

# How to Support Your Swimmer

## Guidance for Parents



Success in swimming is much more than what's visible above the surface. Behind every medal or personal best lies countless hours of practice, perseverance, and learning from setbacks. The iceberg reminds us that progress is built through effort, patience, and resilience. As parents we play a vital role in supporting this journey. By encouraging balance, positivity, and enjoyment, you help your swimmer develop not just as an athlete, but as a confident and resilient individual.



*With that in mind we have put together guidance to help you support your swimmer's journey.*

## Parent Do's

- Praise resilience and persistence. Recognise when your child bounces back from a tough race, illness, or period of plateau; that's where real progress happens.
- Focus on the journey, not the destination. Celebrate milestones like improved skills, better turns, or consistent effort rather than medals or times.
- Show interest in their training without judgment. Ask open-ended questions like "What did you enjoy most today?" or "What did you work on?"
- Support good sportsmanship. Encourage cheering for teammates and congratulating others as it builds a healthy, positive team culture.
- Communicate positively with coaches. Share relevant information (e.g. illness, school workload, injuries) and respect professional boundaries.
- Encourage independence. Let your swimmer take responsibility for packing their bag, arriving on time, and preparing for races - it helps to build self-reliance.
- Help them balance swimming with school, rest, and social life. A happy swimmer is a better swimmer.
- Model healthy habits. Demonstrate punctuality, good nutrition, hydration, and calmness before events.
- Celebrate progress privately, not publicly compare. Your praise matters most when it's genuine and focused on effort.
- Remember the long game. Swimming development takes years; patience and perspective are your child's best support system.

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### Parent Don'ts

- Avoid putting pressure on your child to win or achieve specific times. Instead, emphasise personal growth, effort, and enjoyment.
- Don't expect a personal best in every race. Progress in swimming is not linear; plateaus and small setbacks are normal parts of long-term development.
- Do not compare your child to other swimmers. Every athlete develops at their own pace, with different disciplines and progression pathways. Comparisons can create unnecessary stress and competition.
- Give your child space after a race to process how they feel before discussing results. Often, a simple 'Well done, I'm proud of you' is all they need.
- Supplements are completely unnecessary, especially if they are adult-targeted, stimulant-based, and used instead of good nutrition. e.g. Sugar tablets, caffeine, creatine, etc.
- Refrain from coaching or critiquing your child's performance. Technical feedback is the coach's responsibility - your role is to provide emotional support and encouragement.
- Avoid encouraging your child to swim at the front of the lane in training. Lane order in training is not about hierarchy or ability. It's about pacing, skill focus, and maintaining a smooth training flow for everyone. Constantly pushing to be at the front can create unnecessary pressure and be disruptive to others. Instead encourage your swimmer to focus on quality of effort and coach instruction.
- Respect club and coaching decisions. Avoid discussing team selections, squad moves, or other club matters during meets or training sessions. If you have concerns, arrange a calm conversation with the coach at an appropriate time. Showing unity and trust in coaches and volunteers reinforces a positive and respectful club environment.
- Avoid disputes with officials, coaches, or other parents. Always model respectful and sportsmanlike behaviour.
- Avoid negative talk poolside about other swimmers, teams, or officials. It sets the wrong tone and damages team spirit.
- Don't forget: your child's long-term love of swimming is far more important than any single result.