



5 Swim Parent Tips for When Things Go Wrong

[SwimSwam | May 3rd, 2016](#)

It's time for the big meet. You're excited for best times, hanging out with your fellow swim parents, and giving high fives and hugs after races.

What could possibly go wrong? Well, just about anything and everything.

Here's a partial list of things that did go wrong during my years as a swim mom :

- Forgetting the swim bag at home—one and a half hours away.
- Illness and asthma during championship meets.
- A torn LZR on day one of a big meet.
- Breaking down on the 91 freeway on our way to relays. I wish I'd read that recall notice when it arrived the week before.
- Goggles falling off during Age Group Champs.
- Missed events—one at Junior Nationals—while we sat with our swimmer's soon-to-be college coaches.

Sometimes it's painful to be a swim parent. Our hearts go out to our kids and we wish we could make everything better. How we act when things go wrong impacts how our kids react when they're faced with adversity. They learn so much from our behavior.

Here are five tips for parents when things don't go swimmingly:

Put things into perspective.

How will this unfortunate incident impact your child's life in a week, or a year? Or, in 10 years? Will missing an event or getting sick before a big meet mean the end of their swim careers or life? Most likely, it won't.



Give your child and yourself a break.

We are human and we all make mistakes. If you're upset, maybe it's best to walk away and think about it. Reflect or analyze what went wrong and what lessons can be learned. Please, don't yell at your child on the pool deck in front of the world.

Allow children to learn and problem solve.

We should step back and let our children solve their own problems. It's easy for us to dive in and fix most things for our kids. Problem solving is a skill they will need to become self reliant.

Stay calm.

We're our children's first teachers. They learn from us how to act when faced with problems. I'm an anxious person by nature. That's not an ideal trait I want to pass onto my kids. I'd like my kids to stay calm under pressure—especially when things aren't going well.

You're not alone.

Mistakes and problems happen to everyone. On the bright side, character is developed through struggles and ups and downs. How can our children develop strength and perseverance if life is perfect?