

Everything I Learned About Triathlons I Learned from My Kids

When kids showed up at our house without instruction manuals, I never imagined how much they would teach me about triathloning.



How much did you start understanding more about your parent's influence on you in sports once your own kids entered your life? Ask yourself, "What can my kids teach me about triathloning?"

No kids? Then think about your nieces or nephews. Maybe your newly identified role models live with a slightly older, but are now past friends that temporarily fell out of your social circle. That is... until their kids age up or you produce kids of your own.

Kids and their behavior make more sense than given credit since we discount their wisdom for lack of maturity. What they lack for in words, they make up for in their actions. During observation of my kids, I learned the following about triathlons:

- It's okay to sleep like a baby, especially after a hard work-out or race.
- It really is okay for other people to write stuff on your body with ink.
- Onesie's make great uni-body race suits if found in the right size.
- No one questions the outfits you wear for races including pointy head gear.
- It's okay to lay stuff in neat piles that you're going to use later in day.
- Stuffing things in bags is a great way to store things needed for later.
- Respect other people's stuff in the pen.
- It's okay to wear a floaty on the swim.
- We're never too old to ride a bike.
- It's okay to drink from a bottle.

- It's okay to pee in your pants.
- It's okay to spit up when your tummy shuts down.
- Crawling is acceptable until you are ready to start running again.
- It's okay to spill liquids on your shirt.
- It's okay to laugh at weird things others do for reasons that you don't understand yet.
- Food that looks like goo makes for great race day nutrition.
- It's okay to use made up words for things. Who knew fartlek, DPS, bricks, bonking, taco'd, T1, T2, and GU would ever be said and understood by adult triathletes?
- Goofy glasses make you look cool.
- You don't have to know how to tie shoes to wear 'em. Velcro & no tie shoe laces are made for the fast movers.
- It's okay to run around in grimy clothes while celebrating with others.
- Don't shy away from being your own kid's hero. They'll appreciate being a part of the family's journey at an early age. I didn't want to miss an opportunity of bonding with the kids so I continued triathlon training with the girls in tow.

On many weekends while living in Seattle, I packed up our two kids in the back seat of the VW Jetta, placed the folded up Burley Trailer in the trunk, and our dog, Woody, rode shotgun. We dropped into the bottom of the Green River Valley and parked at one of entry lots located beside the paved running path that paralleled the river. I pushed with one hand on the Burly and held Woody's leash in the other. While the girls enjoyed the passing beauty of the valley, Woody enjoyed nature's smells and the romp in the wild. I held on to both for a wild ride. On clear days, snowcapped Mt. Rainer could be seen to the south enhancing an already well stocked visual landscape. Hayes learned what it meant when asked if "The Mountain" was out today. And I learned the kids taught me more about triathloning than I would ever learn on my own in a lifetime.

Never give up an opportunity to learn more about triathloning or life from anyone. Check your judgement at the door. Open up your mind. Use new sources to your benefit.