

What's It Going To Take For My Child To Succeed On Standardized Tests?

At one time or another, almost every school child will take a standardized test. Most take standardized achievement tests, while others take standardized tests that measure aptitude, ability or potential. They usually take them in a group setting, but sometimes they take them in a one-on-one setting with a specialist. Most standardized tests are timed and require students to work independently.

The results of these tests are reported in a number of ways. Often scores are used to compare students. These scores answer the question, "How is my child doing compared to others?" They do not answer the question, "How much does my child know?" Other tests compare a child, not to other children, but to a specific level of mastery of a skill, such as subtraction, division or fractions. Kumon achievement tests tell us whether or not a student has mastered a specific skill. They do not compare a child to other children.

It is important to remember that standardized test scores do not indicate performance in the classroom. It is also important to note that the content of standardized tests may not match some portions of a school's curriculum or the Kumon curriculum, for that matter. This often accounts for a discrepancy in test scores and classroom performance. If the material covered on the test is not covered in the classroom, the test score may reflect this discrepancy.

The best preparation for any test is to know the content. But there are test-taking strategies that can be beneficial. Students who enter testing sessions with a positive attitude will have a much easier time taking a test than students who enter it with a negative attitude. Students who worry about everything they do not know, instead of concentrating on what they do know, will not be able to perform their best. When parents are positive and offer their children encouragement, thinking positively will come more naturally to their children.

Familiarity with the test format can relieve much stress. Students should know whether or not the test is true-false, multiple choice, matching, fill in the blank, short answer and/or essay. They should know when to guess and when to skip an item that is too difficult. Most importantly, they must understand the directions. If a child does not understand the directions, he or she must ask for clarification. Time management also is of the essence. Anxiety builds as students realize they are running out of time. Students with good time-management skills generally complete standardized tests and experience less stress than students with poor time management skills.

Long term Kumon study is great training for standardized tests. Students learn good study skills including managing their time wisely. Since it is the timing factor on standardized tests that accounts for a great deal of test anxiety, Kumon students have a great advantage. Kumon gives its students a strong foundation in basic skills and advanced Kumon students get a head start in their schoolwork. They have a greater chance of not making careless errors, a common problem on standardized tests. Also, Kumon students can progress through standardized tests in a timely fashion, since they can solve easy problems with speed and have more time to spend on difficult ones. Their ability to estimate or guess, which is often necessary on standardized tests, is enhanced by their mastery of the basics and ability to work efficiently with numbers.

Frequently, however, math problems are embedded in sentences that require grade-level reading. Kumon's Reading program is a comprehensive language arts program offering students, not only the tools they need to do well on standardized tests in reading and language arts, but also the tools they need to do well on many math problems. The student who reads well and has mastered the basic skills of mathematics has a great advantage over students who have deficits in either or both of these areas. Standardized tests are a fact of life. They are here to stay. Kumon is a lifetime gift that parents can give their children to help them do their best on these and all tests.

Kumon Of Gilbert

Note from the editor:

What's It Going To Take For My Child To Succeed On Standardized Tests - Written by Andrea Pastorok, Ph.D. / Educational Psychologist - Published by Kumon.