

POTENTIAL

JUL-
DEC
2020

KUMON *feature*

RESILIENCE

BOUNCING BACK AND
EMERGING STRONGER

my life, my dream

ELIZABETH GOH KIA SWAN

EVA GOH PEI SWAN

ANG YI KAI

parenting
TIPS

Get tougher,
Go further
Tips to develop a
resilient child



KUMON SINGAPORE
CELEBRATES

25
YEARS
OF PROVIDING QUALITY EDUCATION

KUMON

editor's Note

Dear parents,

It is Kumon Singapore's 25th Anniversary this year. Kumon started with one Centre in 1995. Today, there are 86 Kumon Centres established around the country, enabling many more children to learn and grow with the Kumon Method.

Through the years, we have been awed by so many inspiring children who flourished with Kumon. Thousands of children came to Kumon and grew with us. Their learning capacities expanded. Their resilience strengthened.

As we celebrate our 25th Anniversary milestone in this unprecedented time caused by the virus outbreak, we also witnessed how our students and their parents emerged stronger with resilience, ready to embrace the new 'normal'.

Let's take a peek into how Kumon students overcome the adversity, and keep on moving forward towards their goals. In this issue, we have a pair of twins, Elizabeth Goh and Eva Goh who have their own distinctive personalities. Eva is a curious child and is inseparable from her books, whereas Elizabeth's interest lies in music and sports.

In our other feature, we hear from an eight-year-old boy, Ang Yi Kai, who wants to become an independent learner.

Happy reading!

Elphin

PR & Marketing, Kumon Singapore



ON THE COVER Jul - Dec 2020
Elizabeth Goh Kia Swan
Eva Goh Pei Swan



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Tel: +65 6232 5855 Fax: +65 6232 5822/33

E-mail: sg-kaoweb@kumonglobal.com

Website: sg.kumonglobal.com

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Contents

My Life, My Dream

- 03 Elizabeth Goh Kia Swan
Eva Goh Pei Swan
- 04 Ang Yi Kai

Features

- 06 **Regional Article**
Resilience: Bouncing back & emerging stronger
- 08 **Instructors' Quote**

Regulars

- 10 **Local News**
Home learning with Kumon
- 11 **Parenting Tips**
Get tougher, go further – Tips to develop a resilient child



Yi Kai is an active eight-year old boy who enjoys playing badminton and soccer. He frequents the library and aspires to be a writer and scientist.

"I want to make a better world by contributing to the society," he explained.

"My son is a curious child and enjoys sharing about what he observes in people. He enjoys reading books, but had no desire to sit down and often refused to do homework on his own prior to joining Kumon," revealed Yi Kai's father, Mr Ang.

Mr Ang wanted to prepare Yi Kai for primary school and decided to take a leap of faith, enrolling his son in the Kumon Mathematics Programme after seeing an advertisement on social media.

"I believe the Kumon Method can help him to learn at his own pace and become independent," he said.

After about 12 months in Kumon, Yi Kai was already learning materials beyond his school grade and doing school work on his own when he entered Primary One. Mr Ang became even more convinced of the benefits of learning with Kumon. He subsequently enrolled Yi Kai in the Chinese Programme.

He recalled, "My boy was nervous in the beginning and it took him a while to get used to the study approach. He felt frustrated when he had to spend time finding solutions on his own."

Initially, Yi Kai took a while to complete his work as he needed more guidance from his father. Nowadays, he breezes through his work almost effortlessly. The daily practice has helped to build his mental calculation skills and improved the accuracy of his answers.

"When my boy was attempting to simplify the fraction for $\frac{375}{1000}$, instinctively, I told him to reduce by 25 to make it a smaller number. He then corrected me to use 125 immediately," recounted a pleasantly surprised Mr Ang.

Yi Kai revealed that his favourite topic was four operations (of fractions) in Mathematics and he enjoyed 'sentence structuring' in Chinese. Yi Kai is determined to never give up and advance to the higher levels in both programmes.

Yi Kai has gained much confidence and is now four years ahead of his school grade level for Mathematics and one year advanced in Chinese. At school, he often completes his work fast and helps his friends with their school work.

Mr. Ang could not be prouder of the person his son had become. He hopes that Yi Kai will continue to take ownership of his learning and become even more independent.

He highlighted, "Yi Kai actually took the ownership of planning his daily learning routine during the Covid-19 outbreak."

As such, Mr. Ang was able to facilitate his son's learning from home while also working at the same time. He added that Yi Kai was delighted to stay connected with his Kumon Instructor via video calls during the difficult period.



Ang Yi Kai, 8

Mathematics

Level G 100

Simplifying Algebraic Expressions

Chinese

Level CII 30 Sentence Structuring

Ambition

Writer and a scientist



Elizabeth and Eva are a pair of seven-year-old twin sisters.

"Eva has been scoring nothing less than full marks for her English and Mathematics assignments and quizzes in school! Elizabeth is doing almost as well as Eva. I attribute this to the strong academic foundation that Kumon has built. I wish I had signed them up for Kumon Chinese from a young age too," shared Ms Jacqueline Tan, the twins' mother.

She started them with Kumon English and Mathematics when they were two-and-a-half years old. Eva is now learning English materials five years ahead of her school grade. She is also studying three years ahead in Mathematics. Her older sister, Elizabeth is now two years ahead of her school grade in Mathematics and English.

Despite having the same genes, the twins have their own distinctive personalities. Ms Tan said, "Eva has always been a very curious child and is inseparable from her books. As for Elizabeth, her interest lies in music and sports. Elizabeth enjoys taekwondo and swimming, whereas Eva prefers art and fencing. In their free time, they practise their musical instruments (piano for Elizabeth and violin for Eva) or play a game of chess."

Embarking on their Kumon journey

Besides having close proximity between home and the Kumon Centre, Ms Tan shared the other reasons for enrolling her twins in Kumon.

"Firstly, because the Instructor showed keen interest in developing the twins despite them being just two-and-a-half years old. Secondly, because of the rigour and discipline needed to complete the daily worksheets which would help them get used to the concept of homework when they are in Primary school. Thirdly, because Kumon is extremely structured in its approach for every programme."

After looking at the Kumon materials, she decided that Kumon was the best programme around to build a very strong foundation for the twins' future academic studies.

When Eva first joined Kumon, she felt nervous because of the Diagnostic Test. Nowadays, she feels happy going to Kumon because the teachers are nice and the work is interesting. Elizabeth shares the same sentiment these days.

Ms Tan recalled that before Elizabeth joined Kumon, she did not love reading unlike Eva. However, in marked contrast to her previous playful attitude, Elizabeth began picking up books to read after being exposed to many interesting stories from the English Programme.

Ms Tan's heart swelled with pride when she recounted the time Eva received her 5-years-advanced award for English. Eva's English Kumon Instructor encouraged her to be one of the youngest ever English Completers in Singapore and this has kept Eva going despite the challenges of the increasingly difficult worksheets.

The twins found that learning ahead of their school grade not only helped them to get their school work done quickly and accurately but also enabled them to help



Elizabeth
Goh, Kia Swan. 7
Mathematics
Level C 110 Multiplication
English
Level D1 70
Complex Sentence Analysis
Ambition
Doctor



Eva
Coh Pei Swan, 7
Mathematics
Level E140
Addition of Fractions
English
Level G11 70
Summarising over Paragraphs
Ambition
Judge

their friends with work in school.

Elizabeth likes the interesting stories found in the Level D English worksheets while Eva likes the non-fiction found in the same level. For Mathematics, Elizabeth prefers 'Horizontal Addition' because she is able to sail through the questions whereas Eva prefers 'Addition of Fractions' as she can solve the questions by applying what she learned from previous topics.

Overcoming the challenges and building resilience through goal-setting

Ms Tan shared, "The twins are members of Mensa. It helped that the previous Instructor was also a Mensa member as he understood how frustrating it could be for a highly gifted child to do repetitive worksheets."

Working together, they took the decision to reduce the daily worksheets for Eva for a period and also moved her through the worksheets at a faster pace. According to Ms Tan, this tailored, non-cookie-cutter approach was tremendously helpful.

With their perseverance, the twins have not only become skilled at mathematics and English, but also developed resilience. Neither of them have missed a day of Kumon homework even when on holiday. Albeit Eva's threats to quit Kumon several times when she was given repeat worksheets on occasion, the thought of the Kumon awards has kept her going.

In their mother's view, Eva has learnt from Kumon a very important lesson – that hard work is still the bedrock of success no matter how intelligent one is. She recalled a time when Eva herself attributed her good marks in school to Kumon.

Eva shared, "I want to be the youngest Completer for the English Programme and to get the 5-years-advanced award for Mathematics Programme too." Elizabeth is aiming for 3 years award for both Programmes.

Handling work and children during the Covid-19 circuit breaker

The implemented daily routine allowed Ms Tan some time to do her own work while the twins were occupied earlier this year during the circuit breaker period.

"After breakfast and some reading time, the twins will complete their school's homebased learning (HBL). After that, they will do some physical activities like Hopscotch at home. After lunch, they will play board or card games before starting their Kumon homework which keeps them busy for at least two hours (they have taken double the usual number of worksheets for this period). Thereafter, the twins will either play with their lego, or do some artworks before dinner. To wind down the evening, Eva will spend time practising on her violin while Elizabeth does likewise on the piano."

She was grateful for the support and guidance given by the Instructor, which had helped the girls keep their learning momentum going.

The twins remarked that learning at home with their grandmother and mother was not as fun as compared to Kumon classes and at school. They hoped all their friends and teachers at Kumon were safe and well, and could not wait to see them once again.



Resilience:

Bouncing Back and Emerging Stronger



Life is full of ebbs and flows. It is inevitable that you will encounter some form of difficulties at some point of time. When such difficult situations occur, there are generally two options. One, is to let the disappointment, frustration or anger that you are feeling stop you in your tracks. The other; which it not easy, is to let the difficult situation that you have encountered, motivate you and serve as a chance for self-improvement. The ability to bounce back stronger from hard times, rather than letting failures or disappointments keep you down, is known as resilience.

Why Building Resilience in Children is important?

Resilience is an important trait for all of us, and an essential one for our children to develop. It helps to create happier, less stressed children wherever they are – whether in school, at home or attending their enrichment classes. Children are able to emerge from challenging experiences with a positive sense of themselves and their future.

According to a report by the World Economic Forum¹, 65% of the children who entered primary school in 2016 will be in new jobs that have not been invented. Resilient children will find themselves better placed than their less resilient peers to gain the new knowledge and skills necessary for them to succeed in these newly invented jobs.

Now with the COVID-19 pandemic that shook the world, building resilience in children is more important than ever. Early this year, stringent measures and movement restriction orders were put in place around the world. As a result, schools and enrichment centres were closed and children had to adapt to a new way of learning – home-based learning.



Home-based learning, being a different paradigm, poses different challenges to many children. Instead of the face-to-face learning in a physical classroom that they are used to, they are required to learn using a plethora of video conferencing and digital classroom applications. Besides learning and adapting to these new technologies, children have also had to adapt to a learning routine in their homes – a place where they traditionally leave from to go to school and learn.

As schools and Kumon Centres are closed for classroom-based learning and in-Centre study respectively, students now have to complete all their assigned work at home instead of the usual routine that they were used to. When they encounter a problem while doing homework, guidance may not be as readily available. Teachers and Kumon Instructors are not in the same room and parents could be in the next room busy with their own work. That is when a Kumon student digs deep with the resources available to himself/herself to overcome challenges.

The Kumon Method is designed as a home-based learning programme. When students begin learning with Kumon, they are assigned worksheets according to their “just-right” level, to complete daily. Kumon worksheets are designed to take students through difficult concepts in very small-steps by studying the examples and hints contained within. Students then attempt to solve the problems and complete the worksheets on their own. This continual exposure through active problem-solving, independently, develops the resilience, discipline, self-learning and creative thinking skills, which are integral to effective home-based learning.

Beyond the pandemic, the self-learning ability will help Kumon students in various pursuits outside the confines of the Kumon Centre. Mr. Toru Kumon, founder of Kumon, expressed this point when he wrote to the Kumon Instructors in a long-standing publication, *Yamabiko*, in 1986, “We hope they develop an academic ability that is solid enough to enable them to understand new content without having to be taught. Children who have developed the habit of self-learning will surely grow to become people who can continue solving problems in life on their own. They will be able to do this by continuing to read and learn through books, even after university and as they venture out into the world. This is why I want as many children as possible to learn with Kumon.”

¹ World Economic Forum, Chapter 1: *The Future Of Jobs and Skills*, retrieved from <https://reports.weforum.org/future-of-jobs-2016/chapter-1-the-future-of-jobs-and-skills/#view/in-1>



Instructors' Quotes

The Kumon Method provides students a learning journey with lots of ups and downs. One of the skill set taught in Kumon Method is resilience, having the ability to overcome challenges encountered from the worksheet and to keep on going. Whenever students approach me feeling discouraged and unable to move on, I will always encourage and motivate them with the following analogy, "Can a baby learn to walk without falling?" Life provides lots of opportunities and challenges and it is natural that we will face failures. Most importantly we should not be discouraged and should persevere on and overcome them. We will never know unless we try!



Ms. Caroline
Kumon Singapore

I understand that squeezing Kumon in with school, all within the confines of home, may be challenging for children and their parents. But children are using their time well to keep learning. In fact, many of my students are actually asking for more worksheets as they have completed their homework ahead of schedule. They are also responding well to pre-arranged video call sessions.

I see this as my students showing a great deal of resilience through the pandemic. This shows to me that it is always possible to bring out the best in every child, in any situation.



Ms. Krishna Sharma
Kumon Australia
and New Zealand



We have read that resilience is especially important during the Covid-19 pandemic. How important is resilience in our children's Kumon journey and how does Kumon nurtures this essential trait in our children? Let us read on to see what some of our Kumon Instructors from around the region has to say.

Some days, your child's Kumon worksheets feel super easy and homework is finished in 5 mins; other days, they feel challenging and even impossible (cue: tears and tantrums). Through the Kumon journey, our students gain an important life skill - resilience. We are committed to nurturing your child to embrace the difficult or the unknown in his/her worksheets and never to give up when it gets tough. When a page is full of errors, we figure out why, correct our mistakes and learn from them. Resilience gets us through Kumon which, just like life, is full of ups and downs but ultimately an enriching experience for all!



Ms. Caley Lim
Kumon Brunei

"There is never good enough. There is always something better" - Mr Toru Kumon
The Kumon worksheets were designed with incremental difficulty in small steps which help students to be resilient and keep on learning level by level. Eventually, the process helps to improve their skills and they can maximise their potential while learning through the examples provided. Many young children are doing advanced study, that not only develop their academic ability, but also produces strong progress in terms of their independence, enthusiasm, decision making ability which might help them in the future - thanks to the Kumon Method!



Ms. Nurul Syamimi Pauzi
Kumon Malaysia

Home learning with Kumon

Kumon is designed as a home-based learning programme where students build good study habits through completing assigned worksheets on a daily basis.

As we collectively embarked on home-based learning during the Covid-19 outbreak, we received many inspiring videos of Kumon students learning with Kumon. We saw how Kumon students could sit down and get completely engaged working on their worksheets without being distracted.

We are thankful to their parents for sharing the precious moments with us on Facebook.

At the same time, it is heartening to know that many parents have gained a deeper appreciation of their children's learning experience through this.



Kumon Singapore 25th Anniversary

In commemoration of our 25th Anniversary, we lined up a list of activities for all Kumon parents and students. A huge thank you to everyone for your support and participation in our first giveaway contest on Facebook which took place between 20 May and 8 June 2020.

Kumon students shared pictures and videos of their favourite #KumonMoment with accompanied captions of "With Kumon, I'm certain_____". The top ten entries with the most likes, reactions, shares and comments won a pair of limited edition Kumon Singapore 25th Anniversary NETS FlashPay cards.

We hope this initiative had been a fun and engaging activity for Kumon families during the 'Circuit Breaker' period.

Once again, we would like to express our thanks to all Kumon parents for working together with us in developing our children. We are certain that our unique learning method will continue to shape future generations of children in Singapore.



Get tougher, go further – Tips to develop a resilient child

“Oh, you want that toy? Okay, I’ll get it for you alright?”. It is easy fall into the temptation of giving in to the requests, or sometimes demands, of our little ones. Better to spend the money than having a meltdown right?

But much as we want our children to have that carefree childhood, it is also true that they will, at some point in their childhood, face disappointment and frustration. So rather than helping them ascend the metaphorical ivory tower, it might be better to help them become more resilient to setbacks in life earlier rather than later.

Here are some activities to help our little ones develop the mental strength to overcome challenges and bounce back stronger.



01 Read

A good read engages your children, but did you know that reading can teach your resilience too? For example, as you read Sally’s journey to look for her missing son, explain how she doesn’t give up despite the many attempts to find Spot, who incidentally, was hiding in a basket. If your child is older, read about famous personalities who have had to experience failure before eventually turning out to be the person we all know – Michael Jordan, Cristiano Ronaldo, JK Rowling, are some examples.

02 Play sports

Play sports with your children. Besides being a good physical activity, it helps to bond with your children and builds resilience in them. They will appreciate that they don’t always win – yes, resist the temptation to keep losing on purpose to make them happy, it’s about building resilience right? If playing outdoors is not an option, kick the ball around at home (be sure to keep breakable items first) or just pass and roll the ball around.

03 Board, card or video games

Yet another activity to teach your child that they don’t always win and another opportunity for some bonding time. Encourage them when they lose and motivate them to try again. While it’s true that they might turn cranky when they lose, it’s easier to teach them to accept losses in a game of Snakes and Ladders or Monopoly than having to do it in more serious real-life scenarios.

04 Adventure Games

It gets you and your children moving while playing a game. A simple hide and seek, or even a mini scavenger hunt if you are feeling up to it. Apart from family bonding time and resilience, such games teach children problem-solving skills as they work out where to hide or find their target. They may potentially learn the concept of volume as they realise that larger objects cannot fit into smaller spaces.

Any physical activity involves risks and a seemingly safe game like hide and seek is no different. It is important to mark out the play zone or safe areas.

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