

USA Swimming



Parents' Manual



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Welcome

“The mission of the USA Swimming camp program is to provide our members with an exciting camp experience that fosters the love of the sport of swimming from the grassroots to the national level.”

Objectives & Goals

The objectives of the LSC Camp Program are to motivate and educate those swimmers participating in the Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 LSC “Catch the Spirit” Camps.

The following are goals that relate to the objectives:

1. Provide an educational experience for each participating swimmer.
2. Educate participants on the history and heroes of USA Swimming.
3. Improve swimmer’s self-image and confidence.
4. Promote LSC unity by camp participants.
5. Retain athletes in the sport of swimming.
6. Transfer information back to the swimmers’ home club.
7. Provide an opportunity for education, observation, communication and motivation to coaches.

Four levels have been developed in the LSC “Catch the Spirit” Camps. Each “Catch the Spirit” camp is designed as a combination of education sessions, social opportunities and water activities. Each level targets key elements of development through which young swimmers are progressing.

Level 1 – is designed for novice and very young (10/under) competitive swimmers. This level includes basic topics such as sportsmanship, peer pressure, stroke skills, simple training technology, and the Food Guide Pyramid

Level 2 – addresses the needs of slightly older (11/12) more advanced competitive swimmers. Included topics of interest are nutrition, starts, turns and finishes as well as more advanced drills, time management, peer pressure and self-talk.

Level 3 – creates a learning environment for more advanced competitors, usually aged 13 and older to focus on such things as goal setting, visualization, relaxation, prerace nutrition and “eating on the road” and more advanced biomechanics through studying video footage.



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Level 4 - is designed to help motivate and retain advanced swimmers who are ready to step up to regional and/or national events. This camp addresses such topics as injury prevention, college preparation, banned substance and supplements education, and race strategy.

Topics

The educational topics of Biomechanics, Nutrition and Psychology are taught at each camp with age and ability appropriate materials and activities. The Camp Director and coaches have the flexibility to include other topics or tailor the sessions to the age and interests of the athletes. Feel free to contact USA Swimming Club Development Department (719 866-4578) with any questions.

It is recommended that experienced representatives (officers, coaches, parents) conduct the Parent Meetings. The main objective is to have positive, supportive and educated parents behind every one of your athletes.

Scheduling the Parents

Parents probably do not want to spend the day at camp. Plan a one to two hour session prior to the end of camp to conduct parent education. That way, you have the parents present on time at the end of camp.

You might also invite parents to sit in on the camp wrap-up and awards. **DO NOT** allow parents to be present or to observe during workouts or swimmers' classroom session!!



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Resources Provided

The Camp Director is provided with two major resources in addition to the documents in this manual.

- **Successful Sport Parenting CD.** Contains PowerPoint presentations, video clips and extensive documents you can use as handouts. Preview prior to use. Print appropriate handouts.
- **Parent Education Presentation CD.** This is a PowerPoint presentation on four main topics: Growth and Development, Competition and Training, Physical Wellbeing and Balance and Support. One topic would be plenty for a 1 hour Parent Education session.
- **Secure a laptop computer with disk drive, an LSC Projector and a screen if you plan to use these resources. Secure a speaker system to use the video clips on both Successful Sport Parenting and the Presentation CD.**

Who Conducts the Session for Parents?

The following are good role models to recruit for assistance in an effective parent education program:

1. Head Coaches of successful local or national clubs.
2. "Veteran" Parents. Recruit a parent of a successful local swimmer. Rookie parents may feel more at ease asking questions of another experienced parent.
3. A successful, local senior athlete.
4. A parent from outside of the LSC. This parent may be a recognized and respected person at swim meets. Not being from a local club could be an asset.



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Team Meetings Topics for Athletes

**LSC Catch the Spirit Camps
Recommended Curriculum for Each Level**

Topics	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Getting Acquainted	Introductions Purpose Equipment Rules	Introductions Purpose Equipment Rules	Introductions Purpose Equipment Rules	Introductions Purpose Equipment Rules
Icebreaker activity (Recommendations)	Getting to Know you	Memory Chain	Swimmer Skits	2 truths and a Lie
Athlete talk (Recommended speaker)	A senior swimmer from LSC	A senior swimmer from LSC	National team member or college swimmer	National team member or college swimmer
Biomechanics	Basic drills (See manual)	More advanced drills (see manual)	1.Drills 2.use of underwater video	1.Drills, 2.underwater video 3.race strategy discussion
Nutrition	Food Guide Pyramid	1.Basic Nutrients 2. Pre-comp nutrition	1.Eating on the road 2.fuel for competition	1.Supplements and banned substances 2. Injury prevention (outside speaker)
Psychology	1.Sportsmanship 2.Practice Prep 3.Peer pressure	1.Time Management 2.Leadership 3.Self-talk	1.Goal setting 2.Relaxation/ Visualization	1.The “Business of Swimming” 2.College Preparation
Wrap-up and Awards	Prizes for all!	Prizes for all!	Special Recognition	Special Recognition



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What Is USA Swimming?

USA Swimming is the National Governing Body for competitive swimming in the United States. USA Swimming was conceived in 1978 with the passage of the Amateur Sports Act, which specified that all Olympic sports would be administered independently. Prior to this act, USA Swimming was the Competitive Swimming Committee of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) located in Indianapolis, Indiana. USS Headquarters office was established in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in 1981 and is located at the Olympic Training Center.

As the National Governing Body for the sport, USA Swimming is responsible for the conduct and administration of swimming in the United States. In this capacity, USA Swimming formulates the rules, implements policies and procedures, conducts the national championships, disseminates safety and sports medicine information and selects the athletes to represent the United States in international competition.

HOW IS USA SWIMMING ORGANIZED?

International - The international federation for the aquatic sports is the Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur (FINA). USA Swimming is affiliated with FINA through United States Aquatic Sports (USAS) made up of the four aquatic sports- swimming, synchronized swimming, diving and water polo.

National – USA Swimming is a Group A member of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) and has voting representation in the USOC House of Delegates.

Local - Within the United States, USA Swimming is divided into fifty-nine (59) Local Swimming Committees (LSCs) each one responsible for administering USS activities in a defined geographical area. Each LSC has its own set of by-laws under which it operates.

A House of Delegates with representation of athletes, coaches, members of the Board of Directors and clubs is responsible for managing the business affairs of each LSC.

HOW ARE DECISIONS MADE IN USA SWIMMING?

USA Swimming is a non-profit organization made up of very dedicated volunteers. Interested individuals donate their time, energy and expertise at every level from the national Board of Directors to the local swimming clubs. All policy decisions are made through a chain of committees - committees reporting to elected vice presidents. The USA Swimming House of



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Delegates meet once a year at the annual USAS Convention and determine the rules and regulations for swimming for the following year. In between yearly meetings of the House of Delegates, an elected USA Swimming Board of Directors is charged with the responsibility of making decisions for the Corporation.

USA SWIMMING HEADQUARTERS

The USA Swimming Headquarters provides a variety of services and programs for its membership. Among the many services are publications, educational programs, fund-raising activities, sports medicine programs, video resources and general information about swimming related activities. The USA Swimming staff is available to assist you in answering questions or providing additional information about USA Swimming. For information or assistance, contact:

USA Swimming
One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5707
719/866-4578, Fax 719/866-4669
<http://www.usaswimming.org>



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Administrative Structure





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Role of Parents in Swimming Success

Hints on Helping Your Swimmer Be More Successful

BE SUPPORTIVE. Both the swimmer and coach are likely to have a list of criticisms for performance, no matter how good it might have been, so what the swimmer needs is love and support. On the other hand, don't try to provide excuses for poor performances. As mentioned above, most athletes try to give their best performances in every competition, but sometimes the results are disappointing. When that happens, the less said, the better. The old adage, "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all," would probably be a good one to follow. A swimmer is generally quite perceptive about performances, and is, after all, the only one who really knows how much effort went into it. The parent and the coach only know what it looked like.

AVOID PRESSURING THE SWIMMER. The swimmer already has enough problems: trying to go fast, keep the start, stroke and turns legal; execute proper technique; impress teammates, friends and/or enemies; place; improve a time; score points; please the coach; please himself and so on. Don't add additional pressure. Most athletes at all levels are already trying to reach their best performances in every competition, and do not really need parents to remind them to do their best.

AVOID CRITICISM OF THE COACH IN FRONT OF THE SWIMMER. The role of the coach is to provide a progressive training situation in which the swimmer can develop skills and speed. Placing the obstacle of criticism between coach and swimmer creates an additional pressure on the swimmer, which can further impair performances. The swimmer needs to trust the coach in order to get the most benefit. **The best bet if the parent doesn't like what the coach is doing is to make an appointment to discuss the situation.** If unable to talk with the coach, then perhaps try a different approach.

LET THE COACH COACH. Regardless of how much the parent may know about swimming, the coach is employed to coach the child. Parents are paying someone else to do it, so let the coach do it. The child needs a parent; he already has a coach. When the child is swimming is the time to be coached. When he is out of the water, he needs your support. Keep remembering how difficult it is just to grow up, and then figure how much added pressure there is in a competitive sport. Help your swimmer by not being the source of more pressure.



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REMEMBER THAT SWIMMING SHOULD BE FUN. As long as kids enjoy swimming, they will have a healthy, productive activity in which to be involved. When swimming becomes a negative experience, the swimmer is likely to want to stop. All athletes need motivation to attain their ultimate goals. When a swimmer fails to reach a goal, encourage him to keep on trying, rather than get discouraged by being shown a parent's disappointment. When a goal is achieved, let him know how proud you are and stress the fun aspect of the sport.

WHOSE GOALS ARE THEY? The swimmer's performance is not a reflection on the parents. (Manners may be, but not swimming.) Don't let ego be caught up in the reaction to the child's swims. If the swimmer eventually reaches national or international prominence, it will be because of hard work, not because parents wanted the vicarious success.

BE ENTHUSIASTIC AND SUPPORTIVE. Remember that the child is the swimmer. Children need to establish their own goals, and make their own progress towards them. Be careful not to impose standards and goals. Do not over burden the child with winning or achieving best times. The most important part of the child's swimming experience is to learn about himself while enjoying the sport. This healthy environment encourages learning and fun that will develop a positive self-image within the child.



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"The Ten Commandments for Swimming Parents"

Adapted by Rose Snyder

- 1. Thou shalt not impose ambitions on thy child.**
Remember that swimming is the child's activity. The child will progress at his own speed. Nothing is worse than a parent forcing a child to do something he does not want to do. This nice thing about swimming is each person can strive to do his or her personal best. It doesn't matter whether they come in first or last, they can all improve themselves.
- 2. Thou shalt be supportive no matter what.**
There is only one question to ask the child "Did you have fun"? If meets and practices aren't fun, the child should not be forced to participate.
- 3. Thou shalt not 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. That is not your area. This will only serve to confuse your child and prevent that swimmer/coach bond from forming.
- 4. Thou shalt only have positive things to say at a swimming meet.**
If you are going to show up at swimming meet, you should cheer and applaud, but never criticize your child or the coach.
- 5. Thou shalt acknowledge thy child's fears.**
It is totally appropriate for a child to be scared to death at his first swimming meet, or her first 500 free, or 200 IM. Don't yell or belittle, just assure your child that the coach would not have put her in that event if she did not feel she were ready.
- 6. Thou shalt not criticize the officials.**
If you do not have the time or the desire to volunteer as an official, don't criticize those who are doing the best they can.



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7. Honor thy child's coach.

The bond between coach and swimmer is a special one, and one that contributes to your child's success as well as fun. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child; it will only serve to hurt your child's swimming.

8. Thou shalt not jump from team to team.

The water is always bluer at the other team's pool. This is not necessarily true. Every team has its own internal problems, even teams that build champions. Children who switch from team to team are often ostracized by the teammates they leave behind for a long, long time. Often swimmers who do switch teams never do better than they did before they sought the bluer water.

9. Thou shalt have goals besides winning.

Encourage your child to do her best. Giving an honest effort no matter what the outcome 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. This does not make me a failure, in fact, I was very proud of that swim".

10. Thou shalt not expect thy child to become an Olympian.

There are 225,000 athletes in United States Swimming. There are only 52 spots available for the Olympic Team every four years. Your child's odds of becoming an Olympian are 1 in about 4,300. Swimming is much more than just the Olympics. Ask your coach why he coaches, chances are, he was not an Olympian, but still got enough out of swimming that he wants to pass that love for the sport on to others. Swimming teaches self-discipline and sportsmanship; it builds self-esteem and fitness; it provides lifelong friendships and much more. Most Olympians will tell you that these intangibles far outweigh any medal they may have won. Swimming just builds good people and you should be happy your child wants to participate.



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Parents Meeting Evaluation Form

1. What were the strengths of this meeting?

2. How can this session be improved?

3. Please comment briefly on the presenter(s).

4. Overall comments or suggestions for this program.
