

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR SWIMMING PARENTS

- 1. Don't impose your ambitions on your 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 them based on what you think they could be doing. The nice thing about swimming is every person can strive to do their personal best.
- 2. Do be supportive no matter what.**

There is only one question to ask your child: "Did you have fun?" Your child should not be forced to participate.
- 3. Don't coach your child.**

You have taken your child to a professional coach. Do not undermine that coach by trying to coach your child on the side. Your job is to support, love, and hug your child no matter what. The coach is responsible for the technical part of the job. You should not offer advice on technique or race strategy. This is not your area. This will only serve to confuse your child and prevent that swimmer/coach bond from forming.
- 4. Do have positive things to say at a swimming meet.**

If you are going to attend a swimming meet, you should cheer and applaud, but never criticize your child or the coach.
- 5. Do acknowledge your child's fears.**

A first swimming meet, 500 free, or 200 IM can be a stressful situation. 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 if your child was not ready to compete in it.
- 6. Don't criticize the officials.**

If you do not have time or desire to volunteer as an official, don't criticize those who are doing the best they can.
- 7. Do honor your child's coach.**

The bond between swimmer and coach is a special one, and one that contributes to your child's success as well as enjoyment. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child. It will only serve to hurt your child's swimming.
- 8. Don't jump from team to team.**

The water isn't necessarily bluer at the other team's pool. Every team has its own internal problems. Children who switch from team to team are often ostracized for a long, long time by the teammates they leave behind. Often times swimmers who do switch teams never do better than they did before they sought the bluer water.
- 9. Do have goals besides winning.**

Giving an honest effort, regardless of the outcome, is much more important than winning.
- 10. Don't expect your child to become an Olympian.**

Your child's odds of becoming an Olympian are about 1 in about 4,300. Swimming is much more than just the Olympics. Swimming teaches self-discipline and sportsmanship; it builds self-esteem and fitness; it provides lifelong friendships. Swimming builds good people and you should be happy your child wants to participate.

Adapted from:
"Ten Commandments for Swimming Parents"
by Rose Snyder