

## Questions New Swim Parents Should Ask

Your child has told you that he or she wants to join a swim team. How exciting! Now you are wondering what this means for you and your family. Here are some basic topics you need to be familiar with and some questions you should ask before your child dives in.

**1. Financial Obligations.** Swimming costs money because teams usually have paid professional coaches and most teams pay rent for their pool time. These costs must be passed on to the swim team members in the form of membership fees and team fees. Questions you should ask are:

- What is the total cost per year for my child?
- How are the payments broken down? (Monthly? Quarterly? By season?)
- What is the average cost per year for competitions for a swimmer of my child's age and ability?
- How are entry fees for swim meets collected? Is there an account or are meet entry fees collected every time my child is entered in a meet?
- What equipment and outfitting will my child need and how much does it cost?
- Where do I get the equipment such as suits, caps and goggles that my child needs?

**2. Swim Practice.** Swim practices are usually scheduled with the swimmers broken into groups according to age and ability. Questions you should ask are:

- How many days a week will my child have swim practice? Which days?
- What time is practice and how long is the session?
- What is the attendance policy? Can my child arrive late or leave early if necessary?
- Is there flexibility to tailor my child's practice schedule to our family schedule?
- Who will be coaching my child? What is this coach's background and experience?
- How many other swimmers will be in my child's group and what is their age range?
- What are the provisions for safety and supervision?
- Do I drop my child off or can I stay and watch practice?

**3. Swim Meets.** Swimming competitions are called meets or galas. Meets are organised so that children are competing against other children of similar ages and abilities. Questions you should ask are:

- How often will my child compete in meets?
- Where are the meets held?
- Do I chose the meets my child competes in?
- Who does the meet entries?

- Who is responsible for providing transportation to meets?
- What do parents do at the meets?

**4. Volunteering and Parental Responsibilities.** Most teams depend heavily on parent volunteers to perform a variety of tasks. Questions you should ask are:

- How can I contribute to my child's team if I know very little about swimming?
- Who can I ask when I have questions?
- What is expected or required of parents?
- Will my child and I be expected or required to participate in fundraising?