

## Kumon's Place In Standardize Testing

Our children are exposed to a wide variety of standardized tests throughout their formal education. As parents and educators, we need to understand some of the commonly used terminology, the wide variety and classification of the tests, and their multiple uses. Standardized tests are prepared commercially by measurement experts and are administered and scored in a uniform manner. Although they often are classified into individual versus group tests, the most common classification is according to what is being measured: 1) achievement, 2) intelligence and 3) personality.

**1) Achievement tests** measure achievement in basic skills such as reading, comprehension, basic math concepts and computation, science, and social studies. Generally, school districts select which group achievement test to use at their school site. There are many to choose from such as the CTBS, ITBS, MAT, or ERB. Other Achievement tests widely used in schools are the Wide-Range Achievement Test and the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement. An educational specialist administers these tests on an individual rather than a group basis.

**2) Intelligence tests** measure the ability to think abstractly, to learn, to integrate new experiences and to adapt to new situations. Some factors which intelligence tests assess are short-term memory, problem solving, quantitative reasoning, verbal comprehension, and auditory & visual processing. These factors are associated most closely with the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test, the WISC and the K-ABC, which must be administered one-on-one by a highly trained psychologist. They provide us with an "IQ" score and require the written permission of a parent. The most commonly known aptitude tests are the SATs and the ACTs. These test results often are used to predict college success and have become the key to college admission.

**3) Personality tests** may be used to assess interest, values, and attitudes of the student. Students may be asked to fill out a self-concept scale, to make up a story about a picture, to draw a picture or to complete sentences. These tests also must be administered and interpreted by a highly trained psychologist and never are administered without the written consent of the parent. Standardized testing is a fact of life. Perhaps one of the "secrets" of Kumon study is the excellent preparation it gives our children to do well on standardized tests. Kumon stresses mastery and daily preparation and helps children learn to focus and to attend to detail. Daily Kumon study helps children work accurately and quickly and each of these skills is necessary for excellent achievement on standardized tests. As a member of a Kumon family, I can attest first hand to the difference it has had on my niece and nephews in the testing arena. After more than one year of Kumon math study, two of them raised their math standardized achievement test scores to the highest ranking possible. The other, once considered very weak in math, now is regarded by his teacher as a "strong math student". Unbelievable! Whether our children are given standardized tests to evaluate their academic progress, to place them in special programs, or to be accepted into college, the fact remains that the higher the score, the greater the opportunity. Most of the standardized tests mentioned above have strong math and verbal components. As an educator exposed to all types of students, I believe that Kumon Math and Kumon Reading will improve the scores for almost any student.

CTBS – Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, ITBS – Iowa Test of Basic Skills, MAT – Metropolitan Achievement Test, ERB – Educational Records Bureau, WISC – Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, K-ABC – Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children, "IQ" – Intelligence Quotient, SAT – College Entrance Examination Board Scholastic Aptitude Test, ACT – American College Testing Assessment Program.

Note from the editor:

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