

TAEKWON-DO

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A Parents/Beginners Guide

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TAEKWON-DO: A PARENT’S GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your decision to enroll or to considering enrolling your child/children in Taekwon-Do! This art is designed to develop individual character, mental strength, integrity, discipline, and respect! In Taekwon-Do, a child learns respect for authority figures, including parents, as well as respect for him/herself and others.

Taekwon-Do encourages Courtesy, Integrity, Perseverance, Self-Control, and Indomitable Spirit along with patience, loyalty, and honesty ...values that are not (always) specifically taught in more 'traditional' Western sports. Values learned in the Dojang (martial arts class) give the student concrete, practical guidelines for behavior in his/her life. Martial Arts training also will help alleviate the fear most children have about handling themselves if someone physically confronts them.

Taekwon-Do is a traditional martial art that has been developed since its formal inception by General Choi, Hong-hi 최홍희(9 November 1918 – 15 June 2002) on April 11, 1955. Taekwon-Do has roots that go back much further, however, it was 1955 that it became an organized martial art, that has now become an Olympic sport. The Kido Kwan™ continues to ensure that our art remains the best in the world by following the principles of its founder and with the first Taekwon-Do 'international' organization, the International Taekwon-Do Federation® which was founded March 22, 1966. A Dojang certified by our Organization and headed by a trained, certificated Black Belt instructor is a guarantee of the best martial arts instruction available today.

The founder Choi, Hong-hi first formulated Taekwon-Do in South Korea in 1955 with the formation of the name Taekwon-Do. Prior to the name Taekwon-Do other terms were used such as 'TangSoo Do', 'KongSoo Do', etc. Within a few short years, requests for Taekwon-Do training began pouring in from countries all over the world, so by 1966 he founded the International Taekwon-Do Federation®. Now, Taekwon-Do is taught in more than 65 countries on 6 continents and has millions of students worldwide.



*Choi, Hong-hi (11/09/1918 – 06/15/2002)
Founder of the ITF and its 1st President.*

Your child's instructor will be giving you various registration forms when your child/children first enroll in the Dojang, one of which will be the application to join the prestigious Kido Kwan™. Please fill out these forms completely, making sure they are signed by both you and your child, and return them promptly to the instructor; after your child has submitted his or her application form for processing, the instructor will provide him/her a student manual and registration/identification card (requires picture) and membership certificate and patches. These will be required many times during his/her training. Make sure these items are kept in a safe and accessible place.

Again, congratulations on making this opportunity available to your child/children and a warm welcome to all new and prospective students!

Q & A QUESTION: Who will be instructing the class? **ANSWER:** In order to teach in the Kido Kwan™, all instructors are required to pass an Instructor's Certification program. Furthermore, our Black Belt instructors participate in regularly scheduled instructor classes, training camps, and seminars. All of our

instructors have also undergone criminal background checks. You may also see several assistant instructors who work with students in small groups or even individually. When you watch a Taekwon-Do class, you see students enjoying themselves in a friendly environment led by caring, knowledgeable instructors.

QUESTION: Will classes leave my child battered? Will my child become a bully? **ANSWER:** While classes are designed to be fun and exciting, we also teach that what we are learning should never be taken lightly. Safety gear and special equipment are required, and respect for others and self-control are two rules we emphasize. The codes and tenets, which serve as our foundation, reinforce tolerance and compassion for others.

QUESTION: What will my child get out of class? **ANSWER:** We help students reach their fullest potential by teaching challenging classes, setting goals for our students, giving them the necessary skills to reach those goals. In addition to improving physical conditioning, flexibility, and balance, students learn skills necessary for self-defense. Along the way, students further develop integrity, confidence, and self-esteem. We guarantee that dedicated training will result in better focus and concentration. For all these reasons, it is typical that students enrolled in Taekwon-Do also report improved grades and behaviors in and out of school.

QUESTION: Should I join Taekwon-Do with my child? **ANSWER:** Absolutely!!! Every student trains at his or her own pace, so anyone, regardless of age or present condition, can study Taekwon-Do. Taekwon-Do is done from a standing position, and kicks and punches are learned without body contact. In this way, coordination and flexibility can be increased at any age. Also, when children see important values illustrated by their own parents or siblings, they have strong models to follow. Fun, wholesome activity, like Taekwon-Do, that actively involves the whole family strengthens family ties. It's true: Families that kick together stick together!

QUESTION: How do parents stay informed? **ANSWER:** There are several ways for parents to keep up with Dojang information. One is to check the Kido Kwan™ website at www.kidokwan.org/schoolinfo. Another is to listen to announcements made by the instructor(s) at the end of class. Also, there is a newsletter and calendar of events and information about what's happening at the Dojang. Your child/student will bring home flyers and announcements from time to time. Ask to see them. Finally, if you ever have questions, don't hesitate to speak with your child's instructor.

QUESTION: How often will my child attend class? **ANSWER:** Classes are scheduled for one hour sessions to one and a half hour sessions, two days per week sometimes more. Later, as students grow in rank and commitment, more classes become available. Please read the section under "Class Protocol" regarding missing classes.

QUESTION: Are classes ever cancelled? **ANSWER:** There are a few days during the year when the studio is closed for holidays or a special event. In case of severe weather, you may want to call the studio before leaving home. There will be an announcement on the answering machine and on our website (www.kidokwan.org/schoolinfo) if the studio is closed because of weather problems.

QUESTION: What is the Black Belt Club/Unified Study Group? **ANSWER:** When a student reaches Yellow Belt level, he or she may decide to join the Black Belt Club/Unified Study Group. This club/group is dedicated to students who take a serious approach to their training, and who are committed to

completing their journey to Black Belt Excellence! Club/Group members enjoy financial and other benefits, such as additional training opportunities, but learn more of the 'core' of the art. THE BELT SYSTEM Students in Taekwon-Do progress through a series of promotions designated by different colored belts or 'Gup' levels. Each color has its own philosophical meaning, and each represents the cycle of the seasons and the cycle of life. There are 10 different 'gup' levels between the beginning students (white belt) and the eventual Black Belt.

Each promotion or 'Gup' level represents a new and advanced stage in Taekwon-Do training. In addition to learning new techniques, forms and general information at each belt level, a minimum amount of time is required before a student is eligible to test again for next level. The 10 Gup levels are summarized as follows:

GUP		LEVEL BELT	
10th Gup	White Belt	9th Gup	White Belt w/ yellow stripe
8th Gup	Yellow Belt w/ green stripe	6th Gup	Green Belt
5th Gup	Green Belt w/ blue stripe	4th Gup	Blue Belt
3rd Gup	Blue Belt w/ red stripe	2nd Gup	Red Belt
1st Gup	Red Belt w/ black stripe	1st Dan (degree)	Black Belt

TESTING FOR PROMOTION The *instructor* will advise the student when testing for the next belt will occur. It will be the sole discretion of the instructor to determine if advancing to a new level is in the best interest of the student at that time. When the minimum time has passed, your child's instructor will evaluate several factors, including but not limited to: progress made in training since the last test, attitude, general knowledge, conduct in class, etc. The road to Black Belt is a long-term commitment which cannot and should not be hurried any more than growing up should be rushed. At every stage in Taekwon-Do, there are valuable lessons, physical and mental, to be learned, and some take longer than others. Not all students in a class will advance at the same rate.

When an instructor has determined that a student is ready to move to the next phase of training, the student will be required to pass both a physical test and a written/oral test based on information found in the student handbook(s). Prior to the written test, the student must complete and return to the instructor: 1) a testing application form, 2) the testing fee, and 3) the student's ID card. Student evaluation is an ongoing process that takes place during a student's training sessions.

The final step in the process is a demonstration of skills before a testing panel and a promotion ceremony when new belts are awarded. This event is a celebration in which all students should participate, not just those receiving their new belt. A student's attendance at these ceremonies shows support of fellow classmates as well as dedication to one's personal training and is counted toward the number of hours needed for his or her next promotion.

CLASS PROTOCOL

Most all the information pertaining to training protocol is explained in the Kido Kwan™ student manual(s) and should be reviewed on a frequent basis. There are a few important issues explained there that should be mentioned here for emphasis, however.

Students should arrive at least 15 minutes before class is scheduled to begin. Upon entering (and leaving) the Dojang, students should bow to the instructor and bow/salute the flags. Once inside the

Dojang, the student should quietly begin warming up and stretching off to the side. For safety reasons, no gum is allowed, and all jewelry and watches should be removed. If a student arrives late, he or she should prepare him/her for class and then wait to the side until they are recognized by the instructor(s) and asked to join the class.

If a student must miss a class, he or she should notify his/her instructor beforehand if possible. In other words, at the beginning of each class, an instructor should know where every student is. If a student must leave class, he or she should first receive permission from the instructor(s).

One of the most misunderstood aspects of training in a traditional martial art is the meaning of the bow or Kyeong-rye(경례). In Taekwon-Do, the bow is a form of greeting and sign of respect. (This is the same reason why all Black Belts are to be called "Sir" or "Ma'am" by Gup (color belt) students. A student is expected to bow to his or her instructors, all Black Belts and Masters, whether in the Dojang or out, and to his/her opponents. The bow is never interpreted as the student being less or lower than the senior rank, but it is an expression of his or her humility, courtesy, pride, self-esteem and knowledge of the art of Taekwon-Do. Black Belts and senior ranks are also expected to return the bow. A person who can show humility is a truly capable leader.

UNIFORMS The Do Bok (도복) or uniform can be traced back to 600 AD in Korea, and therefore is a symbol of special accomplishment. This traditional symbol should be worn and maintained with great care and respect. Do Boks should be cleaned and pressed for training. A student should not expect to train if not in full uniform.

There is only one acceptable way to tie the belt and to fold the uniform when not being worn. Please refer to this section of the student manual for details and instruction. Even young students should be taught to tie their own belts correctly. The only markings on the Do Bok are those approved by the Kido Kwan™ and your instructor(s). There should not be colored shirts visible under the Do Bok (white shirt, unless there is an approved school colored shirt), and the Do Bok should only be worn for training or competition or demonstrations. Do Boks can be ordered from the Instructor(s). Instructors can help with sizing. There will be times when a different uniform is required, such as pagi (pants) and t-shirt, or some other combination; your instructor will notify you when this occurs.

BREAKING (Gyeokpa 격파) When a student tests for his or her first belt (and for all tests after that), he or she will be asked to break boards as part of his/her physical test. Breaking is a test of concentration and proper technique. The boards are 1 inch thick and 12 inches wide, and the height depends on the age or size of the student. Boards are cut (across the grain) in 8-inch heights for small children, and 12 inches for teens and adults.

PRACTICE & COMPETITION (Kyorugi 겨루기)

The techniques and forms found in Taekwon-Do are designed to improve the student's ability to defend him/her. The more a student practices outside of class, the sooner his or her techniques improve and the better he or she can defend him/herself should the need arise. Practice also magnifies the other benefits of training such as improved fitness, flexibility, concentration, and discipline. For these reasons, natural athletic ability is not a substitute for diligent practice, especially as a student progresses into higher ranks. Ultimately, a student's training is his or her own responsibility and his/her dedication will determine the speed and level of progress.

Like any other worthwhile endeavor, the more a student puts into his or her Taekwon-Do training, the more he or she will get out of it. While Taekwon-Do is considered an art as opposed to a sport, there are several regional tournaments scheduled that provide competition for those who desire to compete. The ultimate in Taekwon-Do competition is the World Tournaments held every other year. Some of the benefits of competition include meeting students from other schools and even other countries, increased confidence, the chance to compare techniques with other students, and the opportunity to learn from others. Tournaments are always educational and fun to watch, even for those not competing and parents should always encourage students attend even if not competing.

Tournaments are arranged so that students of similar age and belt level compete. Events include Tuls (Forms), Dae Ryun (Sparring), and sometimes breaking. Students may compete in some or all events depending on their belt level. Your child's instructor will prepare the students for upcoming competitive events.

PHOTOGRAPHY Parents and family members are strongly encouraged to attend promotions, tournaments, and other special Taekwon-Do events. These special events make wonderful opportunities to photograph or videotape your son or daughter "in action". We ask, however, that you do not bring cameras to the studio to photograph or tape any students while they are training in regular classes without permission. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. However, we will take time to allow such photographs on a regular basis. **VISITING OTHER DOJANGS** One of the great joys of being a member of the Kido Kwan™ and the I.T.F® is the opportunity to train with students almost anywhere in the world. If you are traveling and there is a Kido Kwan™ or I.T.F® studio near where you will be, you may want to consider stopping in for a visit or training session if scheduling permits. Proper protocol must be observed to do this. You should first ask your instructor for permission to train at another studio. Then your instructor will help you contact the studio owner where you will be visiting beforehand to ask permission to stop by. Frequently, a visit to a new Dojang can be the highlight of a trip for a student. *Also, there may be times where we have foster child, or other child who may be present that we do not want their photos made public since the use of things like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. we want to protect those students. When we have a sensitive issue such as that, we will try and display the "NO PHOTOS DURING CLASS" sign.*

WEATHER CANCELLATIONS If we are experiencing severe weather conditions, you can check on class cancellations either by calling the main Dojang, or emailing or a text to the instructor(s) or by checking our website at www.kidokwan.org/schoolinfo. As a rule of thumb, if local public schools are cancelled, classes will be too.



Kido Kwan Certificate Seal (chop)

A Letter to Parents and Students. Dear Parent/Student, Welcome to the wonderful world of martial arts. It is important there be an understanding about what to expect when taking on an endeavor such as traditional Taekwon-Do.

First 6 months: In the beginning, if you are like most people, you will experience a sharp learning curve, where you will see results quickly. Focus and concentration will increase at a rapid rate. Balance and coordination will improve dramatically. There will be an increase in flexibility and muscle tone.

Second 6 months: The student should go over basic stances and basic techniques every day. It seems to take longer and longer to achieve results. This is normal, and this is where self-discipline comes into play. As well as having peaks, where technique is picked up quickly and understanding is high, there are times when it seems that not much is happening but work. These times are what I like to refer to as plateaus of learning. It is this time, when it seems like class is just drill, drill, and more drill, that the serious student is born. Understanding this type of learning curve is important to understanding martial arts. The skills that are acquired through traditional martial arts study sometimes develop at a slower pace than the novice student would like. If students persevere through these plateaus of learning, however, new and exciting power is their reward. Our instructors are experienced motivators. If your child seems to lose interest, let his or her instructor know. They will work with your child to get them back on track. Unlike anything else, Taekwon-Do is a method of self-actualization where a student can define one's self and study human nature as well. Taekwon-Do is not a store-bought item. It must be experienced to appreciate its value, and this takes time, perseverance, and patience.

I like to compare the trip to Black Belt to a college degree. If the student looks at it this way, it saves confusion later when the training becomes more like work. By sticking it out and making an all-out effort, the average student can make it.

Sincerely, Doug Nowling 8th Dan Master Instructor

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