

FAMILY GUIDEBOOK: YOUR FIRST YEAR WITH KUMON



KUMON

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1 Introduction

This guidebook is designed for you to support your children's home-study on their journey towards advanced, independent learning.

Even though your children attend the Centre twice a week, they will be learning at home for the other five days of the week. Here is how to manage their home-study for the long-term with easy-to-follow tips, as well as responses to frequently asked questions.

2 Set a 'Kumon time' each day

There are significant benefits in studying a little each day; however, it can be challenging to find time for Kumon study every day. In our experience, the best way to establish and maintain a long-term study habit is to create a routine. Having a routine helps to develop discipline and time management skills, as well as setting a clear expectation of when Kumon is to be done each day.



To start a new routine, firstly look at your family's weekly schedule, and then decide on when 'Kumon time' will be. Try to make this time the same each day. If possible, schedule a time when you will be free to support your children's learning, especially in the early stages of their Kumon study. Some days will be busier than others and unexpected events may arise, but try to be consistent.

Determine whether your children are better able to concentrate in the morning, afternoon or evening, particularly for children at school. For children not at school or when on holidays and weekends, schedule Kumon around an everyday activity like after breakfast or before dinner.

Tips:

- Whether it be before or after school, have your children do their Kumon study prior to doing their school homework. This is so they are better able to concentrate and can complete the work as quickly and accurately as possible.
- Create a family timetable that is easy for all family members to see and know when 'Kumon time' is.
- As children grow up, encourage them to make their own schedule that includes their daily Kumon study.

3

Create a Kumon space

The place where your children study at home is important for the development of concentration and motivation. Choose an area that will become their regular Kumon study space that is free from distractions such as the television, computers or excessive noise. This could be at the kitchen table during a quiet time or in their room. The Kumon space should have pencils, a sharpener, an eraser and a digital clock so children can time their work. For young children working on levels which require support ([Pencil Skills Programme](#) levels ZI and ZII, English levels 7A, 6A, 5A, 4A and 3A, and Maths levels 6A, 5A and 4A), sit with them and follow the worksheet instructions carefully. For children who prefer to work independently, still check on them regularly to ensure they are following the instructions.



Tips:

- Have your children sit in a chair that is low enough for their feet to touch the floor.
- Have the rest of the family also do a quiet activity to respect the concentration needed to study.
- At the completion of each day's work, have your children set out the next day's worksheets in their Kumon space ready for the following day.

4

Motivating and praising your children

Showing enthusiasm and interest in your children's daily study is an excellent form of motivation and support. By simply observing your children study or by checking in to see how they are working, they will feel supported. If your schedule does not allow you to be with your children while they study, check their work as soon as possible and give specific praise for the effort that went into completing their worksheets.



Tips:

- Patience and persistence is vital to success in Kumon. By being patient with your children's progress and encouraging them to work through difficult problems, your children will feel supported.
- Make sure your children understand they are doing Kumon for their own benefit.

- Observe your children as they complete their worksheets so you know what to praise them for, however do not interrupt their study.
- Give specific praise which focuses on your children's effort and not only on their achievements. E.g. "You learned to solve those fractions by yourself, great effort!" or "You concentrated very well today."
- Remind them of how far they have come since starting Kumon. E.g. "You can read so many new words compared to when you first started Kumon." or "You have come so far since you started with plus ones, now you are doing division!"

5 Marking your children's work

Mark your children's worksheets as soon as possible so that they can quickly correct and learn from any errors. It also demonstrates your interest and support. Answer books and a marking guide are available from your Instructor.



Tips:

- It is normal for children to make errors. Do not criticise them for this, rather, follow the marking guide and mark it as an error, give the worksheets back to your children and encourage them to try again. Repeat this process until they have 100% of questions correct. This is an essential step in developing their confidence and independent learning skills.
- If your children are making a particularly large number of errors or are unable to correct their errors, notify your Instructor as soon as possible.
- Praise your children for how many questions they answered correctly or for how well they read instead of highlighting their mistakes.
- You may like to draw a smiley face or write a comment on their work to show how proud you are of their efforts. Ask your Instructor for advice to ensure consistency with the Centre's marking method.

6 After Kumon study is done for the day

After Kumon study is done for the day, make sure the completed and corrected worksheets are placed neatly and in order in their Kumon student bag. This ensures the worksheets will be handed to the Instructor at the next Centre day.

Tips:

- Check your children's Kumon student bag before they attend the Centre. It should contain: three sharpened pencils, an eraser and your children's marked and completed worksheets

as well as any uncompleted worksheets. This is so they can begin studying at the Centre without delay.

- Please return any uncompleted worksheets to the Centre so the Instructor can update the study plan.
- For corrected and recorded worksheets which have come back from the Centre, consider using these to show your children what they have achieved over a period of time or for your children to use as revision.



7 Read with your children

Reading to your children or listening to your children read will help them to develop a habit and love of reading.

Tips:

- Spend at least 5–10 minutes reading a book to your young children each day.
- Listen to your children read their worksheets to you—especially the story pages and praise them for their efforts (Kumon English Programme).
- Access the [Kumon Recommended Reading List](#) and use this as a guide to select books to suit the current reading level of your children.
- For preschoolers who find it difficult to sit still, try letting them draw or play quietly beside you while you read or have them help you turn the pages.
- Read slowly with lots of expression. Put on different voices for book characters—the more fun you make it, the more they will develop a love of books and reading.
- If your children can read, take turns reading paragraphs or even whole pages.
- Help your children with words they are having trouble with.
- If English is not your first language, read books to them in your native language. (You can also borrow English audio books from the local library).
- Become a member of your local library and visit with your family.



8

Supporting children when they do not want to complete their worksheets

It is normal for children to lose motivation at times and not want to do their worksheets. This can be for any number of reasons. When this occurs, check that all of the above guidelines are in place. If they are still unmotivated, do not let it become an argument. Contact your Instructor for advice if your children continue to not want to do their Kumon worksheets.

Tips:

- Check that your children have a Kumon study time set aside each day.
- Check that your children have a Kumon space free from distractions.
- Remind your children of how Kumon has helped them.

9

When absent from class

There will be times when your children cannot attend the Centre. So that their home-study is not affected, please make plans to collect work in advance or simply drop into the centre during centre hours, collect their worksheets and inform Jane of your child's absence.



Tips:

- You only need to contact Jane if you cannot make it in to collect work and in this instance Jane can arrange to deliver work to your letterbox as a courtesy.
- Where possible, drop off completed worksheets and collect new worksheets so that home study continues smoothly.

10

Communication

Communicating with your Kumon Instructor is an important part of the Kumon Method. However, as Instructors give their full attention to the students during Centre operating times, we ask that you contact your Instructor outside of these times. So that she is able to easily contact you, please let her know which times are most convenient for you and by what mode of communication you prefer to be contacted.

Tips:

- Discuss with your Instructor, which modes of communication suits you best:
 - Telephone
 - Text message
 - Email
 - Face-to-face meeting

- You may also choose to leave a message at the Centre for your Instructor to follow up on after class.
- If you have any observations, questions or concerns about your children's home study or ongoing progress in Kumon, please contact your Instructor.

11 Frequently asked questions

Q: How are these worksheets helping my children when they do not match what my child is learning at school?

A: Most students start their Kumon study at a level below what they are studying at school. This helps them to develop a strong foundation and address any gaps they may have had in their learning prior to starting Kumon. For example, if a child is struggling with fractions at school, he/she would not begin their Kumon study with fractions. Rather, he/she would need to review multiplication and division, which are essential for understanding fractions. In time, school work becomes revision and topics like fractions can be tackled with confidence.

Many topics covered in the broad school curriculum are not included in the Kumon worksheets so children can develop the core calculation and reading comprehension skills as quickly as possible. The [Kumon English](#) worksheets focus on topics intended to develop children's reading comprehension. The [Kumon Maths](#) worksheets focus on the topics necessary for the study of senior high school mathematics. Strong reading comprehension and calculation ability form the foundation for success in all subjects at school.

Q: What if Kumon homework becomes too much for my children who already have a range of other commitments?

A: Kumon requires daily study to be most effective. When planning your children's activity schedule, particularly in their first year at Kumon, please take the level of commitment required for Kumon into consideration so they do not become overburdened. As they continue to learn with Kumon, many students become better at managing their time and can undertake a range of other commitments. They are also able to complete their school homework more quickly and efficiently. However, as children progress, the difficulty and time required to complete the worksheets may increase. Please contact your Kumon Instructor if your children are unable to cope with the workload.

Q: What if my children have not done their assigned Kumon worksheets?

A: Unexpected events may arise which will prevent your children from completing a day of Kumon study. If your children are motivated to complete two days of Kumon work the next day, encourage them to do so. If not, have them continue from where they left off the following day. It is important to return both the completed and uncompleted worksheets to the Centre on the next Centre day. This is so the Instructor can see what your children have and have not completed and adjust their study plan accordingly. Do not keep uncompleted worksheets at home.

Q: Why are my children repeating the same sets of worksheets?

A: Providing children with the chance to practice is a key aspect of the Kumon Programme. Through practice, students become faster and more accurate—two key measures of competency in mental calculation and reading comprehension. Kumon wants all students to have the experience of being able to complete school work quickly and accurately and practice is an effective method to achieve this. It also consolidates students' understanding of a topic so they have the confidence and skill to move on to learn the next topic.

Q: Why have my children been studying addition for so long?

A: The structure of the worksheets has been designed for children to build key skills and progress in incremental steps without feeling they are making a big leap from one topic to another. This is particularly the case during the early levels of the Maths Programme as children are developing the skill of mental calculation. Throughout levels 3A, 2A and most of A, children will be solving addition problems that gradually increase in difficulty along with the number of problems to be solved. Although the topic is not changing, your children's skill level is increasing.

To have a clear picture of when your children are likely to progress to a new topic, ask your Instructor to share your children's 12 month study projection.

3A161a KUMON 3A 161
Adding 3 Part 1 (Up to 14 + 3)

Name _____ Date ____/____/____
Time : to

◆ Add.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

$2 + 3 = 5$
Two plus three equals five.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

(1) $1 + 3 =$

(2) $3 + 3 =$

(3) $4 + 3 =$

(4) $5 + 3 =$

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2A151a KUMON 2A 151
Adding 9 (Up to 12 + 9)

Name _____ Date ____/____/____
Time : to

◆ Add.

(1) $2 + 8 = 10$

(2) $2 + 9 = 11$

(3) $1 + 8 = 9$

(4) $1 + 9 =$

(5) $4 + 8 =$

(6) $4 + 9 =$

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A77a KUMON A 77
Addition 8 (Summary of addition)

Name _____ Date ____/____/____
Time : to

◆ Add.

(1) $5 + 10 =$

(2) $9 + 10 =$

(3) $10 + 10 =$

(4) $11 + 10 =$

(5) $13 + 10 =$

(6) $16 + 10 =$

(7) $15 + 10 =$

(8) $17 + 10 =$

(9) $19 + 10 =$

(10) $20 + 10 =$

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Q: How long will it take until they catch up to their school grade level?

A: We aim for students to study beyond what they are learning at school within 12 months of enrolling in Kumon. Of course, as every child's ability is different, the rate of progress is different for every child. However, most students can achieve this in 12 months, provided they always attend the Centre and study the worksheets on a daily basis at home.

To have a clear picture of when your children are likely to catch up to their school grade level, ask your Instructor to share your children's 12 month study projection with you.

Q: Now that my children are reaching school grade level at Kumon, will they start to get bored at school?

A: Children studying at or beyond their school grade level do not get bored at school. Rather, as their confidence and ability is high, they actively participate at school, have a great desire to learn and feel a sense of satisfaction from being able to understand what they are learning in the classroom.

Even for children who become very advanced in the Kumon Programmes, there will be many topics that they have the opportunity to explore for the first time at school. Schools also recognise and provide opportunities to further challenge bright students, for example, by placing them in extension classes. Because advanced students are able to cope with the classroom content, they often have the ability and willingness to engage in extra-curricular activities and leadership roles.

Q: Should I reward my children for doing Kumon work?

A: How you reward your children is an individual choice. Whichever way you choose, it is important to make clear to your children what they are being rewarded for. Be clear you are rewarding your children's effort, work habit and stamina to complete the task, not only for being 'clever' or getting 100%. For example, reward them for doing their Kumon worksheets without being asked; completing their work in one go; or making a special effort to write neatly. Giving regular praise to your children is an important way to support them through Kumon.

Q: Why are my children not always helped right away when they are at the Centre?

A: Kumon is a self-learning programme. We believe it is valuable for children to attempt to answer questions on their own first. Even when children ask for help or put their hand up, the Kumon Instructor will often ask them to think a little harder and longer and at least make an attempt to answer the question themselves. Once children have made this effort, the Instructor or an assistant will help them.

Wherever possible, we want children to have the experience of solving things for themselves to increase their confidence and independence. This is a unique feature of the Kumon

¹<http://www.nap.edu.au/naplan/parent-carer-support/preparing-for-naplan.html>

Method. Talk to your Instructor about how you can encourage independent learning in your children's home study by making the best possible use of the instructions and examples in the worksheets.

Q: How do we manage our children's Kumon study if we go on a holiday?

A: Please give your Instructor at least two weeks' notice if you are going on a holiday via the centre's [parent portal](#) so they can plan for your children's continued study. A study plan can be adjusted to take your holiday into consideration. While the volume of worksheets may be reduced, keeping your children's study consistent is important for their continued progress.

Q: Will Kumon help my children do well in the NAPLAN test?

A: [The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority](#) (ACARA) which runs the NAPLAN test states: 'NAPLAN is not a test that children can prepare for in the same way they might prepare for an end of term test. NAPLAN tests skills that develop and improve over time. These are skills that should be continuously developed throughout the year and not just in the lead-up to NAPLAN. The best way to get your child ready for NAPLAN is to continue to develop literacy and numeracy skills.'

Kumon Maths and English Programmes focus on children's long-term education by developing their reading comprehension and mathematics ability, which form the foundation for all subjects at school and, according to ACARA, is 'the best way to get your child ready for NAPLAN'.

The Kumon Method also gives students experience in working independently and to time, which closely reflects test conditions they will have at school.

12 Further information

For parents who want to know more about Kumon, please ask your Instructor about borrowing a copy of one of the following publications:

- David W. Russell, *The Kumon Method of Education: A Parent's Guide*, Allen & Unwin, 1993
- *Seeking the Boundless Potential*, Kumon Institute of Education, 1996

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