

## Swimming Parents,

This is my attempt to avoid some pitfalls of being a swimming parent.

Swimming is a sport that your children do. You are the ones who provide emotional support, encouragement, financial support and confidence. You are not the swim coach you are the parent. You did not put your children into swimming to live your dreams through them. In swimming, like life, there are going to be ups and downs, successes and failures and unfortunately they are not always within your control. You must learn to take the good with the bad.

Questions, comments or concerns should be addressed to your coach at the appropriate time. Unsuitable times would be during practice or on deck at a swim meet when the coach is occupied with the swimmers. Swim coaches while on deck are working. This would be the same as if somebody approached you at your place of work and began having a conversation with you. Ask the coach if they have time to chat before or after practice. If you need to email your coach you should always expect a response from them. This is probably the best way to get in contact with your coach if it is not urgent. Remember your coach does not work on-call. Please contact them only at provided numbers or email addresses.

Please do not spread gossip and rumours amongst parents in the stands. Last season, there was too much gossip and not enough factual information taking place between parents. If you want to know the answer to a question you should talk to your coach or Director of Swimming. If you feel something has gone wrong or not in the way you thought please speak with your coach at the appropriate time and place. Coaches are human and will make mistakes. Please believe we are trying to do the best for your children. If a mistake or problem occurs please try and solve it and not complain.

Swimmers in the club will progress at different rates. Some swimmers will be much more skilled and advanced at a young age while other swimmers will progress faster as they get older, stronger, more skilled or more coordinated. This is not any different than any other sport, school, arts or music. Please do not compare and compete openly with other parents and children. Competition is healthy if you do it properly and not in an in-your-face way. We have had situations where parents and swimmers are not competing in a healthy manner. Some swimmers will go to be the best in the world, some swimmers will make club records, BC records, make Nationals, make AAA's etc. Accomplishments should be celebrated and not looked down upon or talked negatively about at home or at swim meets or in workouts. Every swimmer is an individual. Specific circumstances will be treated differently depending on the specific needs of the swimmer. In swimming there are no cookie cutter treatments or prescriptions for success.

Please let your coach coach while you be the parent. If you do want to coach please take your NCCP level one theory, technical & practical and you may get hired? At home ask about swimming, support your child, tell them if they work hard, race hard and are excited about swimming they will achieve their goals. Support your child and be a parent and leave the coaching to the coach! The coach will be a good guy some days and a bad guy other days. Just support your swimmers and communicate with the coach.

Do not bribe swimmers. An occasional reward is ok but swimmers do not need a reward every meet. T-shirts, money, privileges lose meaning if they are given at every meet. Swimming well, swimming fast should come from within the swimmer. Swimming is like life, you cannot get bribed for school nor work.

Swimming is a small part of a person's life. It can be a very rewarding, fulfilling, confidence building sport should you allow it to be.

This club will NOT tolerate parents who are not supportive of the coaches and the club. Fees will be returned and swimmers and parents will be asked to leave the club should behaviour unbecoming to the betterment of the club and club members.

Thank you

Brian Metcalfe  
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News For

# SWIM PARENTS

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The Ten Commandments For Parents Of Athletic Children

Reprinted from The Young Athlete by Bill Burgess

- 1- Make sure your child knows that win or lose, scared or heroic, you love him, appreciate his efforts, and are not disappointed in him. This will allow him to do his best without a fear of failure. Be the person in his life he can look to for constant positive enforcement.
- 2- Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic ability, his competitive attitude, his sportsmanship, and his actual skill level.
- 3- Be helpful but don't coach him on the way to the pool or on the way to the pool or on the way back or at breakfast, and so on. It's tough not to, but it's a lot tougher for the child to be inundated with advice, pep talks and often critical instruction.
- 4- teach him to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying", to be working to improve his swimming skills and attitudes. Help him to develop the feel for competing, for trying hard, for having fun.
- 5- Try not to re-live your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure; you lost as well as won. You were frightened, you blacked off at times, you were not always heroic. Don't pressure your child because of your pride. Athletic children need their parents so you must not withdraw. Just remember there is a thinking, feeling, sensitive free spirit out there in that uniform who needs a lot of understanding, especially when his word turns bad. If he is comfortable with you win or lose; he's on his way to maximum achievement and enjoyment.
- 6- Don't compete with the coach. If the coach becomes an authority figure, it will run from enchantment to disenchantment...with your athlete.
- 7- Don't compare the skill, courage, or attitudes of your child with other members of the team, at least within his hearing.
- 8- Get to know the coach so that you can be assured that his philosophy, attitudes, ethics and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under his leadership.
- 9- Always remember that children tend to exaggerate both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before over-reacting.
- 10- Make a point of understanding courage, and the fact that it is relative. Some of us can climb mountains, and are afraid to fight, but turn to jelly if a bee approaches. Everyone is frightened in certain areas. Explain that courage is not the absence of fear, but a means of doing something in spite of fear of discomfort.  
The job of the parent of an athletic child is a tough one, and it takes a lot of effort to do it well. It is worth all the effort when you hear your child say, "My parents really helped and I was lucky in this respect"