

## STRAIGHT talk

Published Quarterly for Parents of Kumon Kids

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From Errors  
to Excellence

Obed Tessema began Kumon at the Brampton Kumon Center just outside of Toronto when he was just a little boy of four. Already a Kumon veteran in Grade 3, he's now a dual ASHR student. His parents think he'll continue Kumon until he completes both the Math and Reading Programs. This doesn't come as a big surprise to those who know Obed because he is someone who constantly keeps busy by challenging himself with big goals.

In addition to Kumon, Obed plays piano, chess, and soccer; goes to karate class; and takes swimming lessons. "I only have two days a week when I can stay at home and put my feet up," Obed says of his busy schedule. When asked what he does to relax on these days, he says that he does his Kumon worksheets (Math Level D and Reading Level CI). Most students would think of this as working and not relaxing, but not Obed who says, "For me, it isn't working because it's fun!"

Obed says that Kumon has helped him outside of school. For instance, he believes that Kumon has taught him to focus and use his mind in chess. His mother Abeba Hagos agrees that Kumon has helped Obed become a quick thinker, someone who is able to learn new tasks independently. His father Tadesse Tessema feels that time management is a skill which Obed developed from his Kumon study. Since Obed really values how much Kumon has helped him, he tells

his classmates at school about it. He claims to have recruited six students plus his sister, Yordanos, to Kumon. Obed hopes to become a lawyer when he grows up because he is a good reader and as he himself says, "because I am good at arguing." Kumon might very well be what makes this dream a reality.

Marion Christie, Obed's Kumon Instructor at the Brampton Kumon Center, says that Obed is a perfectionist. "He is a hard worker who does not like to make mistakes. The hardest lesson for him to learn was that we learn from our mistakes and that mistakes are what challenge us to do better and move forward." Obed and his family recognize Ms. Christie's dedication to Obed's learning. The entire Tessema family all remember the day when Obed forgot his Kumon homework at the Center, and Ms. Christie took the time to drive to their home to drop off his work. When Obed was asked why his Instructor would do such a thing, he said that it was because she knew I would learn from my mistake: hats off to Obed, his parents and his Instructor! They are perfect representatives of what Kumon is all about.

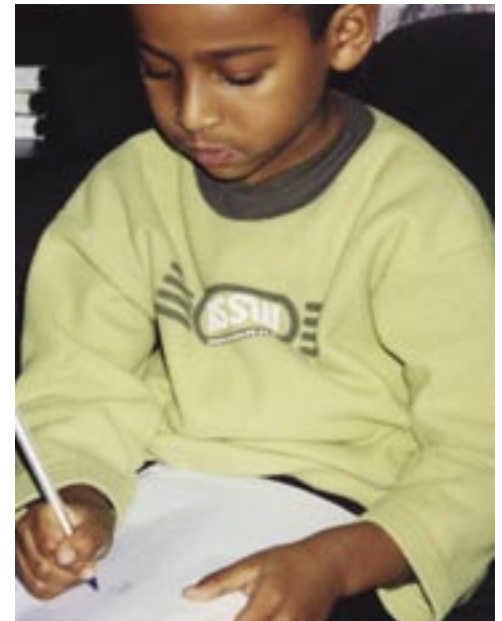
*Obed Tessema Photos-*

*Top: Writing at five years old*

*Middle Left: Age 4 when he first started Kumon*

*Middle Right: Soccer photo at seven years old*

*Bottom: Current school photo at 8 years old*



THOUGHTS BY TORU KUMON

To completely master calculation ability and reading comprehension, it is necessary to learn those fundamental abilities sequentially, systematically, and continually.



# Earn While You Learn with Kumon's Cosmic Club

## What is the Cosmic Club?

Kumon's Cosmic Club is a program that rewards Kumon Students with great prizes for learning.

## How can I enroll?

Every student enrolled at Kumon is automatically registered in the Cosmic Club.

## How do I earn points?

You earn points just by being enrolled at Kumon and even more points for reaching milestones, like moving to a new level or attaining G by 5 with the most points awarded for Program Completion.

## Enrollment Points

- 2 Enroll as a new student, or in a new subject
- 1 Each month of enrollment
- 2 6 months of consecutive enrollment bonus
- 5 12 months of consecutive enrollment bonus

## Milestone Points

- 3 Successful advancement to a new level
- 5 Achieving advanced honor roll status (ASHR Level 1)
- 7 Achieving two years ahead of grade level (ASHR Level 2)
- 10 Achieving three years ahead of grade level (ASHR Level 3)
- 10 Attaining "G by 5" status
- 20 Attaining Reading Level L 200
- 30 Attaining Math Level O 200
- 30 Attaining Kokugo Level O 200

## Do my points ever expire?

If you are absent for more than two consecutive months, you will lose all of your accumulated points. So, don't take the summer off! If you are going on vacation, take your Kumon Worksheets with you. See the Official Rules on the Cosmic Club Web Page.

## How do I know how many points I have in my Cosmic Club account?

You can either go to the web page ([www.cosmic.kumon.com](http://www.cosmic.kumon.com)) or call the Cosmic Club Hotline at 1-800-711-0584. Just ask your Kumon Instructor for your Student ID number.

## How do I use my points to order prizes?

If you have your Student ID number, you can go to the web page to order your prize. You are also welcome to order through the Cosmic Club hotline.

## What are the prizes?

There are six different prize levels with 4-6 different prizes for each level. See some examples below. Remember that the longer you are in Kumon and the more you achieve at your Kumon Center, the more points you earn.

**Status:**  
50 Cosmic Club Points



**Galaxy:**  
100 Cosmic Club Points



**North Star:**  
150 Cosmic Club Points



**Constellation:**  
200 Cosmic Club Points



**Orion:**  
250 Cosmic Club Points



**Zenith:**  
300 Cosmic Club Points  
\$500 Dell Gift Certificate



# The Many Faces of the Language of Numbers

Doctor  
on  
Call

DR. ANDI  
Addresses  
Today's Parenting  
Issues



Learning to do math is a lot like learning to read. Both require breaking a code. For reading, the code is made up of letters; for math, the code consists of numbers. Most children learn to break the codes easily enough. For some, however, it takes great effort, and there are even a few who never succeed in making reading or math easy and enjoyable. For students who struggle with math, it is inconceivable to put the words 'math' and 'simple' in the same sentence. Fortunately, for these students, help is woven into the fabric of the Kumon program.

**1. Gap in Math Basics.** There is no getting around the fact that math is cumulative: each skill builds on the one preceding it. Learning the language of numbers starts with number sense and the basics of arithmetic. The math learned in first grade will be used throughout a student's math career. One cannot do division without knowing how to multiply and subtract, nor can one do algebra without first having mastered the art of manipulating fractions, any more than one can build a house without first constructing a strong foundation. As math grows in complexity, a child's ability to do well in it will lessen if a student has a gap in the basics. **Kumon helps students build a rock-solid foundation in math by introducing concepts in small, incremental steps and by advancing students only after they master each concept before moving on to the next.**

**2. Math Disability.** **Dyscalculia** is a math disability that ranges from mild to severe and is usually not diagnosed until 4th grade or higher; it can involve computational skills or conceptual components; it is frequently accompanied by **Dyslexia**, a reading disability. Math disabilities also occur in combination with visual processing deficits, auditory processing deficits, visual-spatial confusion, memory and sequence difficulties, as well as handwriting problems, **Dysgraphia**. For students with a math disability, nothing about math is simple. The fundamental principle for students with math disabilities is individualization, identification of their strengths and weaknesses, and the use of their strengths on which to build new mathematical skills. For these students, it is important to master the basics; to use verbalization while solving math problems; and to learn strategies for computation and problem solving. **Kumon helps students with math disabilities by individualizing the program to the needs of each student; providing ample repetition and clear explanations (explicit instruction) for those who need it; and allowing students to move at their own pace so there is no pressure to perform.**

**3. Math Phobia.** When a teacher calls on a student who is math phobic, the child may actually experience physical sensations such as throat constriction, sweaty palms, and fear.

To succeed in math, researchers have determined that three things are involved: *spatial ability*, *commitment*, and *confidence*. Although spatial ability is inherent, commitment and confidence are learned. It has been shown that students with less math aptitude, but who are confident in their skills and committed to the subject, can do very well in math. But as students lose their confidence, anxieties mount and math phobias grow. If students lack a solid foundation in the basics, their ability to do well in math will lessen, their confidence will erode, and a phobia to math will develop and increase over time. **Kumon is a confidence building program. Here students always meet with success. As they build their skills and their confidence, they can become committed and capable math students.**

## HELPFUL HINTS FOR PROBLEM AREAS IN MATH:

- a) **Reversal of Numbers** (e.g. 73 for 37 and  $9+2$  for  $6+2$ ).  
**Helpful Hint:** Read math problems aloud before solving them.
- b) **Misalignment of Numbers on Paper.**  
**Helpful Hint:** Use graph paper or turn lined paper sideways so that the lines serve as vertical columns (great for long division).
- c) **Confusion of Operational Signs** (e.g. adding when the sign says subtract).  
**Helpful Hint:** Color code the symbols, e.g. red for addition, blue for subtraction, green for multiplication....
- d) **Failure to Retain Math Facts** (memory deficit is a common characteristic of many learning disabilities).  
**Helpful Hint:** Repetition and regular review of math facts, especially prior to tests; and use of strategies, e.g. since doubles are easy to learn, use the strategy that  $6+7=$  one more than  $6+6$ , reinforcing the fact that  $6+7=13$ .
- e) **Difficulty Translating Words into Numbers and Operations.**  
**Helpful Hint:** Have students build math vocabulary by creating a list of words, and/or symbols on  $3 \times 5$  cards with a definition or an example on the back of each card. For example, the word *ratio* on one side and the division symbol ( $\div$ ) on the other; or the words *greater than* on one side and  $>$  on the other....
- f) **Difficulty Problem Solving** (e.g. lack of planning, organization, and improper sequencing of steps).  
**Helpful Hint:** Before putting pencil to paper, read the problem aloud; next, create a plan, working your way through the steps needed for the solution, verbalizing routinely; then, solve the problem.



**DOB:** 9/95  
**School Grade:** 5th  
**Starting Level:** Math 4A  
 Reading 5A  
**Present Level:** Math H & Reading H  
 (G by 5 Math & Reading)

**Vishal**



**DOB:** 6/98  
**School Grade:** 2nd  
**Starting Level:** Math 4A  
 Reading 2A  
**Present Level:** Math E & Reading CII  
 (ASHR Math & Reading)

**Anmol**



**DOB:** 9/97  
**School Grade:** 2nd  
**Starting Level:** Math 3A  
**Present Level:** Math D (ASHR Math)

**Andrew**



**DOB:** 3/94  
**School Grade:** 6th  
**Starting Level:** Math 4A  
**Present Level:** Math G

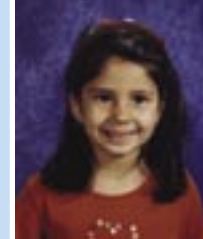
**Megan**

# THE FACES OF KUMON



**DOB:** 4/95  
**School Grade:** 5th  
**Starting Level:** Math 4A  
**Present Level:** Math D

**Alyssa**



**DOB:** 9/99  
**School Grade:** 1st  
**Starting Level:** Math 4A  
 Reading 6A  
**Present Level:** Math A & Reading BI  
 (ASHR Reading)

**Medina**



**DOB:** 1/98  
**School Grade:** 3rd  
**Starting Level:** Math 3A  
 Reading 4A  
**Present Level:** Math C & Reading CII  
 (ASHR Reading)

**Michael**



**DOB:** 5/00  
**School Grade:** K  
**Starting Level:** 6A Math & Reading  
**Present Level:** Math 4A & Reading 3A

**London**



**DOB:** 11/96  
**School Grade:** 4th  
**Starting Level:** Math 3A  
**Present Level:** Math F (ASHR Math)

**Olivia**



**DOB:** 10/98  
**School Grade:** 1st  
**Starting Level:** Math 5A  
**Present Level:** Math C (ASHR Math)

**Charysse**



**DOB:** 11/96  
**School Grade:** 4th  
**Starting Level:** Math D  
**Present Level:** Math J  
 (ASHR Math & G by 5)

**Anthony**



**DOB:** 11/98  
**School Grade:** 2nd  
**Starting Level:** Reading A  
**Present Level:** Reading DI  
 (ASHR Reading)

**Thomas**



**DOB:** 4/96  
**School Grade:** 4th  
**Starting Level:** Math A  
**Present Level:** Math D (ASHR Math)

**Rhea**



**DOB:** 3/01  
**School Grade:** Pre-K  
**Starting Level:** Reading 7A  
**Present Level:** Reading AI  
 (ASHR Reading)

**Mohit**



**DOB:** 4/97  
**School Grade:** 3rd  
**Starting Level:** Math A  
 Reading B  
**Present Level:** Math C & Reading DI  
 (ASHR Reading)

**Rahul**



**DOB:** 7/97  
**School Grade:** 3rd  
**Starting Level:** Math 3A  
**Present Level:** Math E (ASHR Math)

**Yash**



**DOB:** 11/99  
**School Grade:** 1st  
**Starting Level:** Math 4A  
 Reading 7A  
**Present Level:** Math A & Reading All  
 (ASHR Reading)

**Swetha**



**DOB:** 3/98  
**School Grade:** 2nd  
**Starting Level:** Math 4A  
**Present Level:** Math D (ASHR)

**Srihari**

## Interested in having your child featured?

Please talk to your Kumon Instructor.



submissions to The Faces of Kumon must include a signed **Student Profile Form** and a photo (preferably, a head shot no smaller than 2 x 3 inches).

**Incomplete submissions will not be considered.**

Request a form from your Instructor or email us at:

[straighttalk@kumon.com](mailto:straighttalk@kumon.com)

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