

(adapted from Ed Clendaniel's 10 Commandments for Little League Parents)

## TOP 10 SWIMMING PARENT TIPS

### 1. **Don't impose your ambitions on your 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 him based on what you think he should be doing. The nice thing about swimming is every person can strive to do his personal best and benefit from the process of competitive swimming.

### 2. **Be supportive no matter what.**

There is only one question to ask your child after a practice or a competition - "Did you have fun?" If meets and practices are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate.

### 3. **Don't coach your child.**

You are involved in one of the few youth sports programs that offer professional coaching. Do not undermine the professional coach by trying to coach your child on the side. Your job is to provide love and support. The coach is responsible for the technical part of the job. You should not offer advice on technique or race strategy. Never pay your child for a performance. This will only serve to confuse your child concerning the reasons to strive for excellence and weaken the swimmer/coach bond.

### 4. **Only have positive things to say at a swimming meet.**

Encouraging and never criticize your child, your child's coach will give advice on how to improve next time.

### 5. **Acknowledge your child's fears.**

New experiences can be stressful situations. It is totally appropriate for your child to be scared. Encourage them to give new things a go, don't always allow them to back away from facing their fears, or they will never conquer them. Don't yell or belittle, just assure your child that the coach would not have suggested the event or meet if your child was not ready. Remember your job is to love and support your child through all of the swimming experience.

### 6. **Don't criticize the officials.**

Please don't criticize those who are doing the best they can in purely voluntary positions. Don't criticize the way the meet is being run, the people running it are doing the best they can, instead look for ways you can help.

### 7. **Honor your child's coach.**

The bond between coach and swimmer is special. It contributes to your child's success as well as fun. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child.

### 8. **Always be loyal and supportive of your team.**

Remember "yelling at" is not the same as "cheering for". Ensure your child wears the teams uniform at swim meets, and parents should support their team by wearing team colors also..

### 9. **Encourage your child to have goals besides winning.**

Most successful swimmers have learned to focus on the process and not the outcome. Giving an honest effort regardless of what the outcome is 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. Does this make me a failure? No, in fact I am very proud of that swim." What a tremendous outlook to carry on through life.

### 10. **Do not expect your child to become an Olympian.**

There are 250,000 athletes in USA Swimming. There are only 52 spots available for the Olympic Team every four years. Your child's odds of becoming an Olympian are about .0002%.