

PARENT ETIQUETTE AT PRACTICES & MEETS

- The primary responsibility for parents is to support their swimmer during practice and swim meets. Offer encouraging words and let them know that no matter what their times are that you support and believe in them.
- Please let the coaches do the coaching, and refrain from offering tips on how to swim or improve their strokes, etc. The coaches may be working on a different aspect or trying to correct the stroke flaw in a different manner. Let the coaches be constructive.
- During practice please sit back by the green awnings or off to the side of the pool deck. Refrain from telling your swimmer to go faster, kick harder or to catch up etc. On the lap (8 lane) pool side please do not sit between the pool and the team shed next to the pool covers. This is a distraction for the swimmers and the coaching staff. Think about when you are sitting at your desk and someone is standing behind you peering over your shoulder trying to look at what you are working on. It's a distraction.
- Swimmers are allowed to be dropped off 15 minutes prior to practice and must be picked up within 15 minutes at the conclusion of their practice! They cannot be left unattended while their siblings or friends are participating in their practices.

10 Commandments of Parent Code of Conduct

I. Thou shalt not impose thy 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 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.

II. Thou shalt 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.

III. Thou shalt not coach thy child.

You are involved in one of the few youth sports programs that offers 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.

IV. Thou shalt only have positive things to say at a swimming meet.

You should be encouraging and never criticize your child or the coach. Both of them know when mistakes have been made. Remember “yelling at” is not the same as “cheering for”.

V. Thou shalt acknowledge thy child's fears.

New experiences can be stressful situations. 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 or meet if your child was not ready. Remember your job is to love and support your child through all of the swimming experience.

VI. Thou shalt not criticize the officials.

Please don't criticize those who are doing the best they can in purely voluntary positions.

VII. Honor thy 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.

VIII. Thou shalt be loyal and supportive of thy team.

It is not wise for parents to take swimmers and to jump from team to team. The water isn't necessarily bluer in another team's pool. Every team has its own internal

problems, even teams that build champions. Children who switch from team to team find that it can be a difficult emotional experience. Often swimmers who do switch teams don't do better than they did before they sought the bluer water.

IX. Thy child shalt 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.

X. Thou shalt not expect thy 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%.

by Rose Snyder, Managing Director Coaching Division,
USOC Former Director of Club Services, USA Swimming
(adapted from Ed Clendaniel's 10 Commandments for
Little League Parents)