

# **SUPPORTING YOUR SWIMMER**

## **Parents Guide to Age Group Swimming**

### **Swim Meet/Practice Do's & Don't's...**

#### **DO FOR YOURSELF:**

1. Get vicarious pleasure from your children's participation, but do not become overly ego-involved.
2. Try to enjoy yourself at competitions. Your unhappiness can cause your child to feel guilty.
3. Look relaxed, calm, positive, and energized when watching your child compete. Your attitude influences how your child feels and performs.

#### **DON'T FOR YOURSELF:**

1. Base your self-esteem and ego on the success of your child's sports participation
2. Care too much about how your child performs
3. Lose perspective about the importance of your child's sports participation

#### **DO WITH OTHER PARENTS:**

1. Make friends with other parents at events. Socializing can make the event more fun for you.
2. Volunteer as much as you can. Youth sports depend upon the time and energy of involved parents.
3. Police your own ranks: Work with other parents to ensure that all parents behave appropriately at practices and competitions.

#### **DON'T WITH OTHER PARENTS:**

1. Make enemies of other parents or teams
2. Talk about others in the swimming community (teams, swimmers, parents, coaches)

#### **DO WITH COACHES:**

1. Leave the coaching to the coaches
2. Give them any support they need to help them do their jobs better
3. Communicate with them about your child. You can learn about your child from each other.
4. Inform them of relevant issues at home that might affect your child at practice.
5. Inquire about the progress of your children. You have a right to know.
6. Make the coaches your allies.

#### **DON'T WITH COACHES:**

1. Interfere with their coaching during practice or competitions.
2. Work against them. Make sure you agree philosophically and practically on why your child is playing sports and what he or she may get out of sports.

#### **DO FOR YOUR CHILDREN:**

1. Provide guidance for your children, but do not force or pressure them.
2. Assist them in setting realistic goals for participation.
3. Emphasize fun, skill development and other benefits (cooperation, competition, self-discipline, commitment).
4. Show interest in their participation: help them get to practice on time, attend

- competitions, ask questions.
5. Provide a healthy perspective to help children understand success and failure.
  6. Emphasize and reward effort rather than results.
  7. Intervene if your child's behavior is unacceptable during practice or competitions.
  8. Understand that your child may need a break from sports occasionally.
  9. Give swimmer space when needed. Part of sports participation involves them figuring things out for themselves.
  10. Keep a sense of humor. If you are having fun and laughing, so will your child.
  11. Provide regular encouragement.
  12. Be a healthy role model for your child by being positive & relaxed at meets, and by having balance in your life.
  13. GIVE THEM UNCONDITIONAL LOVE WHETHER THEY WIN OR LOSE!!!

#### **DON'T FOR YOUR CHILDREN:**

1. Expect your children to get anything more from their sports than a good time, physical fitness, mastery and love of a lifetime sport and transferable life skills.
2. Ignore your child's bad behavior in practice or competitions.
3. Ask the child to talk with you immediately after a competition.
4. Show negative emotions while watching them perform.
5. Make your child feel guilty for the time, energy and money you are spending and the sacrifices you are making.
6. Think of your child's sports participation as an investment for which you expect a return.
7. Live out your own dreams through your child's sports participation.
8. Compare your child's progress with that of other children.
9. Badger, harass, use sarcasm, threaten or use fear to motivate your child. It only demeans them and causes them to dislike you.
10. Expect anything from your child except their best effort.
11. EVER DO ANYTHING THAT WILL CAUSE THEM TO THINK LESS OF THEMSELVES OR OF YOU!

#### **YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD BECOME A STRONG COMPETITOR/SWIMMER BY...**

1. Emphasizing and rewarding effort rather than outcome.
2. Understanding that your child may need a break from sports occasionally.
3. Encouraging and guiding your child, not forcing or pressuring them to compete.
4. Emphasizing the importance of learning and transferring life skills such as hard work. Self-discipline, teamwork, and commitment.
5. Emphasizing the importance of having fun, learning new skills, and developing skills.
6. Showing interest in their participation in sports, asking questions.
7. Giving your child some space when needed. Allow children to figure things out for themselves.
8. Keeping a sense of humor. If you are having fun, so will your child.
9. Giving unconditional love and support to your child, regardless of the outcome of the day's competition.
10. Realizing that your attitude and behaviors influences your child's performance.

#### **DON'T...**

1. Live your dreams through your child.
2. Do anything that will cause your child to be embarrassed.

3. Feel that you need to motivate your child. This is the child's and coach's responsibility.
4. Show negative emotions while you are watching your child at a competition.
5. Expect your child to talk with you when they are upset. Give them some time.
6. Care too much about how your child performs.
7. Coach your child. Leave this to the coach.