



Straight TALK KUMON

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KUMON

Welcome To Our New Publication



As CEO of Kumon North America, I would like to welcome you to *STRAIGHT TALK KUMON*. We are very proud to present this first issue. Our purpose is twofold: 1— to inform parents about the Kumon Method, and to help you understand how it works; 2— to help your child receive the maximum benefit from Kumon study.

Each issue will feature an article correlating with the season of the year as it relates to your child's education, both in school and in Kumon. Also featured will be an article written by Dr. Andi Pastorok, an educational specialist for Kumon North America. She will discuss pertinent topics related to learning, education, and parenting. In addition, each issue will give you the opportunity to ask her questions, and to share comments, information, or anecdotes you may have relating to your child's Kumon education.

The Kumon North America Mission is to make the Kumon Method available to as many children as possible. We believe that one of the best ways to achieve this goal is to share insight and information with everyone, especially our Instructors and Kumon parents. As a result of sharing information through writing and word of mouth, Kumon North America has grown to 132,000 students in 1450 after-school centers. Our founder, Mr. Toru Kumon, was a true visionary, whose ideas are as pertinent today as they were forty years ago when Kumon began in Japan.

We look forward to communicating Mr. Kumon's information and insight with you bi-monthly, and to providing a forum for parents. *STRAIGHT TALK KUMON* will replace the former *NEWQUEST*. Enjoy this first edition. We eagerly anticipate your comments and questions.

Sincerely,

Takao Kashima, CEO
Kumon North America

Inside This Issue

Ready For Back To School?

In most neighborhoods in North America, September means it's time to go back to school for kids. For some families this is a happy, anticipatory time. For others, it is a time of great stress, with screaming and teeth gnashing. Parents can play a major role in determining whether the transition from summer vacation to back to school is smooth or bumpy.

One of the most common reasons for a child's reluctant start back to school is anxiety caused by the fact that they have "forgotten stuff" over the summer. This is of course especially true for those children who have done little academic-type work during summer vacation, including reading books for pleasure. Even very motivated students who like school may experience some trepidation thinking of a new school year with new teachers, subjects, and friends.

Parents should be aware, however, that it is common for students to forget some of what they learned during the previous school year.

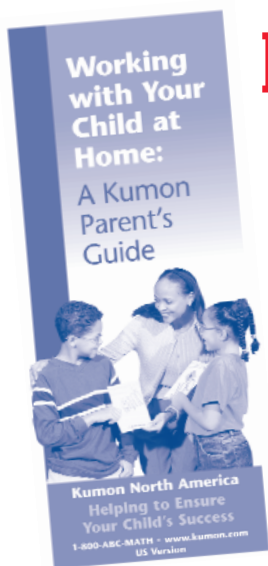
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Home Grading/Marking: A Strong Bridge Between Parents and Kumon

Pictured at left is the front cover of the 2001 Home Grading brochure. It was designed to help Kumon parents supervise and grade ("mark" in Canada) their child's Kumon work. Parents are invited by many Kumon Instructors to partner with them in their child's Kumon study. This includes going over their child's homework each day.

Your child's Instructor can give you a brochure explaining how to home grade/mark. This article will highlight the important points for you.

Here's how the process works:

- 1. The student completes his/her homework.**
- 2. Homework is assigned and is expected to be completed every day, seven days a week, and it's done in the order assigned.**
- 3. Check your child's homework assignment daily.**
- 4. Make sure the name, date, and beginning/end times are recorded on the first worksheet. (See Brochure)**
- 5. Using a red pen and an answer book (from your Instructor), grade/mark the homework. This is more specifically explained in the brochure.**
- 6. Make sure your child corrects errors immediately. More detail will be found in the brochure.**

7. After all errors are corrected to 100%, place the homework in the holder and return it to the Instructor the next class day.

8. The Instructor or Assistant will check it over and record the scores in the student's record book.

The entire grading/marking process should take only 5-10 minutes per day.

Some tips for helping to ensure your child's success:

- Incorporate Kumon study into your child's daily routine.
- Designate a "Kumon time" every day at the same time. This helps promote consistency and a regular routine.
- Create a quiet study area at home. Removing all distractions will encourage fast and accurate work.
- Allow your child to do the work independently; remember Kumon is a self-learning program.
- Most important: be encouraging! Your child will catch your enthusiasm!

What are the benefits of home grading?

- It provides students with immediate feedback, so they don't keep repeating the same errors.
- It helps parents become aware of their child's strengths and weaknesses.
- It provides opportunities for parents to give direct, specific praise and support.
- It allows the Instructor to spend more time developing individualized plans and observing all students closely.

For more information on involving yourself in your child's education, please turn to Dr. Andi's article on page 3. ■

Ready For Back To School?

(Continued from front page)

According to a Washington Post (June 22, 2001) article, kids can lose up to 25% of their math and reading skills during summer vacation. This regression is certainly no mystery to parents or educators, or even Kumon Instructors! Without practice, learning skills of any kind, for example sports and music, will diminish rapidly for most. Of course, if a student has been studying Kumon throughout the summer, stress caused by the transition back to school will most likely be minimal.

Parents who have made the decision to remain involved in Kumon throughout the entire year, have made a wise choice. It will no doubt show in their child's success in school, but also in his/her advancement in Kumon.

When all is said and done, the bottom line message is: providing Kumon as part of your child's year-round daily routine is essential to help him or her succeed in making this school year (and every one hereafter) his or her best ever! ■

Parental Involvement in Education: Does it Matter? ... a note to Kumon parents from Dr. Andi

Yes! Parents count. Their participation in the education of their children is a major reason why children succeed in school. Research shows that when parents are involved, children do better. Parents who spend time at home reinforcing, reviewing, and expanding what is taught in the regular classroom or Kumon, generally see improved performance on measures of their children's academic achievement.

What particular things can parents do to help their children succeed academically?

- 1. They can encourage their children to read and reread directions to ensure that they understand them. Understanding directions often makes the difference between academic success and failure.**
- 2. They can help set and maintain good routines; consistency and predictability are important to children.**
- 3. They can promote success by teaching their children the value of work and effort.**
- 4. They can provide a positive environment where in children can develop a lifelong love of learning.**
- 5. Perhaps the best strategy parents can employ with their children is positive reinforcement; and the finest reinforcement to build both self-esteem and motivation is genuine praise and acknowledgement.**

Home is where learning begins, and Kumon seeks to engage parents in promoting learning at home. Parental involvement ensures your child's academic success.

When mistakes need to be corrected, **immediate-and sensitive-feedback** is a positive learning tool. When parents provide feedback promptly and directly, they convey the message to their children that their work is valued. This also gives students the opportunity to make corrections immediately so that the correct responses can be reinforced; otherwise, students risk strengthening their mistakes.

Here are specific suggestions that Kumon parents can follow to maximize the benefit of the Kumon experience:

- Keep *communication* lines open with your Kumon Instructor.
- Help your child remain *task-oriented*.
- Make sure your child *understands directions* and can follow examples.
- Observe and keep track of the *length of time* it takes your child to complete worksheets.
- Provide plenty of *praise*.
- Keep in mind that children learn best when given *sensitive feedback*.
- *Home Grade* your child's worksheets.

Home Grading is perhaps the most important way in which you can participate in and help your child acquire the maximum benefits from Kumon. The value you place on Kumon will be mirrored in the value your child places on it. Children are easily motivated to learn when parents demonstrate a high regard for learning. Additionally, Home Grading provides immediate feedback that affords your child the opportunity to learn from mistakes and gives you the knowledge of the types of errors your child is making. It also affords you information as to your child's particular strengths and weaknesses, information that can be vital when communicated to the Kumon Instructor.

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Questions/Comments?

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KUMON[®]
MATH & READING CENTERS
Learning How To Learn[™]

Second Annual Kumon North American Conference

Instructors Refine Their Skills at the Second Annual Conference Held in Canada

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada was the site of the 2001 North American Instructor Conference, held July 20-22, at the Ottawa Westin Hotel and the Congress Convention Centre. Over 700 Kumon Instructors, and Kumon staff members were in attendance from all over North America, including Mexico.

The second conference was a great success, as was the first one, held in Chicago in July 2000. The 2001 conference theme was "Lead to Succeed", and most of the attendees agreed that

the theme was fitting and inspiring.

Two Instructors, one from California, and the other from Canada, were the keynote speakers. Both shared their secrets of success for helping Kumon

students. Also included were panel discussions and breakout sessions presented by Instructors and staff to help all in attendance learn more about the many aspects of the Kumon Method. ■



General Session