

# SWIM PARENTS

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## Why is Swimming a Year Around Sport?

First, at the competitive level a swimming athlete must train year around just to stay competitive with all the other athletes. Swimming is both conditioning intensive and skill intensive. Strength and endurance conditioning for swimming are not readily transferable from other sports or activities so they must be developed in the pool and in swimming specific dryland exercises. Swimming skills are constantly being developed and refined throughout the swimmer's career.

Not all swimmers are at competitive levels so what is the point in training year around for them? The simple answer is that a good swimming program provides far more than swimming skill development and improvements in strength and endurance — it provides active development of life skills. By "active development" we mean planned — not by accident and not by coincidence. I regularly stop practice to take advantage of a teaching moments to demonstrate or discuss a life skill and we plan short 10 minute discussions on a variety of topics. Life skills that are actively promoted by this team include responsibility, self-discipline, work ethic, coping with peer pressure to use drugs, time management, team commitment and loyalty, lifetime fitness, nutrition, setting and meeting goals, learning to extend themselves, challenges, cooperation, and goal setting.

We know through research that sport in and of itself does not build character or life skills. These skills are developed by the influence of role models, the environment, and through a systematic, planned process. We do this at KJ SwimAmerica all year around and it is the most compelling reason to keep your child in the water all year around.

Now, having said that, is there room for other sports and other activities? As long as children aren't being over scheduled we think YES! We encourage the children to be in other sports and other activities. My own 8 year old daughter swims two or three times a week all year around but she also plays in a basketball league and she plays with neighborhood friends after school.

The bottom line is that this swimming program is a healthy and wholesome activity available all year around for your children and we encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity.