



FAMILY GUIDEBOOK:
YOUR FIRST YEAR WITH KUMON

KUMON

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1 Introduction

Kumon is committed to engaging with parents and carers as partners in their children's learning. 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 learn at home on the other five days. Their progress is therefore dependent on the effectiveness of the home learning conditions. This guidebook suggests how to manage the challenges with easy-to-follow tips, as well as responses to frequently asked questions.

2 Making a place for Kumon in your busy family schedule

There are significant benefits to studying a little each day. For example, it develops a positive attitude towards learning and ensures steady progress. However, it can be challenging to find time in your busy schedules. The best way to establish and maintain a long-term daily study habit is to create a routine. Having a routine helps to develop discipline and time management skills.



To establish a routine, firstly look at your family's weekly schedule and decide on when 'Kumon time' will be. Allocate 30 minutes per day per subject. If possible, this should be a time when you can be present to support your children as they learn, especially in the early stages of their Kumon study. Some days will be busier than others, and unexpected events can arise, but aim to be consistent.

Determine when your children are best able to concentrate. Schedule Kumon around everyday activities, such as meals, or other regular commitments.

Tips:

- Whether it is before or after school, have your children do their Kumon study prior to other activities. Some children consider Kumon study a 'mental warm-up' before taking on other tasks, such as music practice or school homework.
- Create a family timetable that it is easy for all family members to see and know when 'Kumon time' is.
- Include your children in the process of deciding when their 'Kumon time' will be.

3 Creating a Kumon space

The place where your children study at home is important for the development of concentration and motivation. Choose an area together with your children that will become their regular Kumon study space, free from distractions, such as the television, computers or excessive noise. This could be during a quiet time at the kitchen table or in their room. The Kumon space should have pencils, a sharpener, an eraser and a digital clock so children can write their start time and finish time. It is necessary to supervise young children working through the [Pencil Skills Programme](#), [English](#) levels 7A, 6A, 5A and 4A and [Maths](#) levels 6A, 5A and 4A. We recommend families to continue supervising their children until they are able to study the worksheets independently. Even when children are studying independently, please still check on them periodically to ensure they feel supported.

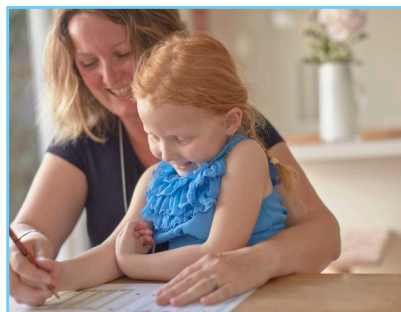


Tips:

- Have your young children sit in a chair that is low enough for their feet to be on 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, encourage your children to prepare their worksheets 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 checking in to see how they are working, your children will feel supported. If your schedule does not allow you to be with your children while they study, check and mark their work as soon as possible and acknowledge the effort that went into completing their worksheets.



Tips:

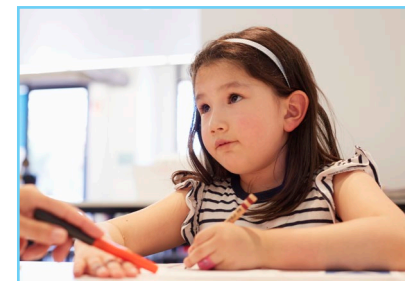
- Be patient with your children's progress and encourage them to work through difficult problems.
- Observe how your children are studying

the worksheets. Ensure they are following the instruction or examples as indicated on the worksheets, however, be mindful not to interrupt their study flow.

- Give specific praise which focuses on your children's effort and not only on their achievements. E.g. "You learned to solve division 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're doing multiplication!"
- Link their effort in Kumon to their wider academic progress and the benefits this will bring. E.g. "Your test results at school have been improving, I can see that the effort you are putting into your Kumon is making a big difference!" or "You are finishing your school homework much quicker, Kumon has definitely improved your concentration!"

5 Marking your children's work

Mark your children's work, and have them do any corrections, as soon as possible. It is one of the best ways to support your children's progress. By doing corrections quickly, they learn from any errors. In Kumon, errors are learning opportunities, and they help Instructors gauge what are the appropriate worksheets to assign next. Answer books and the [Kumon Marking Guide](#) are available from your Instructor.



Tips:

- Never criticise errors. Making errors and then correcting them is a fundamental feature of our learning method. Rather, praise your children for doing their corrections.
- If your children are disappointed when they make errors, explain it is a chance to confirm their understanding.
- Follow the [Kumon Marking Guide](#) and give the worksheets back to your children to try again.
- Ensure that they work out where they went wrong first, and then erase and fix only the part of the answer that is wrong. This approach is efficient, and develops correction and problem solving ability. Avoid them rubbing everything out and starting all over again. This is time consuming and they do not determine where they went wrong.
- Repeat this process until they have 100% of questions correct. This is an essential step in developing their confidence and independent learning skills.
- 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.
- If your children are making a particularly large number of errors, don't worry, and don't start teaching them how to do the worksheets. Rather, inform your Instructor at the next class.
- If your children cannot fix any errors on their own, again, you don't need to teach them. Your Instructor will identify the root cause and address it at the next class.

6 Finishing Kumon for the day

Once a student has completed and corrected their worksheets and placed them in order within their Kumon student bag for their next Centre visit, their Kumon is done for the day.

Tips:

- Check your children's Kumon student bag before they attend the Centre. It should contain: sharpened pencils, an eraser and your children's marked and completed worksheets, as well as any uncompleted worksheets. This is so they have everything they need to study at the Centre and can begin their work without delay.
- Please make sure any uncompleted worksheets are also handed in to the Centre.
- For corrected and recorded worksheets which have come back from the Centre, consider using these as a reference to show your children what they have achieved or for your children to use as revision. Take these worksheets out of their Kumon bag.



7 When unable to attend class

There will be times when your children cannot attend the Centre. So that your children's home study is not affected, please contact your Instructor to make arrangements for the collection of worksheets.

If you are going on holiday and want your children to continue studying, please give your Instructor at least two weeks' notice of your children's absence from the Centre so



they can plan ahead. A holiday study programme to meet your needs can be arranged. The volume of worksheets may be reduced, and previous content may be reviewed.

Tips:

- Contact your Instructor as soon as possible if you know your children will miss a Centre session due to illness
- Contact your Instructor at least two weeks' prior to taking absence from the Centre, e.g. if taking a holiday
- Where possible, arrange to drop off completed worksheets and collect new worksheets so that daily study continues.

8 Communicating with your Instructor

Communication 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. Much like your children's school classroom teachers, Kumon Instructors are generally not available to respond to queries during class time. So that your Instructor is able to easily contact you, please let him/her know which times are most convenient for you and how you prefer to be contacted.

It can be helpful to inform your Instructor of matters such as an upcoming family holiday, if your child is particularly busy at school or if you notice a change in your child's motivation.

Tips:

- Discuss with your Instructor, which modes of communication suit 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.

9 Reading with your children

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

For reading tips and to discover much loved book titles for younger readers, visit: www.readtogether.com.au. For readers of all ages and abilities, visit www.kumon-english-rrl.com.



10 Frequently asked questions

Q: What happens if my children don't want to do their Kumon?

A: It is normal for children to lose motivation, particularly when they encounter a difficult set of worksheets. If this occurs, check that the above tips are being followed. If they are still unmotivated, do not force your children to study. Contact your Instructor for advice if your children continue to object to studying.

Q: I just want my children to enjoy studying but they can become frustrated doing their Kumon. What should I do?

A: Parents may find their children becoming frustrated during their Kumon journey. Whatever the cause, learning how to persevere through challenges at Kumon makes it easier for students to overcome challenges at school. As Kumon Maths and English Completer Shilpan Patel said, "There will be times when you're struggling with a question and the Instructor will just say you need to look at the example and try to work it out. It's tough and it can be frustrating but that's when the best learning happens!"

If your children become particularly frustrated, do not do the work for them or encourage them to skip a day. Ask your children to take a short break and come back to finish it later. Contact your Instructor for further advice on how best to support your children during their home study.

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

A: Unexpected events may arise which could 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 adjust your children's study plan accordingly. Do not keep uncompleted worksheets at home.

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

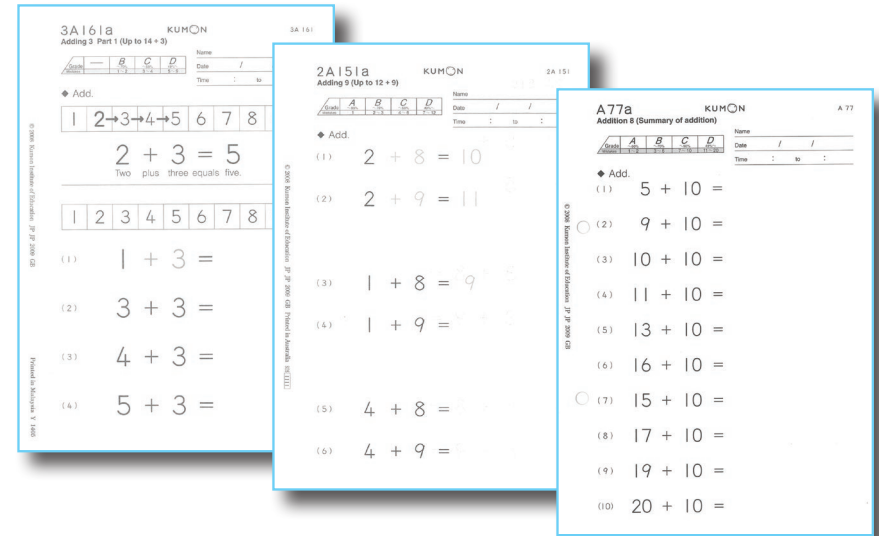
A: There will be times in your children's Kumon Programme when their Instructor will plan for them to repeat the same set of worksheets. This ensures children have the necessary skills and knowledge to confidently progress to the next set of worksheets. Practice also gives students a chance to consolidate their understanding of a topic and complete their work faster and more accurately—two key measures of competency in mental calculation and reading comprehension.

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

A: The aim of Kumon is to prepare students for the challenges of learning at school and beyond. To do this, Kumon Instructors plan for all students to have a strong foundation in calculation and reading before progressing towards advanced study. While the material a student is learning at Kumon may not always match what they are learning at school, the fundamental topics and study skills they are gaining ensures constant improvement. For example, if a child is struggling with fractions, it is first necessary to review topics such as multiplication and division.

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

The structure of the worksheets have been designed for children to progress in incremental



steps without feeling they are making a big leap from one topic to another. For example, maths worksheet levels 3A, 2A and most of level A concentrate on addition which is the basis for all other operations in maths. If children develop strong mental calculation through these initial levels, future studies will be more manageable.

Although the worksheets from 3A – A contain the same topic, the level of difficulty and number of problems to be solved in the worksheets increases gradually. Although the topic is not changing, your children's skill level is increasing.

To have a clear understanding of your children's future progress, ask your Instructor to share your children's 12 month study projection with you.

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

A: We aim for students to study above what they are learning at school within 12 months of enrolling in Kumon. Of course, every child's rate of progress is different, however most students can achieve this if they attend the Centre twice a week and study the worksheets on a daily basis.

Ask your Instructor to share your children's 12 month study projection to have a clear understanding of your children's intended progress.

Q: When my children reach school grade level at Kumon, will they 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 topics

they will explore for the first time at school. Schools also provide opportunities to challenge advanced students, for example, by placing them in extension classes. Many advanced Kumon students also have the willingness to engage in extra-curricular activities and leadership roles.

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

A: Kumon is a home-based study method that requires daily study to be most effective. When planning your children's other activities, please take the level of commitment required for Kumon into consideration. As students' progress with Kumon, they become better at managing their time and are able to complete their school homework quickly and efficiently.

If you or your children are unable to manage the workload at certain times, please discuss this with your Kumon Instructor. It is very common. The Instructor can make some temporary adjustments to help you manage your children's study along with all your other commitments.

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

A: If you choose to reward your children for doing Kumon, it is important to make clear to your children what they are being rewarded for. Be clear you are rewarding your children's effort and work habit, 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 and specific praise to your children is an important way to support them through Kumon.

Q: Why is it important to attend the Kumon Centre?

A: Instructors are skilled in maximising students' learning through the Kumon worksheets. When students attend the Centre, Instructors observe students' work habits, see the records of their home study and address any problem areas. Instructors are also able to motivate students and individualise the programme based on each student's ability. Instructors will also often plan for a student to start a new topic during their Centre days. This ensures any misunderstandings can be addressed at the Centre and home study can be a more enjoyable experience.

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

A: Wherever possible, we want children to have the empowering experience of answering questions themselves. This is a unique feature of the Kumon Method. Even when children ask for help or put their hand up, the Instructor will often guide them to re-read the instructions or to follow the examples. This allows students to experience the joy in discovering things for themselves by using their own capabilities – at Kumon this is called "self-learning". Once children have made this effort, the Instructor or an assistant may offer support.

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: What if the Kumon Maths worksheets show a different working out process to how my children are taught at school? Will my children get confused?

A: Kumon worksheets show the most efficient calculation process, but it may not always exactly match how your children are expected to solve maths at school. For example, we do not insist that children write carry marks in vertical addition if they can hold numbers in their head, or convert mixed numbers to improper fractions when doing addition and subtraction of fractions. As such differences are slight, Kumon students can usually easily switch between the two methods without confusion, especially once they are studying above their school grade

level. Kumon Instructors are also always mindful of such points in the worksheets where the working out may differ and take this into account when instructing your children. If there is ever a particular issue arising from such differences, please let your Instructor know so that he/she can support you.

Q: Will Kumon help my children do well in tests such as selective high school tests (NSW, VIC, QLD, WA), opportunity class tests (NSW) and NAPLAN (Australia)?

A: While the Kumon Method doesn't teach to any specific test, Kumon requires children to work independently, concentrate for extended periods and complete assignments within a time frame, all of which will support performance under test conditions. Kumon also provides students with achievement tests when they complete a level of study in maths or English. The Instructor ensures students are ready to sit the tests which allows them to experience success. The confidence and skills students gain from their Kumon tests supports their performance outside of Kumon.

[The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority](#) (ACARA) runs the NAPLAN test and 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.

Q: What signs of progress can I expect to see as my children continue with Kumon?

A: Our aim at Kumon is to develop students into independent learners with mathematics and reading ability beyond their school grade level. We achieve this by ensuring children develop the following:

- quick, precise calculation skill in mathematics, and reading comprehension ability;
- concentration
- a daily study and reading habit and;
- the confidence to learn independently

Daily study of the Kumon worksheets will help your children to develop the above attributes. Over time, the Kumon Method helps students to develop independent learning skills – at Kumon we call this "self-learning". Characteristics of a self-learner include perseverance and the confidence to take on challenges by themselves. These attributes continue to improve throughout a student's time at Kumon. Ultimately we develop children into self-learners for them to succeed in high school and beyond.

11 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

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



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