

Dragon Heart



Tang Soo Do

The Seven Benefits of Martial Arts Training for Kids

Have you ever stopped to wonder why martial arts is fast becoming the leading activity for kids? And why thousands of families enroll their children in martial arts across the country each year?

The answer is simple. Unlike most sports (which emphasize winning games), martial arts focuses on **personal development** and **life skills**. This provides many positive outcomes, but most of these benefits fit into seven main “categories”. They are:

- 1.) Confidence
- 2.) Discipline
- 3.) Respect and Courtesy
- 4.) Goal-Setting
- 5.) Perseverance
- 6.) Physical Fitness
- 7.) Leadership Skills

In this special report, I’m going to discuss each one of these seven benefits and reveal how martial arts creates each one. We’ll start with...

Benefit #1: Confidence

It’s a fact: martial arts training boosts a child’s **self-confidence**, **self-esteem** and feeling of **self-worth**. In fact, many parents enroll their kids in martial arts for this reason alone. Martial arts training helps raise a child’s confidence and self-esteem because it teaches kids...

- To try their best, even though they don’t know if they can succeed or not...
- How to perform under pressure and handle stress...
- How to defuse bullying, stand up and protect themselves...
- How to voice concerns, ask for what they want and address adults (and other authority figures) in a respectful manner.

- How to recognize their own body's potential. For example, by being able to kick and punch things hard and push themselves beyond their own limits.
- How to talk to an adult, stand and look them in the eye and be listened to.
- To be proactive and take more initiative because they believe in their own abilities.
- The feeling of pride. For example, through belt promotions and by competing in tournaments or in class.

All of these factors add up to **greater self-esteem** and **improved confidence**. As one parent put it:

“I still can’t believe how my son has come out of his shell after just two months in martial arts. Before he started, he was shy, wouldn’t approach people or ask for what he wanted. Now he’s a different person. His improved confidence is amazing”.

If your child is shy, having problems relating to other children or being picked on by others, martial arts training is your answer.

Benefit #2: Discipline, Focus and Self-Control

Martial arts training helps kids develop self-control, improves their powers of concentration and gets them to **really focus**. This can even alleviate some of the negative behavior associated with ADD and ADHD.

A major scientific study on ADD / ADHD revealed **martial arts training helps in just about every area**. Conducted in 2004 by Dr. Kenneth Moran, the study scientifically proved that martial arts training for kids boosted homework completion, academic performance and classroom participation. At the same time, martial arts training **decreased** the number of classroom rules broken, times leaving the seat and call outs in class.

Believe it or not, martial arts training scored higher than **exercise alone**. The reason why is because martial arts involves rhythmic breathing and relaxation, step-by-step repetitive movements, personal attention, positive reinforcement, adherence to etiquette and rules (structure), group reinforcement and a sense of belonging.

Martial arts also instills **discipline** in students by requiring full attention in class, refraining from unruly behavior, teaching kids to arrive on time and prepared, following instructions and not interrupting instructors. Kids are also taught to keep uniforms and other items clean and organized. Finally, they’re **taught physical self-control**: that when confronted, the first option

is to get away and **fighting is always the very last resort**. It's a myth that martial arts makes kids "aggressive". In fact, it's the exact opposite: instead, kids develop confidence, discipline and self-control.

Benefit #3: Respect (and Courtesy)

If you want your kids to become more respectful and courteous to others, martial arts is the ticket. Nothing does a better job at teaching the "old school" values of **respect** and **courtesy**. Martial arts training teaches children to....

- Answer in a respectful manner to instructors ("Yes, Sir" and "Yes, Ma'am" when speaking to senior ranks or other authority figures).
- "Bow in" before entering the floor (workout area) and show respect to their academy...
- Shake hands with sparring partners before a match and treat them with respect...
- Accept a judge's decision even if they don't agree with it (respect for authority)...
- Stand at attention "like a black belt" before class begins...
- Make others feel noticed, honor other people's feelings and respect their wishes...
- Treat juniors (lower ranks) the way they were treated when they were the same rank...

Martial arts instructors also hammer home the importance of respect and courtesy in *school and academics*: the importance of paying attention in class, taking school work seriously, respecting school rules and teachers and finally, focusing on academic goals and **getting good grades** (martial arts is BIG on this! Martial arts students are also taught to treat their classmates with respect and **never engage** in teasing, mocking or bullying others.

Martial arts supports you at home, too. Kids are taught to help out with chores, respect and honor parents and their wishes, treat brothers and sisters with respect and courtesy, keep their room clean and respect family rules like curfews.

Yes, respect is one of the key **cornerstones** of a martial arts education and a big reason parents enroll their children in martial arts programs all across the country!

Benefit #4: Goal-Setting

At a very early age, martial arts students are encouraged to **set long term goals**. The most obvious goal is *reaching the rank of black belt*. But this is only one goal. Other goals are

encouraged, too. In our academy, we teach kids the S.M.A.R.T. way to set and achieve goals:

- S stands for **specific**
- M stand for **motivating**
- A stands for **achievable**
- R stands for **relevant**
- T stands for **trackable**

The goal-setting martial arts student’s learning encompasses all areas of their life – it’s NOT limited to martial arts. We show students how to apply the S.M.A.R.T. goal-setting strategy to personal relationships, school and academics, in the community as well as martial arts.

This early exposure to goal-setting and **delayed gratification** paves the way for **lifelong achievement** and success.

Benefit #5: Perseverance

Setting goals is one thing. Actually *reaching* the target is another. That’s why martial arts teaches the practical life skill of **perseverance**. Let’s face it: martial arts is a real challenge for most people. This is where perseverance comes in. Martial arts show students how to develop follow-through and “stick-to-it-ness” to overcome challenges, break through fears, avoid negativity and stay focused on the path to their goals. *They are taught to never give up on themselves.*

Martial arts instructors also **motivate** children and reinforce a **positive mental attitude** – so important in today’s society. When things get tough, students learn it’s just a test to “see how bad you want something” and that there is NO such thing as “failure”, *only temporary setbacks*.

I’m sure you’d agree: nothing good in life is accomplished without perseverance, follow-through and staying true to the path. Martial arts teaches this life skill in abundance.

Benefit #6: Fitness

You know the stats: Two out of every three Americans are either overweight or obese. And over the last thirty years childhood obesity has **tripled**. We hear about it all the time.

But did you know that in many cases, the bad lifestyle habits that lead to obesity start in childhood and can get worse over time? It’s true. *Fortunately, martial arts helps families avoid*

these statistics by teaching healthy lifestyle and fitness early on.

Look around our academy and you'll see many success stories. Students who were out of shape when they began, but have transformed themselves into stronger, leaner and fit kids!

Martial arts improves all these areas of a person's fitness:

- They become **more flexible**
- Their **endurance** and **cardio** improves
- Their **balance** improves
- They become more **agile** and lighter on their feet
- They build **strength, explosiveness** and **power**
- They learn the "fitness mindset" and how to overcome physical challenges
- They tune their fine and **gross motor skills**

Is it any wonder so many professional athletes train martial arts in their "off-season" to take their fitness to the next level? Of course not.

Now imagine learning this type of training while growing up! Incredible. And get this: **while gaining all this physical fitness, kids are learning something 100% practical and valuable: self-defense!** These are life-long skills a child can count on to stay safe for years to come. Finally, we have...

Benefit #7: Leadership

The first six benefits lay a solid foundation for this final benefit: **leadership**. Think about it: Confidence...discipline and focus...respect and courtesy...goal-setting... perseverance...physical fitness. Aren't these all attributes of a leader?

But it doesn't stop there. Through martial arts, your child will learn even more leadership skills. Like how to...

- Have integrity, be truthful and cultivate a good reputation among peers...
- How to speak in front of a group and communicate effectively...

- Set a good example for others....
- Stand up for themselves and form their own opinion...
- Help with class, teach lower ranks and guide others...
- And finally – this could be the most important – how to resist negative peer pressure, avoid bad influences and risky behavior like smoking and drinking. What could be more crucial?

Martial arts offers so many benefits to child development, it was difficult to list them all. You might be thinking of a few more.



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