



Why do you want her to move up?

It's a question worth asking.

At this time of year, there can be a tremendous amount of attention placed on levels. *Will she move up? Is she ready? She's so close. What does she still need? Can she get there before the next evaluation?*

We understand the excitement. Moving to a new level feels like progress. It feels like an accomplishment.

But **changing levels and making progress are not the same thing.**

Our job as coaches isn't to move a gymnast through the levels as quickly as possible. Our job is to help her become the strongest, safest, most confident, most capable gymnast she can be—and to put her in an environment where she can continue to grow.

What happens when a gymnast moves up too soon?

A gymnast at the wrong level may spend an entire season simply trying to keep up.

Instead of refining routines, she may be struggling to complete them. Instead of building confidence, she may constantly be reminded of what she can't yet do. Instead of developing new skills, she may spend most of her time trying to reach the minimum requirements of the level she is already competing.

And, most importantly, attempting skills before an athlete has the strength, technique, consistency, and preparation to perform them safely can increase the risk of injury.

Ironically, moving up too soon often doesn't get an athlete anywhere faster.

She may spend the entire year catching up—and then repeat that same level the following season anyway, once she finally has the tools to actually be successful there.

Now consider the gymnast who is “so close.”

She may be disappointed when she doesn't move up. We understand that.

But look at the opportunity in front of her.

Instead of fighting to survive at the next level, she can **thrive at her current one.**

She can improve the little details that separate doing gymnastics from doing gymnastics *well*. She can develop better form, stronger technique, greater consistency and confidence. She can work ahead on future skills instead of constantly chasing current requirements.

She can become a leader in her group—the gymnast who knows how things are done and can set an example for the athletes around her.

She can compete confidently. She can perform well. She may earn some great scores.

Most importantly, she can spend the year filling her toolbelt.

And when it is time for the next level, she arrives there prepared—not merely qualified.

Think about where both gymnasts are a year from now.

One athlete rushed ahead and spent the year trying to catch up.

The other spent the year developing, growing, leading, learning, competing confidently, strengthening weaknesses and building new skills.

Eventually, **both may arrive at exactly the same level.**

But they haven't necessarily arrived there as the same gymnast.

One has spent a year trying to survive the next step.

The other has spent a year becoming ready for it.

That's the difference we're looking at when we make level decisions.

There's another important distinction for parents to understand.

In school, failing to “move up” to the next grade generally indicates that something has gone wrong.

Sports don't work that way.

Athletic development isn't organized by age or by calendar year. Gymnasts develop strength, flexibility, confidence, coordination, technique, maturity and skills at different rates. Some athletes move quickly through one stage and spend longer at another. Some repeat a level and make enormous progress during that year.

There is no single correct pathway.

And there is no prize for getting to a particular level first.

At Gym Rev, we want our athletes to learn something much more valuable: **success isn't the name of the level you're competing. Success is becoming better than you were before.**

So when your daughter is close to moving up, encourage her. Celebrate the skills she's learning. Be excited about her progress.

But please don't make the next level the finish line.

There are a lot of years of gymnastics ahead of these kids, and we're looking much farther down the road than the next evaluation or the next competitive season.

They will move up when they're ready.

Our responsibility as coaches is to keep our eyes on their long-term development, safety, confidence and success—not simply the next level.

Gymnastics is a marathon, not a sprint.

We hope you'll help us teach them to run it that way.

Brian & Allyson
Gymnastics Revolution