I'D RATHER IT DO IT MYSELF!
By Wayne Goldsmith

Check out the January issue of Swimming World Magazine and read Wayne Goldsmith's column, "GoldMinds," which is an open letter to all swimming parents. In it, he offers some advice to help swim parents be the best they can be and how they can help their kids enjoy their swimming experience to the extent of their talent and to the limits of their dreams. Following is a story about a typical Swim Mom and how she perceives her role as a swimming parent:

Let me tell you a story about a swimming family I know.
I was asked to stay with the family and enjoy a few days with them. The kids both swam and asked me if I would be interested in getting up early with them the next morning for practice. Of course I said, "Yes."
I set my alarm for 5 a.m., got up and got dressed.
Then the strangest thing happened.
Another alarm went off—in the mother’s room.
Mom got up...got dressed...rushed into the kitchen...and made a cup of coffee for herself and two mugs of hot chocolate for the children. She then rushed around the house gathering up swim gear, towels, swimsuits, goggles and water bottles. She then put all of these things in the kids’ swim bags and put the bags near the front door.
She then tapped gently on the kids’ bedroom doors and said, "Darlings, it is time to go to swimming."
The kids responded, "I’m not going...I hate swimming...it’s too cold," among other things.
Mom then carried both swim bags out to the car and backed the car out of the garage. Meanwhile, one of the kids was still in bed and had rolled over and gone back to sleep. The other was sitting on her bed, saying, "I’m tired, I’m tired," over and over again.
Mom helped both kids out of bed, helped them put on their warm-up suits and shoes, then helped them out to the kitchen table. The kids weren’t even drinking their hot chocolate—they kept moaning and groaning and complaining about swimming and about being cold and how it was "too early” in the morning to go to workout.
Mom then helped the kids into the car—one slept in the back seat, while the other put his head on the car window and fell asleep.
When we got there, Mom jumped out, helped the kids out of the car and carried their bags to the front entrance of the pool.
The kids trained OK, and I enjoyed watching the practice while Mom went off doing something else.
After training, Mom came back, embraced the kids with, “Hi, my angels. How was practice?” The kids answered, “OK,” and then sat quietly all the way home listening to Eminem on their CD players.

When they got home, the kids took a shower, while Mom emptied their swim bags, made their breakfast and ironed their clothes for school. I was a bit surprised she didn’t also do their homework!

Sound familiar?

Bottom line: don't do everything for your kids. Let them learn self-responsibility, self-management and self-discipline.