



How to Choose a Swim Team

August 2011

So your child wants to try swimming on a team. Maybe they've just finished great summer swim lesson program, have friends asking them to join, or you just want them to be busy doing something healthy throughout the year. Like most people, families often end up on a team that a neighbor recommended and was close to home. However, parents are sometimes clueless about the sport in general and some are very fortunate to join a team that fits them, but there are ways to make an informed decision. Don't just leave it up to chance! The next question is usually, "What should I look for in a program to determine if it is the right one for our/my situation?"

1. DETERMINE YOUR GOALS

- Are you looking for your child to simply have fun?
- Is this an activity you think they may pursue long term or just for a season?
- Does YOUR CHILD display an interest in swimming or do you?
- Find out what you want before you begin your search.

2. RESEARCH YOUR OPTIONS

- Check out the websites of all the Edmonton teams: Penguin Swimming, Edmonton Keyano Swim Club, and the Olympian Swim Club to get a feel of what their team is all about.
- Find out about different teams' coaching philosophy.
- Is the program tailored to more of a traditional distance based practices, or is it geared more towards a technique based program?
 - a) Traditional distance based programs (thousands of metres per practice) usually encompass a lot of longer practice sets with the focus being an aerobic base. This old school philosophy can be very boring for young swimmers.
 - b) Technique based programs focus on technique and use interval sprint sets to increase speed. While the workouts may vary greatly (and probably sound really confusing until you come to understand some of the terminology), the philosophy of a technique based program will always be similar; lower amount of metres, more technique, and race paced swimming. On the flip-side, some swimmers struggle with the mental aspect of having to push themselves to maximum-effort over and over.

3. INTERVIEW KEY PEOPLE

- Interview key people involved with the organization.
- What are their goals and philosophies on the developing child? Do they yell?
- What are their expectations of your new swimmer?
- Be careful not just to interview the gatekeeper, but the coach him/herself if possible, get as much personal contact with the person who will be working with your child as possible.
- If you don't like something...run! There are always other options.

4. TRY IT OUT

- If you think you are a good match, ask for a trial period. If they say no, move to your next choice. Programs should have no problems with a free trial period, in fact, many offer such periods at the beginning of each season.
- Use the information above to recognize the coaching style, and don't be afraid to ask the coaches about it prior to registering.
- If your child leaves the pool happy, you might have found a good place to begin their career. If they are not happy, move on.



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5. STAY THE COURSE

- Once you have found a place that meets your goals and is offering your child a positive environment, stay the course for at least one season.
- There will be ups and downs. Your child will get faster, slower and faster again. There will be good days and bad. The trick is to expect this and tell your child that it is normal to fluctuate. Success is not simply a downhill event.
- After the season is over, you can reflect on whether or not this is the right team for your child, but never mid voyage.

6. REVIEW AND REFLECT

- Hopefully, the first swim season went well....now it is time to consider what is next.
- Did the season go well? Did your child have fun? Does the team have a progressive system to help your child now that they have reached the next level?
- Take time to review how the season went, and what your child's new goals are.
- Is the team the best suited for long term development (coaching stability, well thought out long term swimmer development plan for swimmers etc).

7. ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE

- This is the best part. Swimming helps kids learn time management, the value of hard work and teamwork. Enjoy watching them grow as they swim. Enjoy it all...it goes by so very fast!
- If your child chooses to stay in the sport, he/she will more than likely be at the top of their class, be a joy to be around and have many skills that most adults in our society lack. Enjoy!

8. FEE COMPARISONS – EDMONTON TEAMS 2011/12

To give parents an idea of cost, the following fees are for similar/equivalent swim programs offered by the three Edmonton swim teams 2011/12. The total fees listed include: Membership Fees, Training Fees, Swim-A-Thon requirement, and/or Fundraising requirement.

Introductory to Competitive Swimming

Penguin Swimming	Keyano Swim Club	Olympian Swim Club
Novice Program	Development 2	Junior Olympic Way
Ages: 9-11	Ages: Unknown	Ages: 10&Under
3 practices/wk (3.0 hrs/wk)	4 practices/wk (4.5 hrs/wk)	3 practices/wk (4.0 hrs/wk)
Fees: \$1,155	Fees: \$1,650 + 10 Bingos	Fees: \$1,445

Intermediate/Advanced Competitive Swimming

Penguin Swimming	Keyano Swim Club	Olympian Swim Club
Youth Program	Development 1	Youth Development
Ages: 13&Over	Ages: Unknown	Ages: 14&Over
6 practices/wk (10.5 hrs/wk)	6 practices/wk (9.0 hrs/wk)	6 practices/wk (14.0 hrs/wk)
Fees: \$1,680	Fees: \$1,950 + 12 Bingos	Fees: \$1,830 + 17 Bingos

We strongly recommend to do your own research on each swim team, and wish you the best of luck with finding the right team for your child.