

Kumon of Niles  
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## Center Hours

**Mondays & Wednesdays**  
**3:30 – 7:30 pm**

**Saturdays**  
**10:00 am – 2:00 pm**  
(For Park Ridge and Niles Students)



## Brain Teaser

**You bought two beautiful vases at a flea market for \$50 each. You sold one for \$60, saw its duplicate on sale for \$75, bought yours back for \$65, and then sold it for \$75. You finally sold the second one for 10 percent less than what you paid for it. How profit much did you make?**

**See Dr. B with your answer!**

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**kumonofniles.com**

## **How Does Proficiency In Computation Develop “Thinking Skills?”**

*“Reason is an experiment carried out in the imagination...”*

*- W. W. Sawyer*

“Thinking skills” can be defined as the application of facts. In order for the facts to be applied, they must first be learned. Without proficiency in the basics, there can be no proficiency in the applications. Kumon is an effective way for students to develop proficiency in math. This mastery serves as a basis for future, more sophisticated learning. Without a strong foundation in calculation skills, students would never be able to handle complex mathematical operations of a more advanced nature. Failure to master each sequential mathematical operation thoroughly jeopardizes a student’s subsequent understanding. Complete mastery of each step has proven to promote smooth progress and comprehension.

Mathematical thinking is the process of devising solutions. A system such as Kumon, in which students must quickly find solutions to many problems on a regular basis, is the ideal type of training for students to develop thinking skills. Unlike passive activities, Kumon study provides daily mental stimulation. Students are required to work quickly and accurately, which demands intense concentration mental effort. Students are able to develop sharp, active minds—key characteristics of people who are capable of thinking critically.

Proficiency in computation often means advancement beyond grade level. If a student’s abilities are developed ahead of their grade level, the demands of mathematics study at grade level will surely be manageable. A third grader studying at Level F, for example, must be proficient at the four arithmetical operations (adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing) in order to work through the multi-step fractional problems at this advanced level. This student will develop “thinking skills” with regard to third grade level multiplication and division. The student will easily be able to conceptualize the applications of these basic operations. Mastery of the basics provides the intellectual tool to explore and express more abstract concepts. Thus, the mastery of computation attained through the Kumon Method is crucial for the development of thinking skills.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF  
THE KUMON NILES CENTER



## How to Avoid Procrastination

### Create a Homework Schedule

Students are used to having designated days and times in which they have to report to a classroom to take notes, listen, and study. Build off this routine and apply it to completing homework and studying. Designate specific days and times for studying and completing homework assignments. This is helpful because the more of a routine something becomes, the more difficult it becomes to break that routine.

### Create a Homework Friendly Environment

Many times the location where the student is studying is the problem. Students are easily distracted by cell phones, computers, TVs, and general activity. Therefore, students should go to homework friendly locations where these distractions are eliminated or reduced to a minimum.

### Set Goals and Plan Ahead

Start with small goals if you're facing a big assignment. Don't get overwhelmed by the big picture. Accomplishment feels great, so set small goals first, and take it day by day. Set new goals as you go.

### Make a Deal

Work out a reward system with your parent. There may be a concert you're dying to go to. Make a deal way ahead of time—you can go but only if you reach your goals. And stick to the deal!

### Schedule "Down" Time

Finally, give yourself time to play! Set aside a special time to do whatever you want. Afterward, you'll be ready to get to work!

## Plan Ahead to Balance School and Kumon

For many families, the return of the school year means the return of after-school activities, such as school clubs and sports, not to mention school homework. Before fall schedules become too hectic, sit down with your child and make a commitment to incorporate Kumon into your child's daily activities by creating a plan for completing the daily assignments. By ensuring your child has a consistent time to complete the daily work, your child will realize that Kumon is a priority in your household. Take a look at possible reasons why your child might struggle to complete the Kumon work. For instance, if you know your child is too tired after sports practice to complete the daily assignments, perhaps Kumon work could be completed before school while mom or dad prepares breakfast or before sports practice. Remember, most children's Kumon assignments take less than 20 minutes per subject. If the problem seems to be that your child already has too much school homework and there isn't time to complete the Kumon work, here are a couple of things to consider. Teachers rarely assign two or three hours of homework to elementary or middle school students (Typically 10 minutes per school grade). It is more likely that your child procrastinates, and so it takes hours to complete what could have been done in 30 minutes or less. Modeling study habits and creating a structured homework time can help put a stop to procrastination. Many children need structure to act as a catalyst to studying. Without this structure, children are overwhelmed by the task at hand. (See side bar for tips on how to avoid procrastination).

If your child truly cannot do the school homework in the allotted time, the work is too difficult and a conference with the teacher may be necessary. While Kumon adds to overall homework time in the beginning, in the long run your child's increased speed and accuracy will greatly reduce the time spent doing school homework in the future. Remember the goal of performing your Kumon studies daily is to provide your brain with stimulation. This daily stimulation leads to the development of strong, automatic long term neural connections. The latest research suggests that the key factor separating geniuses from the merely accomplished is not a divine spark. It is not IQ, a generally bad predictor of success. Instead, it is **DELIBERATE PRACTICE**. Top performers spend more hours (many more hours) rigorously practicing their craft. Researchers now believe that what Mozart had as a child, was the same thing Tiger Woods had: the ability to focus for long periods of time, and a father intent on improving his skills. Mozart played a lot of piano at a very young age, so he got his 10,000 hours of practice in early and then built from there. The mind wants to turn deliberate, newly learned skills into unconscious, automatically performed skills. But the mind is sloppy and will settle for good enough. By practicing slowly, by breaking skills down into tiny parts and repeating, the strenuous student forces the brain to internalize a better pattern of performance. It is this process that Kumon has been implementing for over 50 years. As the research shows, the primary trait that people of high ability possess is not some mysterious genius. **It is the ability to develop a deliberate strenuous and boring practice routine.** Therefore, it is important to balance your Kumon work load so that you will be able to stimulate your brain each day while not overwhelming it. To do this, many of us will have to decrease the amount of Kumon worksheets we do daily. Similar to in season and off season training with athletes, it is important to determine the just right level of homework study during the school year for each student.

I invite each student and parent to set up a meeting with me so we can individualize your Kumon studies for the school year. By developing a manageable and individualized workload that keeps your mind active, your Kumon studies will keep you on track for a truly amazing school year!

*Dr. Michelle Bettuzzi*