

Understanding Swim Clinic and Swim Team Evaluations

Evaluations for our swim clinics and SAL swim team are used to make sure swimmers will be safe and that the clinic or team environment is one in which they'll be able to progress, rather than needing the lower student/teacher ratio and general environment of lessons. So, we're looking at specific stroke skills as well as endurance, and the ability and willingness to pay attention and respond appropriately to coach instructions. Evaluations are in a 25-yard pool and will involve swimming several lengths of the pool. Swimmers will be asked to show what they are able to swim for each of the four competitive strokes: freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly.

Be sure to tell your child that the clinics and CBST-SAL team have swimmers who have been on teams before as well as newer swimmers, so they should not worry about how their skills seem compared to others in their small evaluation group. Tell you swimmer that there are always some swimmers at evaluations who don't have a firm grasp on all of the strokes yet and that swimmers definitely don't need to know exactly how to do each of the four strokes ahead of time, but should at least have a good grasp on freestyle and backstroke. Our evaluator will ask the swimmers if they know how to do each stroke – if a swimmer said they didn't know how to do any particular stroke they would be prompted with another name they might know for the stroke (for example freestyle means front crawl or breaststroke means frog stroke). The evaluator would also show them the basics of the stroke from the deck and explain what to do if they were unsure. For strokes they don't know how to do already, the evaluator would be looking to see how well the swimmer is able to do the stroke based on the instructions – basically looking to see if the swimmer will be able to pick it up quickly in a clinic or team setting (where there are more athletes per coach) or if the swimmer would be better off in lessons with a lower student/teacher ratio.

Also be sure your swimmer knows that it's totally fine to evaluate as more appropriate for lessons than clinic or team right now. For most kids if it's set up for them as just deciding what is best, rather than “making” it into the clinic or team, they're fine with any outcome. They can always join the clinic or team later when they're ready. We want to help children become life-long swimmers and are looking for the best program to help them based on what they need at this point in time.

Be sure to also read the details at the evaluation sign-up link for evaluation day procedures and other important information.