

POTENTIAL

JAN - JUN 2020

KUMON FEATURE

A Strong Start Makes
A Difference

PARENTING TIPS

Why Reading in Early Years Counts?

MY LIFE, MY DREAM

★ Tyla Png Zi Jin
★ Manikandan Nithil





Dear readers,

The new year is a time when we come together to celebrate the past year and look forward to what the future will bring. A heartfelt thank you to all Kumon parents for your unwavering support towards your child's learning with Kumon.

And to all Kumon students, please continue to challenge yourself and believe that you can be smarter each day.

Last October, we celebrated the achievements of 96 Kumon Programme Completers and 336 advanced students during our annual Advanced Students Forum (ASF) held at the University Cultural Centre (UCC) – National University of Singapore (NUS).

To excel at anything, it is most important for children, to enjoy what they are doing. For children to enjoy the process of learning and benefit from it for the rest of their lives, it is necessary to cultivate a sound basis for learning from an early age. Within this issue of Potential, we find out from two young Kumon students, Tyla Png Zi Jin (9 years old) and Manikandan Nithil (5 years old), on how learning with Kumon has developed a positive attitude in them towards learning.

On this note, here's wishing all our readers have a happy and great start to 2020!

Do follow us on Kumon Singapore's official Facebook page - @KumonSingaporeOfficial to receive the latest updates and keep up with our upcoming activities!

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ON THE COVER
JAN - JUN 2020
TYLA PNG ZI JIN

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Have something to say?

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E-mail: sg-kaoweb@kumonglobal.com



Tyla began her Kumon Mathematics Programme at the tender age of three and a half years. Her mother, Mrs Png recalls, "Tyla started Kumon before she started formal school. On top of teaching her numbers, her Kumon Instructor had to train her on the proper way of holding a pencil. At home, getting used to a routine of completing a set of worksheets daily did not come easy."

Young children have relatively short attention spans. For this reason, Mrs Png discussed with Tyla's Kumon Instructor on how to better manage this challenge with adjustments made to the worksheets assigned. They agreed to a slower progress and focused on making Tyla's learning experience more enjoyable.

Research has repeatedly proven that young children are able to acquire enormous amounts of information. The real challenge is not in improving their

ability, but their attention span instead. When they discover the joy of learning, they gain greater interest and curiosity to learn.

Currently a Primary Three student, Tyla loves exploring new places, cultivating plants and reading mystery and action genre novels, as well as comic books. Her favorite book is Charlotte's Web and she is currently reading a novel titled Dry, by Neal and Jarrod Shusterdam. Being an avid reader, she aspires to be an author when she grows up.

Another interest of Tyla's is going to Kumon class. She enjoys learning new concepts and progressing through the levels in Mathematics. She recounted that she felt nervous but yet excited when she first joined Kumon. These days, Kumon feels like home to her. Furthermore, she has developed a love-hate relationship with Mathematics.

"Each time, I begin a new and challenging concept, Maths would be my least favorite subject. But once I have a good understanding of it, Maths becomes my favorite subject!" explained Tyla.

When asked how she overcame those challenging worksheets, she replied, "I continue to try and I never give up. Because of the guidance and support from my Instructor and my family, I always manage to overcome those

challenges."

Currently, Tyla is studying five years ahead of her school grade and her favourite topic is Algebra. She revealed that her mental calculation skill has helped her greatly in school when she needs to check her work within a limited time.

She shared proudly, "In a particular group project on fractions, my team was able to complete the task within the given time because I was quick in providing the answers."

Tyla's mother shared that Kumon has changed her perspective on how much and how far a child's potential can be stretched, and each child's learning ability is not constrained by age. She sees this in Tyla when Tyla is able to solve questions beyond her academic curriculum.

Mrs Png credits Kumon for equipping Tyla with a strong foundation in Mathematics and instilling the discipline in completing daily tasks. She added that the discipline in allocating time to learning is a trait which will benefit her daughter in the long run.

"The determination and never-quit-attitude acquired from the endless worksheets conquered will prepare Tyla for any challenge in her life ahead." shared Mrs Png.

TYLA PNG ZI JIN, 9

Current Worksheet level

Maths H70 (Calculation of Algebra)

Starting level

Maths 5A1 (Counting)

Ambition

To be an Author





MANIKANDAN NITHIL, 6

Current Worksheet level

Maths B170 (Subtraction)

English BI 110 (Visualising a Passage)

Starting level

Maths 6A1 (Counting)

English 7A1 (Reciting words)

Ambition


Still deciding to be a Teacher
or a Storyteller or a Writer...

Nithil is now six years old. He enjoys reading books about the forest habitat and forest animals. At about two years ago, he started reading on his own with little help from his mother. Now, he enjoys reading independently and devours book after book in one sitting. Besides reading, Nithil also likes singing, dancing and playing with his friends at the playground in his free time.

"I didn't like English but I

liked Maths. Now, I like both Maths and English as they are becoming so easy to learn," Nithil shared.

Nithil's mother, Ms Kowsalya, enrolled him in Kumon not only for the academic skills Nithil would gain but also for the underlying life values that many children have inculcated in their Kumon learning journey. She shared, "The teaching approach and syllabus covered in Kumon are what I needed



for my son. All I wanted is to let my son enjoy learning and eventually study on his own independently”

Recounting the first few months at Kumon, Ms Kowsalya shared, “I had to struggle with his daily Kumon homework. It was not easy to make my son sit at one place and concentrate on the homework”.

However, she acknowledged that because the homework was easy due to the low starting point, Nithil was able to complete his homework on his own. This has helped to encourage Nithil and boosted his confidence. And after heeding the advice from the Instructor to establish a routine by blocking out a specific time for Kumon homework on a daily basis, Nithil took to the Kumon system like a duck to water.

Nithil’s mother revealed, “My son loves getting 100 marks for his Kumon worksheets. Nowadays, he makes time to complete his worksheets without much supervision”.

Ms Kowsalya shared how Nithil has transformed from being a reserved boy to be one who is expressive. “My son was not socially interactive with his friends. He was kind of detached from his classmates.”

Within six months of enrolling, she received feedback from Nithil’s school teacher that he has become very good at articulating his thoughts. Nithil also became less socially anxious and has been interacting with his classmates and talking more.

Kumon requires repetition sometimes. It is one of the most

misunderstood tools in Kumon among parents who lack the understanding of the objectives behind and its relationship with the long term study goals. But this is not the case with Ms Kowsalya. “I like Kumon because it is structured with repetition. I believe repetitive can help my son become more familiarised with the subject.”

Nithil is currently learning ahead of his school grade for both Mathematics and English and his mother is pleasantly overwhelmed with his progress and the changes she witnessed in him. She shared, “Nithil has become very independent in his studies. He gets his homework done on his own without needing me to go after him every day”. She is also impressed with Nithil for picking up the good habit of cleaning and maintaining the tidiness of his study table after every homework session.

Ms Kowsalya is thankful that Kumon gives her son the space and time to learn a subject thoroughly. She elaborated, “After joining Kumon, my son has developed a love for learning. He enjoys going to Kumon and always shares excitedly on what he learnt every time”.

Nithil credits his parents and his Kumon Instructor for their constant encouragement. He also looks forward to receiving the Advanced Student Honour Roll (ASHR) medal of recognition. Nithil strives to become more advanced and he remarked, “English and Maths are easier to understand in school as I have already learnt them in Kumon. I want to be more advanced than I am now”.



A STRONG START MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Studies have shown that the first five years of a child's life are crucial to their development. It is an incredibly important time for them to develop essential learning and life skills, that has a direct impact on their future achievements in school and the adult they will become.

What makes Kumon unique and different?

Children as young as three years old can enrol in programmes offered by Kumon. Its unique method of learning is tailored to suit each individual child's ability and needs, allowing your little ones to take small steps towards their goals. Through this learning journey, your child will also become more independent, resilient and confident.

Here's how Kumon Method of Learning helps to build these early foundational skills.

Developing motor skills

Your child's mastery of their fine-motor skills, or the use of hands, will allow him or her greater independence, as well as good handwriting skills. Handwriting is

such an important skill to have for future reading, communication and written expression. This is why it is important to make sure the building blocks for handwriting are solid.

Before the young ones are able to write letters and numbers, they will need to have proper pencil grip and a certain level of pencil skills. Kumon understands just how important fine motor skills can unlock a child's full potential, and its Pencil Skills Programme is specifically designed to develop a child's ability to write.

Our exercises gently progress children from colouring pictures with a thick crayon to carefully drawing straight and curved lines, as well as intricate design with a pencil. We know there are many stages before a child can write with dexterity, and our programme and our Instructors

develop early learners through all the stages.

As children continue to progress with Kumon, they'll eventually be able to join their letters, form sentences and write neatly with speed and accuracy.

Instilling academic ability and skills

Kumon develops academic ability in our early learners. They are exposed to their very first reading and mathematical concepts.

Depending on their ability, the early learners enrolled in Kumon Maths will be learning to count, read, trace and write numbers, whereas those enrolled in Kumon English will be learning to recite words, phrases and short sentences, as well as tracing and writing the alphabets.



These worksheets are colourful with attractive pictures to keep the little minds engaged while learning.

Our early learners will learn to read and follow instructions, and to follow a clear study flow – academic skills that are important to prepare them for school later.

Nurturing good attitude towards study

Children are keen to learn by nature and our engaging worksheets facilitate their learning while keeping their interest burning. Our Instructors and assistants help by assigning worksheets that are “just-right” for them.

Our Kumon Instructors and assistants, as well as our Kumon parents can help to support this interest by praising and celebrating

their little milestones and achievements to encourage our little early learners.

“Parents should give their children acknowledgement and praise; they should be patient and should not rush; they should not easily become angered and should strive to provide their children with things that interest them,” Mr. Toru Kumon wrote in *The Strengths of the Kumon Method* on how he thought parents should support their child’s development.

Having observed that the common traits in Kumon Centres, where Instructors have nurtured many children to become excellent students, Mr. Minoru Maeda, president of Kumon Asia and Oceania, shared his hope for our Kumon Instructors.

“Both Instructors and parents can convey to young children the feeling of ‘let’s enjoy learning in the Centre’, so as to spark their interest and learn actively, and grow up to enjoy learning,” Maeda wrote in one of his monthly messages to Instructors. “Instructors, I hope you and your assistants can also respond to early learners with smiles, and do not forget to praise and encourage them,” he continued.

When children are young, they are learning sponges. Every new experience, every word they learn, every behaviour they adopt, are all about honing and molding the holistic child, which will eventually form the basis of their lifelong journey.

Ms Barbra Tan
Kumon Singapore



The path of learning poses many challenges, conquering them needs great courage and perseverance.

In order to equip early learners with the right study approach for advance learning, we build a systematic learning plan and work together with parents to achieve our learning goals.

Guiding and motivating students to keep trying, praising and encouraging them frequently, we want to build young and confident self-learners who enjoy studying on their own!



Ms Suvra Nanda
Kumon India & Sri Lanka

Early learners come to Kumon Centre with a lot of ambiguity. They wonder "what is all this about, will my mom be there?" For them the first point of interaction needs to be very warm and comforting experience. While administering the Diagnostic Test, I make sure that the child gets a feeling this is something I can do or want to do. I want them to have a good experience with Kumon starting from Diagnostic Test. Early learners learn from examples, hence modelling and doing it together with them supports their learning progress.

Instructors' Quotes

I've learned that young children love routines, being able to complete a task successfully and be showered with praises.

By starting at each of their 'just-right' level, our early learners experience success each time they complete a set of Kumon worksheet and activities in the Centre.

Expectations are clearly communicated to parents/guardians of early learners. Their support and encouragement make a world of difference to our early learners!



Ms Cindy Koh
Kumon Brunei



Ms Tan Hwa Choo
Kumon Malaysia

"A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step." – Laozi

Kumon very much embodies this quote. The first few worksheets of a new topic are presented in a strikingly simplistic manner in order to promote a fundamental understanding in the students; especially in early learners. The complexity of the worksheets slowly builds upon itself in such a way that allows the students to see the connection from one level of understanding to another. The Kumon progressing system also allows me as an instructor to ensure that the fundamental building blocks are not forsaken as student progress further in their Kumon journey.

ADVANCED STUDENT FORUM (ASF) 2019

On 5th October, we celebrated the achievements of 96 Kumon Programme Completers and 336 students who were studying five years ahead of the Kumon International Standard (KIS) at the Advanced Student Forum (ASF).

The youngest Completers in 2019 were 10 Primary Five students; 9 Completers were enrolled in the English Programme and 1 Completer was enrolled in the Mathematics Programme. And the youngest awardee was a Nursery Two Japanese student enrolled in the Mathematics Programme.

Achievement (2019)	No. of Awards
Completion	96
5 Years Ahead	336
3 Years Ahead	1173
2 Years Ahead	1771
6 Months Ahead	4295

Held at the University Cultural Centre (UCC) at the National University of Singapore (NUS), the Advanced Student Forum saw one Completer; Rohan Panday on stage to share about his journey to completion of the Kumon Mathematics Programme.

In another highlight of the ASF, the attendees had a glimpse of a Kumon Mathematics worksheet demonstration by two Kumon students, Jordan Lee and Jai Kousalyan. Both of them demonstrated their ability with topics that are at least 5 years ahead of their school grade level. Subsequently, they also shared about their plans to complete the Mathematics programme. The audience listened intently to their sharing and were left in visible admiration of their ability.

In his speech, Mr Mashiro Takatsu, General Manager of Kumon Singapore and Brunei conveyed to the awardees his heartiest congratulations and urged them to persevere and pursue their dreams.

Mr Takatsu shared, "You are here today because you never give up halfway but continue to strive for excellence. This ability to persevere on is one of the most powerful things in life. In your learning journey, there must be difficult times which you have faced. But upon encouragement and support from your family members and your Instructors, you achieved this result. Keep up this spirit and go for your dreams. Be proud of yourself, and advance further from here."





WHY READING IN EARLY YEARS COUNTS?

Reading is one of the most essential skills children need to learn for lifelong success. It helps to form the building blocks of language and literacy in the first three years of a child's life.

Enjoying books and reading stories from an early age will help to increase children's ability to understand words, develop creativity and imagination. It also helps in their speech development too.

How to encourage good reading habits in our little ones?

Try these **10** easy tips to encourage good reading habits in your child by making them fun.

1 Create reading spaces for your little ones

Fostering a love of books and of reading gives your little ones a great start in life. By creating a cosy, comfortable reading nook, you will give them every reason to fall in love with the world of books and reading.

2 Set an example

Be a role model and read in front of your child. Watching you reading books or newspapers shows your child that reading is important. You can also encourage him or her to join you with his or her own book.

3 Reading with your child

Set aside some time to read to your child. It is a time for closeness, laughing and having great conversations together. This great bonding will also help to him or her to become lifelong readers.

4 Visit your local library

Visits to child-friendly libraries will make your child want to read. Making reading fun can be easy with a library card. Let your child pick out a book of their choice - one that caught his or her attention from the Children's Section.

5 Pick books at the just-right level

Help your child find books that are not too hard or too easy. Children have better reading experiences when they read books at the right level. You can check your choices by having your child read a few pages to you. If your child struggles with reading the words, try a different book.

6 Make reading fun

As you read to your child, point out interesting objects or characters, the "red balloon" in Goodnight Moon or "Jerry Jordan" in Dr. Seuss's ABC: An Amazing Alphabet Book to them to trigger their interests.

7 Talk about what your child is reading

After your child has finished a book, talk about what happened or what his or her favourite part was. This helps to develop and enhance their comprehension skills.

8 Reading beyond home

Teach your child that reading is more than just books. It can transcend from indoor to outdoor too. Practice reading street names, road signs, instructions, and more. Show your child that reading is everywhere.

9 Praise your child

As you read to your children, you may notice certain small achievements. It could be them completing a book in one sitting, or repeating the word "balloon" after you. Celebrate these little achievements by praising them and let them feel good about reading.

10 Read each night

Make reading part of your child's bedtime routine, and they like routine. A good cuddle and bedtime story can help calm them down, and sleep better at night.

Reading should be fun, not frustrating.

If you are unsure of what are the age-appropriate books to select for your child, the Kumon Recommended Reading List (RRL) is a good resource to help you get started with.

The RRL consists of 380 carefully curated titles, intended to help students find books that they will enjoy reading, and to encourage them to read books from a wide range of genres and styles.

The RRL can also be viewed here: <http://www.kumon-english-rrl.com/>

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