

Why Swim?

The USA Swimming (USAS) age group swimming program is America's largest program of guided fitness activity for children. Age group swimming builds a strong foundation for a lifetime of good health by teaching healthy fitness habits.

1. Physical Development

Many physicians consider swimming the ideal activity for developing muscular and skeletal growth. Why do doctors like it so much?

- **Swimming develops high quality aerobic endurance, the most important key to physical fitness. Unlike other sports, where an hour of practice may yield as little as 10 minutes of meaningful exercise, swimming practices provide sustained aerobic conditioning.**
- **Swimming provides proportional muscular development by using all the body's major muscle groups.**
- **Swimming enhances children's natural flexibility at a time when they ordinarily begin to lose it by exercising all of their major joints through a full range of motion.**
- **Swimming helps develop superior coordination because it requires combinations of complex movements of all parts of the body, enhancing harmonious muscle function, grace, and fluidity of movement.**
- **Swimming is the most injury-free of all children's sports.**
- **Swimming is a sport that will bring fitness and enjoyment for life. Participants in Master's Swimming programs still train and race well into their 80s.**

2. Intellectual Competence

In addition to physical development, children can develop greater intellectual competence by participating in a guided program of physical activity. Learning and using swimming skills engages the thinking processes. As they learn new techniques, children must develop and

plan movement sequences. They improve by exploring new ideas. They learn that greater progress results from using their creative talents.

3. Preparation For Life

One of the great values of swimming as a sport is that it prepares one for life. The total swimming experience is made up of people, attitudes, beliefs, work habits, fitness, health, winning and losing, and much more. Swimmers learn to deal with pressure and stress, success and failure, teamwork and discipline.

Swimming is a self-achievement activity. There is only one person in the water in a given lane in any race. The responsibility for performance ultimately lies with the individual. How well the individual has prepared physically and mentally to a large degree determines the performance level.

By learning how to handle frustration and disappointment, swimmers gain confidence. They learn dedication and commitment. Through perseverance, swimmers learn to overcome adversity. All of these experiences tend to develop individuals who are better able to handle life's hardships and face problems.

Swimmers must learn that not all people are born with the same natural talents. They learn to emphasize their given talents and skills. Swimmers learn that if they do their best, then there are no failures. They learn to set realistic goals for themselves which they will achieve through hard work.