
Seishin Shotokan
精神
Karate

7 Ways that Karate Helps Kids Succeed in School

Have you heard about the benefits of karate for kids? Did you know that the martial arts are helping literally thousands of kids around the country do better in school and also improve in all aspects of their lives? How are the martial arts creating positive change in the youth of today? This article will list the 7 most common ways that karate helps kids succeed in school. If your child needs help in any of these areas then it may be time to start paying attention to a growing trend.

Focus

With the increasingly greater numbers of children today who are diagnosed with ADD/ADHD or similar disorders, it can be no wonder that parents are looking for activities that will help their child focus on the task at hand. Martial arts bring together all of the different learning modalities such as visual, auditory, cognitive and experiential in every single practice session. Students must watch the instructor model a technique or drill, listen to the command to begin, think about how to do the technique and then actually perform the technique to the best of their ability. It is no wonder that karate develops a laser-like focus in its practitioners!

Discipline

Unfortunately in our society today a major quality that is lacking in all segments of the population is discipline. This is most noticeable in school age children and teenagers. Karate training is very demanding and many instructors are excellent authority figures in terms of their high standards, clear expectations and strict discipline methods. If you feel that your child needs fine-tuning in this area, then karate is an ideal activity to accomplish this.

Respect

As children get older and prepare for the future they begin to realize that it is important to show respect to others. This shouldn't come as a surprise to them because if you've been doing your job right as a parent, then they will have heard about the importance of this on numerous occasions. Martial arts offer a great environment in which to not only understand the value of respect, but also to practice and truly understand the importance of respect. As the saying goes, "it takes a village to raise a child," and in this case your local karate school could very well be the ideal complement to the life lessons that you are already trying to teach your child.

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Structure

Life can be incredibly demanding for parents. In between work responsibilities and life's daily chores, parents are trying their best to raise their children. In order to do this it is essential to maintain order among the chaos of life. This order is called structure. To help raise a calm and responsible individual, structure is vital. Any opportunity to expose your child to structure rather than outright distraction should be welcomed with open arms. Karate as a whole is very structured right from the curriculum to the belt sequence and the required etiquette - structure shows up everywhere in a martial arts school. Take advantage of this and get your child enrolled in the martial arts as soon as you can.

Accountability

Did you just say accountability? You mean my child must actually take his actions seriously and be responsible? Absolutely, yes! The right martial arts school offers a perfect environment for accountability. If your child does his best he is rewarded with praise, a high five, maybe a stripe on his belt and hopefully every few months his next colored belt. Conversely, if he doesn't do his best, then you can expect to see a consequence in the form of a verbal warning, a time-out, some push-ups or even a failure of his belt test. Accountability is crucial to a student's success in the martial arts and consequently it should be clear to see in any reputable martial arts school.

Memorization

This is an interesting and relatively unknown benefit of karate training to anyone who is looking to get started in the martial arts. In many karate schools there is very often a type of training called 'Forms'. Forms are essentially sequences of movements that a student should learn and memorize in order to perform on their test or at a tournament, or simply because they are fun. What forms teach, however, are not simply set sequences or patterns of movements, they teach memorization skills and help students find and create links between required techniques. The greater relevance of this is seen at school as students often find it easier to remember the important parts of their study. The jury is not yet in on this point but the evidence is growing that the martial arts do in fact stimulate our brains and help us to create links between information more readily than we were previously able to do.

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13599 Del Mar Road,
Apple Valley, CA 92308

(760) 220-6820
pwalker@seishinshotokan.com
www.seishinshotokan.com

Higher grades

It shouldn't be too much of a stretch for you, the parent, to read through all of the above benefits and to also conclude that the practice of martial arts can also lead to improved grades and test scores at school. There has been extensive research done on the value of physical exercise for developing increased levels of cognitive skill. Martial arts are no different as they not only provide an excellent source of physical exercise, but they also demand high levels of focus, discipline, respect, structure, accountability and memorization. How can these factors not lead to improved achievement at school and in all areas of your child's life?

So come on, get your child into the martial arts. One day they will thank you for it, and maybe they'll even inspire you to get started too, because after all the martial arts are one of the few activities out there today that families can get involved in together regardless of age or physical ability. The benefits are potentially huge and there is nothing to lose by giving it a go.

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