

Straight TALK

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The Power of Our Pencils

This February, Kumon is going to show the world that there really is power in our pencils!

PencilpowerSM is a North American Kumon pledge drive to raise money for the thousands of children who lost a parent/guardian in the terrorist attacks of September 11th. The Kumon Method is dedicated to each individual child. Likewise, the goal of pencilpowerSM is to help as many children affected by this tragedy as possible through the very heart and soul of Kumon - our students and their work.

Your child's participation will help us reach this goal and will make a difference in helping these children cope with their grief by working through the ongoing bereavement process.

How It Works. During the month of February, Kumon students throughout North America will make a commitment to complete all of their worksheet assignments for the month. Then, they will ask family members and friends to pledge a suggested amount for every day of work done. So, if you make a donation of 50 cents for every day of your child's work, this will add up to \$14.00 if all worksheets are completed by the end of the month. With hundreds of thousands of children enrolled in Kumon, imagine how much money we can raise for these children!

Where Does The Money Go? At the end of February, all collected donations, which are tax deductible upon request, will be sent to the Moyer Foundation, a non-profit organization created by Jamie Moyer, the Seattle Mariners pitcher, and his wife, Karen. The Moyers are long-time Kumon parents who established this foundation to help children cope with life-altering events, such as the loss of a parent. The Moyers will work with New York City area hospices to

organize bereavement camps, where children of the WTC tragedy will have the opportunity to spend a weekend with trained counselors who can help them work through the grieving process. Our hope is to raise enough money to create similar camps in the Washington, D.C. area to help those children as well.



Seattle Mariner pitcher, Jamie Moyer and wife Karen Moyer of the Moyer Foundation have been long-time Kumon parents.

Recognizing Winning Kumon Students. The top 100 students who raise the most money will receive a signed baseball by Mariner's pitcher Jamie Moyer. The grand prize winning student, plus two family members will receive free airfare and hotel accommodations to Seattle, WA the weekend of April 27 and 28, 2002. During this weekend, the student will have the opportunity to attend the Seattle Mariners/NY Yankees game and visit the dug-out. The grand prize winner will also be invited to attend the North American Instructors' Conference in Seattle to speak to attendees, this coming August.

How You Can Get Involved. So... regardless of whether your child attends a Center in

Winnipeg or Willowbrook, we can all help a child who lost a parent or guardian that day. If you haven't already received information about pencilpowerSM, ask your Kumon Instructor about participating. You can also check out our website at www.kumon.com, under the Kumon Extras section. Go get those pledges!!!



Important
pencilpowerSM
Dates

January/February:
Pledge collection

March 5:
Submit all pledges to your Instructor

April 12:
Notification of winning student and Instructor

April 27:
Weekend for winning student and his/her family to go to Seattle

August 2:
Weekend for winning Instructor to go to Seattle and for winning student to return to speak at Kumon conference

THOUGHTS BY
TORU KUMON

"Children's ability levels are not the products of innate ability, but of the environment in which they are brought up. This is why a child's ability is so greatly influenced by parents."



Kumon Recommended Reading List

Warm Titles for the Winter Months

Our **Recommended Reading List** of books offers something for all students. Some books teach, others entertain and many have beautiful illustrations to capture the interest and imagination of even the youngest of readers. There are favorite stories, classic tales, and humorous books. Some are written in rhythm, rhyme, and playful language while others, more serious, teach a lesson. Young children can learn their ABC's and how to count while others can solve mathematical riddles or lose themselves in stories set in countries around the world, such as Italy, China, Russia, France, Japan, and India. Our **Recommended Reading List** offers students the opportunity to immerse themselves in rich literature and influence their future success in school. So, encourage your child to curl up with a book, experience the joy of reading, and learn that books are friends to revisit again and again.

FUN FACTS

Did you know...

Kumon has passed the milestone of **1.5 Million** students studying outside of Japan

There are **9 different** language versions of our Math program in the world.

Kumon has **8 different** Reading programs around the world.

Kumon worksheets are used in **44 countries** and areas around the world.



4A #11 Chicken Soup with Rice by Maurice Sendak

Chicken soup with rice is used as a theme to describe the 12 months of the year. Although chicken soup is great all-year round, it is probably most soothing for a cold winter night!

2A #11 The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats

This 1963 Caldecott Medal winner is the simple tale of a boy who wakes to discover that snow has fallen. The little boy celebrates the snow-draped city with a day of adventures - playing with footprints, creating snow angels, and trying to save a snowball for the next day.



All #2 Nate the Great and the Snowy Trail by M.W. Sharmat

Nate the Great, super sleuth, has his work cut out for him when Rosamond loses his birthday present. He and his faithful dog, must face snow, ice, and Annie's ferocious-looking dog, to solve the case. But how can Nate find his missing present when Rosamond won't tell him what it is?

BI #14 The Mitten by Alvin Tresselt

This Ukrainian folktale tells of a boy who loses his mitten in the winter woods and how, one by one, wild animals crowd into the mitten for shelter. A mouse finds the mitten and makes it a cozy home. Then, other forest dwellers, including a big brown bear, ask to squeeze in & join the fun!



BI #1 Owl Moon by Jane Yolen

On a winter's night, under a full moon, a father and daughter trek into the woods to see the great horned owl. This book, which is a 1988 Caldecott Medal winner, provides visual images that have a sense of depth and invite the readers into a special nighttime world.

CI #4 The Snow Walker by Margaret and Charles Wetterer

During the East Coast blizzard of 1888, most of New York City was shut down by the powerful winds and snow. The authors tell the true story of twelve-year old Milton Daub, who spent an entire day taking food and medicine to people in his Bronx neighborhood.



CII #2 Nine Days to Christmas by Marie Ets and Aurora Labasida

Published over 33 years ago, this book remains fresh and relevant. Ceci's first Christmas posada party and piñata have made her Mexican town come alive for generations of readers.

D #11 Help! I'm a Prisoner in the Library! by Eth Clifford

Two girls spend an adventure-filled night trapped inside the public library during a terrible blizzard. The writer keeps the action and surprises coming throughout this antic adventure.



E #13 The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis

Four English schoolchildren find their way through the back of a wardrobe into the magical land of Narnia, where they come to the aid of Aslan, the golden lion, in his battle against the White Witch, who has cursed the land with eternal winter. This is a classic for every generation.

F #7 Julie of the Wolves by Jean Craighead George

A 13-yr old Eskimo girl who becomes lost on the North Slope of Alaska is befriended by a pack of wolves. After learning their language & slowly earning their trust, Julie becomes a member of the pack. This stunning coming-of-age tale won the prestigious Newbury Medal and has found its way into the hearts of millions of readers.



The Doctor Is IN

Dr. Andi Addresses Today's Parenting Issues



Optimism and Compassion: A Winning Combination

Childhood is a time for joy and laughter. Sometimes, however, tragedy strikes - and *rocks a child's world*. How children cope in such circumstances varies. To help children get through these difficult situations in as positive a way as possible, adults can enforce optimism in children and teach them to have compassion for others.

Encouraging Optimism Over Pessimism

When children encounter tragedies, those who have learned to be optimistic have a much greater chance of surviving them than do children who are pessimistic. Optimists believe that people and situations can change and improve. They are the individuals among us who see the glass as half-full rather than half-empty. How can children learn optimism? They can learn it from parents, teachers, and Instructors who are skilled at turning pessimism into optimism and helplessness into self-confidence. Here are some suggestions for parents to follow to help their children become optimists:

Since the key to developing optimism lies in the way one perceives the causes of events, one must first distinguish optimistic thoughts from pessimistic ones. Parents can teach their children that the way they voice their thoughts about an event will influence the way that they feel and act.

If children think that a bad event is permanent, that a tragedy will persist forever, they are at risk for becoming pessimistic. When parents encourage children to view misfortunes as temporary rather than permanent, children will bounce back after such setbacks. Parents can show children how to view a disaster as an isolated event so that it will not become pervasive in other aspects of their lives.

Parents can model optimism by teaching children to challenge pessimistic assumptions and by encouraging children to master challenges and overcome obstacles.

Parents *can* create an environment that fosters optimism which will ultimately promote positive self-empowerment in their children.

Raising a Child to Have Compassion for Others

Compassion is the ability to feel with others, even to the extent of being able to "put oneself in another's shoes" (empathy). It builds on self-awareness. The more aware we are of our own feelings, the more accomplished we become in reading the emotions of others. Children who are compassionate have the ability to develop concern for the welfare of others, expressing it in acts of caring and kindness. Since compassion does not come naturally to most children, it must be nourished throughout childhood. An effective way to teach children to be compassionate is to practice "random acts of kindness."

Teaching Our Children to Practice Random Acts of Kindness

- ♥ Take your child with you to serve a meal at a homeless shelter
- ♥ Have your child donate outgrown clothes and toys to a charity
- ♥ Have your child collect pledges from family & friends to support his or her participation in a special event benefiting other children.

Such acts of thoughtfulness will teach your children to be more considerate of others. Schools recognize the importance of compassion in society and are asking students more than ever before to complete a specified amount of community service as a graduation requirement. The positive feelings that accompany helping others will shape a child's behavior in powerful ways. Children helping others is a magical cure for nay-sayers and pessimists.

We've Got Mail

You asked. Dr. Andi answered.

Dr. Pastorok:

I am a Kumon parent and thoroughly enjoyed reading your article about advanced study. In fact, my goal of enrolling my son in the Kumon program (who is in first grade) is to see him advance well beyond the average grade level.

The Kumon content, for grade level equivalent, seems advanced for what my child is studying in school. Why is this? - *Puzzled Parent*

Dear Puzzled Parent:

Kumon content, for grade level equivalent, may be slightly ahead of actual material students study in school for two reasons:

1. Kumon follows an International standard which may be slightly higher than North America.
2. Kumon does not cover all of the elementary school curriculum. It only covers the most important materials that lead directly to High School material. As a result, sometimes, Kumon delves deeper into a certain subject matter than the schools.

Long-term study of such materials yields maximum benefits.

If you have a question or comment for Dr. Andrea Pastorok please contact her at:
askdrandi@kumon.com





Brian

Brian is a **Double G by 5 Student** at just 10 yrs old. Brian has been a Kumon student for nearly 5 years.



Rachel

7 yr old Rachel is a Double Medal Winner for Math & Reading.



Matthew

In addition to attending 1st grade, Matthew is completing Level F Math and CII Reading!



Abbey

This bright 4th grader is well on her way to completing Level G Math.



Alexandria

At just 5 yrs old, this early kindergartner is studying Level 2A Reading & 2A Math.



Interested in having your student featured? Please talk to your Kumon Instructor.

LOOK
for the next
issue of
StraightTALK
arriving in March.

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