

# Why Should My Child Be a Swimmer?

- As posted on the USA Swimming Website

1. Swimming is an outstanding activity for young people.
2. Swimming promotes fitness and teaches a child to strive for physical achievement. Many super-starts in other sports started out as swimmers and gained strength and coordination that helped them to excel.
3. Swimming is an exciting individual and team sport.
4. Swimming is a technical and specialized activity involving extensive skill development.
5. Swimming is a healthy "lifetime" activity. Participants may be 1 or 101 years old.
6. Swimming is relatively injury free in comparison to other youth sports.
7. Swimming teaches the life lessons of sport and sportsmanship which include learning to deal with winning and losing, as well as working with officials, teammates and coaches.
8. Swimming motivates participants to strive for self improvement and teaches goal orientation.
9. Swimming cultivates a positive mental attitude and high self-esteem.
10. Swimming can prevent drowning.

Did you know?

Drowning is a leading killer of American children.

In ethnic communities, drowning rates are nearly three times the national average.

More than 30% of kids are at risk for obesity-related illnesses.

Swimming is a cure.

## Key Questions

While winning is nice, while setting a record, getting a best time, or making a qualifying time feels good, we hope that our young athletes learn more than "it is great to swim fast". No where in human history or theology do we learn that the ability to swim fast holds a very high priority in the grand scheme of the universe. From a practical standpoint, over-emphasis on speed, times and achievements will eventually end in frustration. No matter how fast a young athlete swims, there will probably be another swimmer in the next town, state, or country, swimmer faster, if not now, then next month. So as coaches and parents, ask yourselves:

- Did the child learn to swim with more skill this past season so he or she is both stronger and safer in the water?
- Did the child learn to exhibit initiative, wanting to come to the pool and do the practice with having to be constantly pushed or prodded by parents and coaches?
- Did the child learn something about unselfishness, sacrificing his or her personal wants for the good of others or the team?
- Did the child benefit from the competitive experience, learning how to handle winning and losing in our competitive society?
- Did the child learn more patience in overcoming obstacles, setbacks and problems?
- Did the child learn empathy

In a few years, the medals and ribbons will be laid aside and best times will be a hazy memory. The friendships that will develop and the life skills learned will carry on for a lifetime.