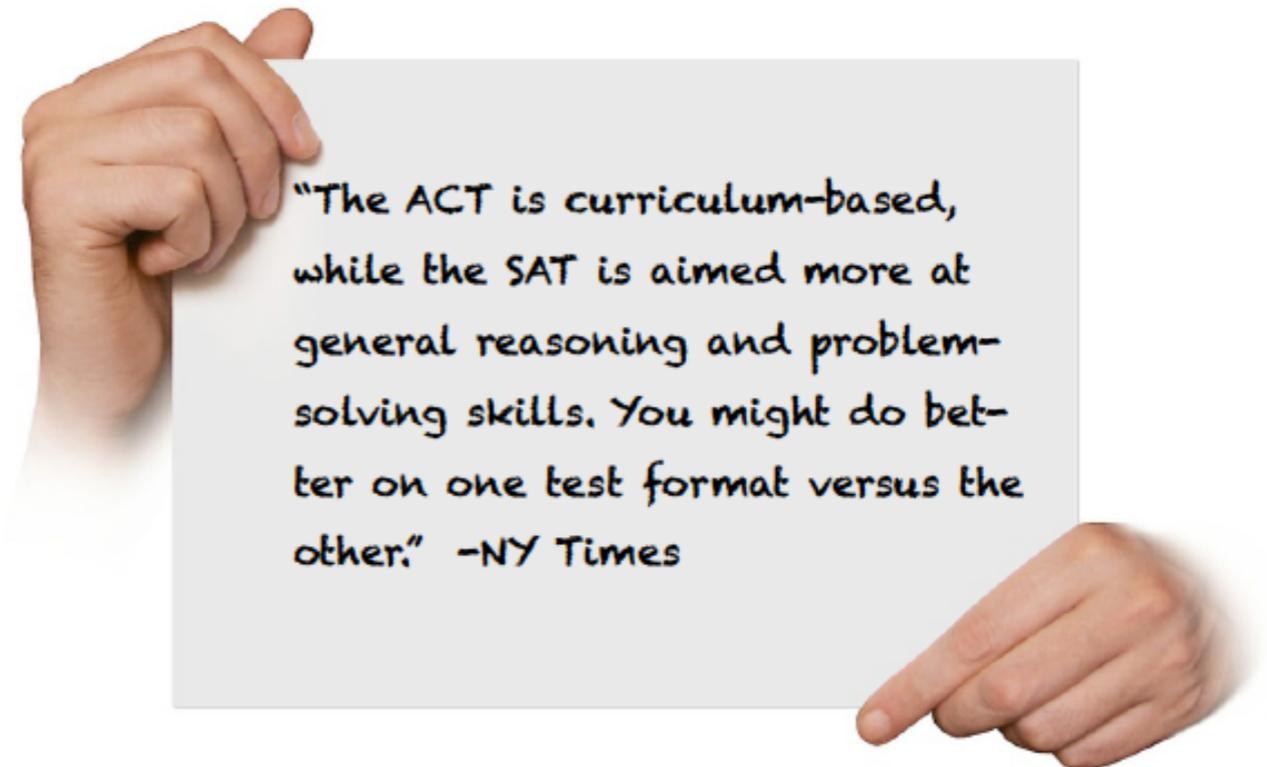
Ideally this will be a year of successes for your child, a final culmination of his or her hard work and consistent efforts. Be sure to take time to not only recognize but also celebrate your child as the young man or woman he or she has grown into and applaud their strong work ethic. Take time to enjoy your child before he or she heads off for college.



"I'd compare college tuition to paying for a personal trainer at an athletic club. We professors play the roles of trainers, giving people access to the equipment (books, labs, our expertise) and after that, it is our job to be demanding." - Randy Pausch

SCHOOL

- Continue to strive for a strong GPA, all the way until June!
- Strive to get as high a score as possible on the SAT and or ACT - discuss with your child's college counselor as to which might be more advantageous for your child to take
- Stay in-touch with your child's college counselor for guidance
- Update any academic awards or honors your child receives
- Continue to leverage volunteer work to help your child stand out - the required hours to graduate high school varies by state



"The ACT is curriculum-based, while the SAT is aimed more at general reasoning and problem-solving skills. You might do better on one test format versus the other." -NY Times



SWIMMING

- Continue to race in all four strokes and to work on technique and the basics
- Discuss with your coach whether more dryland or weightlifting is appropriate for your child at this time - it may be time
- Strive to qualify for the bigger races - college coaches will be looking to see which races your child qualifies for
- Be at practices - Consistency is still the key
- Be sure to race for the high school team
- Update the list of any swimming honors or outstanding swims for your child
- If your child specializes in a stroke, be sure to let the college coaches know

“The hardest skill to acquire in this sport is the one where you compete all out, give it all you have, and you are still getting beat no matter what you do. When you have the killer instinct to fight through that, it is very special. All great swimmers have that skill.” -Eddie Reese



“Perhaps the most valuable result of all education is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do, whether you like it or not.” -Thomas Henry Huxley

COLLEGE-ORIENTED

- Take the SAT - remember colleges applied to will receive this information
- Narrow down the list of colleges interested in to 5
- Have your child continue to email the coach at each college swim program to show interest - be sure to cc your child's current swim coach so he or she is kept in the loop
- Notify the college counselor of the colleges narrowed down to
- Pay attention to college admission application dates - do not miss these!
- Your child can receive material and information from the college coach
- A college coach can call your child once per week starting July 1st and can meet your child in person three times



APPLICATION TIPS

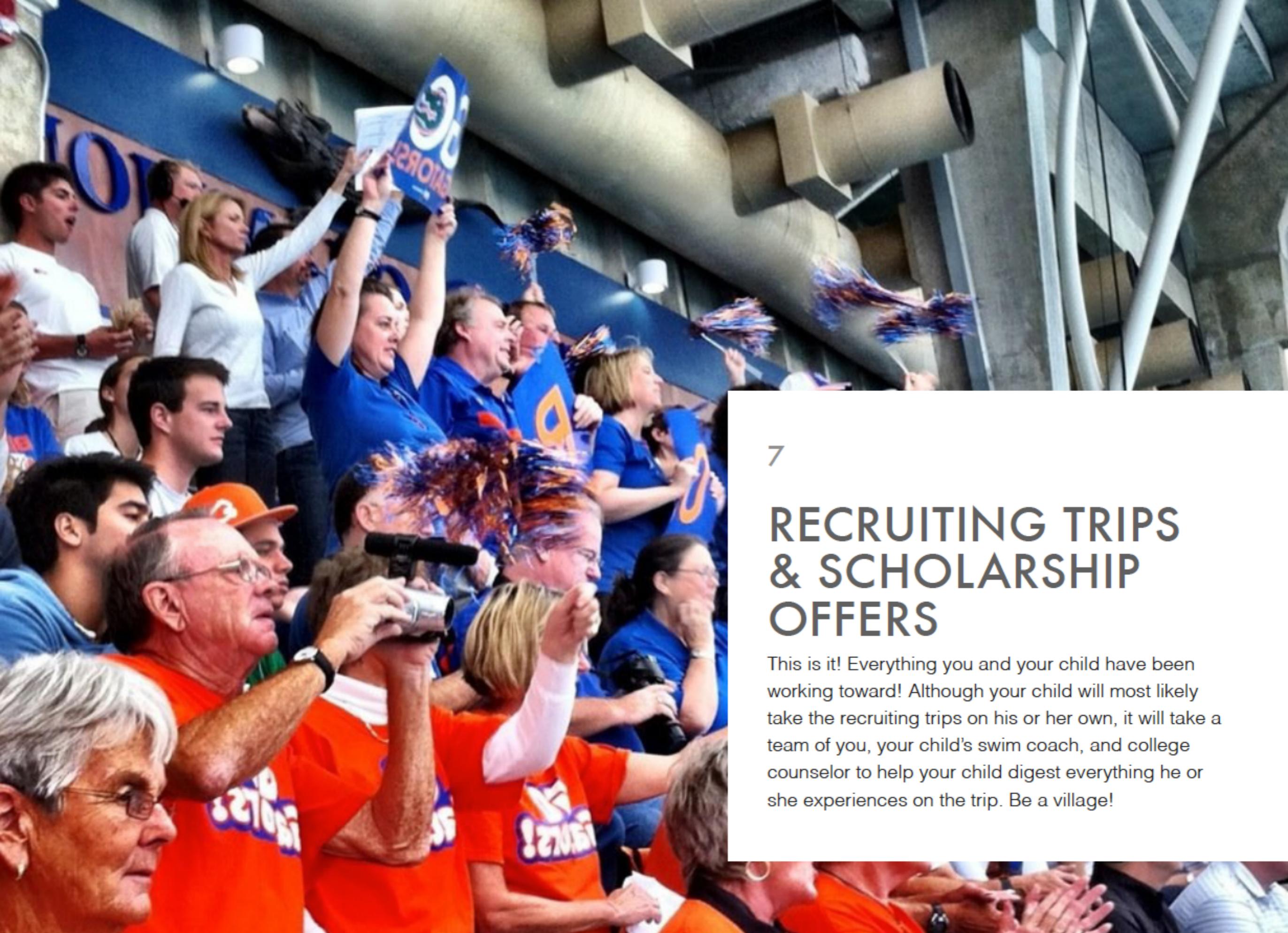
- Be sure to proofread your application several times to avoid any unnecessary mistakes
- Research the school before you write your essay - try to align your goals with their stated mission in order to show why you would be a good fit
- Don't underestimate the importance of a strong application, even if you are a top swimmer
- Pay attention to deadlines, fees, and making sure your tests cores are sent in, too

More than a Swimmer

No matter how strong a swimmer you are, schools want to see a well-rounded student who will contribute to the student body.

Emphasize your strengths out of the pool, too.





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RECRUITING TRIPS & SCHOLARSHIP OFFERS

This is it! Everything you and your child have been working toward! Although your child will most likely take the recruiting trips on his or her own, it will take a team of you, your child's swim coach, and college counselor to help your child digest everything he or she experiences on the trip. Be a village!



“We really like the good swimmers that express a sincere interest in our program. We are happy to look at them. We don’t want anyone to slip by.” - NCSA Athletic Recruiting

RECRUITING TRIPS

- Starting senior year, your child can start official visits on the opening day of classes.
- Your child can get one official visit per college and a maximum of 5 visits to D1, and unlimited visits to D2, D3 and NAIA schools
- Encourage your child to visit a variety of schools - Division I is not always best
- Have your child discuss a recruiting trip with his current coach both before and after the trip
- Remember manners - have your child follow up with a thank you email to the coaching staff for all recruiting trips
- For more information from the NCAA on Recruiting Trips, [click here](#).



"You can't put a limit on anything. The more you dream, the farther you get." -Michael Phelps

SCHOLARSHIP OFFERS

- Congratulations if your child receives an offer in writing - this is something to be celebrated!
- Offers come in all shapes and sizes, including athletic grants-in-aid, books-only, partial, academic, to quite often combinations, etc.
- Do not feel obligated to take the first offer that comes along - you have time to consider all offers
- Colleges will offer the best they can do for your child based on their resources. It is never appropriate to reveal what other schools are offering no matter what the movies show!

- Choose the college, swim program, and scholarship offering that is the best fit for your child's needs and desires

"By signing a National Letter of Intent (NLI), a future NCAA student-athlete ends the recruiting process with all other NLI institutions and commits to a school for one year. In return, the student-athlete is guaranteed a one-year scholarship from that school. The NLI seeks to limit recruiting pressure but signing one is not a required step to earning an athletic scholarship."
-NCAA.org



Scholarship Application

OTHER SCHOLARSHIPS

- **FAFSA** is Federal Student Aid available to all US residents
- Some states award merit money for students with good grades that stay in state
- Seek out swim specific scholarships provided by private organizations - [click here to see a list](#)
- Look for scholarships based by state - [click here to see a list](#)

Slim Chances

Less than 2% of high school athletes receive a full ride. Most sports, including swimming, divide their allotted scholarship money between several athletes.

This is why academics and other scholarship opportunities are important.





Be sure to visit [MyCollife.com](https://www.MyCollife.com) to create a free account to help you determine which schools will help you reach your dreams.

MORE CONSIDERATIONS

- Dormitory fees, food plans, and books are added on top of tuition expenses - [click here for a college expense calculator](#)
- Not all college swimmers compete for all four years, so be sure the school is a good fit without the swimming
- Chances are your child will not be a professional swimmer - look for schools that will provide opportunities to jumpstart his or her career
- Keep in mind the final decision must be your child's - he or she is the one who has to attend the school and compete for the next four years - give time for the decision to be made

MORE RESOURCES

We have teamed with [MyCollife](https://www.MyCollife.com), the leader in helping students find the right-fit school based on their personality and needs.

By creating a free account, your child can determine career choices, associated majors, corresponding classes to take, and which schools will best provide them with a quality education.

