

Seven Habits of Sainly Swim Parents

By Orlando S. Anaya, Mokihana Aquatics, Hawaii

Habit 1. Getting Your Swimmers To Practice Regularly And On Time.

With multiple-job families, single-parent families, and just “being a family,” it is sometimes very hard to get your swimmers to practice every day and on time. The first rule of improvement is “show up!” A great swim parent makes excuses for how they *will* get their swimmers to practice on time. It’s a powerful message and it teaches your swimmer that you care, amongst other positive messages that it sends.

Habit 2. Providing Emotional Support In All Circumstances.

We appreciate parents who see their primary role as providing emotional support for their swimmers in all circumstances. We’d love to say that kids should always be happy but sometimes they are not. Happiness comes and goes depending on the environment and is also heavily influenced by what children hear their parents saying about a situation. Parents who see temporary difficulties as an opportunity for their children to learn to “work it out” create a great life skill opportunity.

Habit 3. Building Up The Coaches And The Program

We like to view our club as a family and as such we sometimes have questions about one another or the direction of the program. We appreciate families who keep it in the family and bring concerns to the proper person in the chain of command rather than taking it to the “parking lot.”

Habit 4. Comparing Your Swimmer With Themselves

Every swimmer is different. Some have more passion than others. Some swim only for the socialness of the sport. Some are stronger and faster. Some become craftsmen of their technique. Thinking about your own children you may remember that they learned to tie their own shoes at different ages. Trying to compare any swimmer, regardless of time in the sport, or age, is a problematic. The emphasis should be on your swimmer's personal improvement and overall enjoyment of the sport. Coaches tend to be “long term patient” with swimmers in terms of technique and speed. Some get it early, some later. In the meantime, we love them all.

Habit 5. Making Your Children Victors, Not Victims.

This may be the most difficult of all the life skills a parent seeks to instill in their child. In the world today excuses abound and blame shifting is common place. We hear the excuses all the time: "I have too much homework," "I'm not feeling well," "I didn't get enough to eat today," "The lane is too crowded," "The set is too hard," "The coach yelled at me today.", and on and on. We believe that victors are created by toughing it out in the face of adversity and difficulties. When we (coaches or parent) empower a child to do what they want, when

they want, it does not promote athletic development or the ability find a solution. If a swimmer is sick, keep them home. If a swimmer is injured, bring the physical therapist's exercise routine to the pool so the swimmer can do it there. Love and protect your kids, of course, but don't allow them to become victims.

Habit 6. Respecting the Coaches' Time During Practice

We appreciate the parents who come early to talk to the coaches or stay until after practice. If that is not convenient please call. The coach's focus needs to be on the swimmers in the water during workout time.

Habit 7. Getting Your Swimmers To Practice Regularly And On Time.

See Habit #1