

Learning Disabilities and Kumon

An individual is said to have a learning disability when he or she is not able to learn in the same way or at the same rate as the majority of others. This can have significant academic and social consequences for a child. We know that learning disabilities seem to be hereditary and that they can affect those with average and even superior intelligence. Many famous people such as Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, and President Woodrow Wilson allegedly had learning disabilities. Most often, problems occur in the areas of math, reading, and communication.

In school, children suspected of having a learning disability are generally referred for a thorough evaluation by a team of specialists. It is only after a complete work-up by this team, that a child may be diagnosed as having a specific learning disability. This team follows very precise guidelines in making such a determination. Just because a low-achieving child is referred for an evaluation, does not mean that the child has a learning disability.

Kumon programs can accommodate these children positively but parents of children with learning disabilities need to play an especially involved role in their child's education. Grading Kumon homework each day and providing specific praise for a job well done, are very good examples of this involvement. Praise and immediate feedback are two of the strongest recommendations made by experts who work with these children. They also suggest that the amount of work learning disabled children do each day needs to be customized in order to maximize their learning. Parents can help by keeping a close watch on the number of sheets their child does well on in one sitting and advising the Kumon Instructor of this. These parents may also find it helpful to provide their child with two shorter Kumon homework sessions each day (the first in the morning / the second in the afternoon) instead of just one slightly longer session each day. Whatever the case, it is important that this information be shared with the Instructor.

One final piece of advice for Kumon parents dealing with these students is to be persistent and consistent in all that they do with their child. Generally speaking, these children need more repetition than others to master a concept. If frustration builds or if the child loses interest in his or her Kumon work, for example, chances are that repetition is necessary. The answer is definitely not to take a break. This is because students with learning disabilities frequently have a memory deficit which means that if they take time off from something, the likelihood of their forgetting what they learned is far greater than for those without a learning disability.

Though the above information is meant mostly for parents with learning disabled children, clearly many children can benefit from the suggestions shared here and the step by step mastery that the Kumon programs provide.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions about this topic, please contact me at mr.jose@kumonofgilbert.com.

Note from the editor:

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