

# The 10 Commandments for Swim Parents



## 1. THOU SHALT BE SUPPORTIVE NO MATTER WHAT.

There is only one question to ask your child— “Did you have fun?” If meets and practices are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate. Your job is to support, love and hug your child no matter what

## 2. THOU SHALT ONLY HAVE POSITIVE THINGS TO SAY AT A SWIM MEET.

If you are going to show up at a swim meet, you should cheer and applaud, but NEVER criticize your child, coach or officials.

## 3. THOU SHALT NOT CRITICIZE THE OFFICIALS.

If you do not have the time or the desire to volunteer as an official, do NOT criticize those who are doing the best they can. Officials are to be treated with respect, just like every other participant!

## 4. THOU SHALT NOT COACH YOUR CHILD.

You have taken your child to professional coaches! Do not undermine them by trying to coach your child on the side. The coach is responsible for the technical part of the job, you should not offer advice on technique or race strategy. This is not your area and will only serve to confuse your child and prevent a swimmer/coach bond from forming.

## 6. HONOR THY CHILD’S COACH.

The bond between coach and swimmer is a special one, and one that contributes to your child’s success as well as fun! Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child— it will only serve to hurt your child’s swimming.

## 5. THOU SHALT ACKNOWLEDGE THY CHILD’S FEARS.

A first swim meet, 500 free or 200 IM can be a stressful situation. It is totally appropriate for your child to be scared. Don’t yell or belittle, just assure your child that the coach would not have suggested the event if your child were not ready to compete in it!

## 7. THOU SHALT NOT IMPOSE YOUR AMBITIONS ON THY CHILD.

Remember that swimming is your child’s activity. Improvements and progress occur at different rates for each individual. Don’t judge your child’s progress based on the performance of other athletes and don’t push them based on what you think they should be doing. The nice thing about swimming is that every person can strive to do their personal best.

## 8. THY CHILD SHALT HAVE GOALS BESIDES WINNING.

Giving an honest effort regardless of the outcome is much more important than winning. One Olympian said “My goal was to set a world record. Well, I did that, but someone else did it too, just a little faster than I did. I achieved my goal and I lost. This does not make me a failure, in fact, I am very proud of that swim.”

## 9. THOU SHALT NOT JUMP FROM TEAM TO TEAM.

The water isn’t necessarily bluer at the other teams’ pool. Every team has its own internal problems, even teams that build champions. Children who switch from team to team are often ostracized for a long, long time my the teammates they leave behind. Often times, swimmers who do switch teams never do better than they did before they sought bluer water.

## 10. THOU SHALT NOT EXPECT THY CHILD TO BECOME AN OLYMPIAN.

There are 225,000 athletes in USA Swimming. There are only 52 spots available for the Olympic Team every 4 years. Your child’s odds of becoming an Olympian are 1 in 4,300. Swimming is much more than just the Olympics. Ask your coach why he/she coaches. Chances are he/she was not an Olympian, but still got enough out of swimming that they want to pass that love for the sport onto others. Swimming teaches self-discipline and sportsmanship; it builds self esteem and fitness; it provides lifelong friendships and much more. Most Olympians will tell you that these intangibles far outweigh any medal that may have won. Swimming builds good people and you should be happy your child wants to participate!