

## Being a swimming parent:

Here are a few guidelines or behaviours that I have noticed from the parents of successful swimmers:

1. Consider why your son/daughter participates in sport. Obviously participation is fun and helps fitness but swimming teaches many other skills that are transferable in other spheres of life: Time management, self awareness, communication, team building and many others. This should reflect in your conversations and actions as a swimming parent.
2. Help your son/daughter gain perspective on their successes and failures. Coming to terms with, and making sense of, situations and results can help with a swimmer's progression and their long term happiness. Avoid over-analysis (or "coaching"). Make any message you give to your child simple, clear, supportive and positive.

A good example after an unsuccessful swim might be:

*"Better luck next time, keep listening and developing your technique in training and with your attitude I am sure good results will come"*

3. Emphasise enjoyment and skill development rather than results. Often the important skills developed by participation are lost when obsessing about winning. Be PB orientated congratulating swimmers on improvements in effort both in competition and training.
4. Where possible emphasise being a team player. Swimmers that motivate others rather than distract them are often the happiest and gain the greatest benefit out of training and competition. Being a good team player is often about carrying out tasks with excellence and therefore encouraging the same standards in those around you.
5. Avoid extrinsic motivation (bribery!). Be careful of the message you send out, swimmers should swim for themselves and for the positives the sport brings. Don't confuse the situation by asking swimmers to swim fast for a £5 note – you may find they are not prepared to try when no money is on offer.

6. Consistent communication is vital. If the messages received are mixed whether from the same source or from different ones (coaches, parents, other parents, peers) then expect confused results. Communicate with club officials to ensure you are clear on how the program works and why. Always encourage your child to follow their coaches instruction, this clarity of message is vital in performance swimming.
  
7. If you feel that you want to help your child in the sport the best way is often indirectly. Don't coach your son/daughter (they already have one) find a way to support the program by volunteering.

This means that your child will benefit from the improvements in the club as a whole. One of the direct things you can do to support your child is to ensure they are fed and rested well at home. Most swimmers are too young to do the shopping and plan their own meals. Read and gain advice that will help you support your child's performance through correct nutrition.

The other direct way you can support swimmers is getting them to training on time. Swimmers may under perform when they have to rush to get in the pool missing vital parts of the warm up.