

What to expect on your first visit

Your child wants to be a ninja.

You need him to have more focus and are concerned about his respect of others.

You hear that martial arts can teach him some of those things. You decide to check out a place on your drive home. A quick phone call on your way in and you are told a person will look out for you.

Bringing your kid you walk in the door.

Kids and adults are in practice and they are loud! An instructor is barking in a foreign language. You see kids moving into positions on command, as a single unit. They are engaged. They are disciplined. The instructor calls out and they come to attention and bow. It is natural and unforced. There is calm and focus.

Your boy's eyes get big and he is surprised by all the goings on. You realize this new stuff has him off-guard. He moves a little closer to you. Very different from the kid who was jumping around showing the moves he was going to use just a few minutes before!

A young man in a crisp uniform approaches you and introduces himself. He asks: Are you here to look at our program?

He listens closely. He then describes the scene, helping you understand what is going on. He points you to a pair of chairs. He lets you know that someone will be with you shortly.

Be prepared to watch for a few minutes, take it all in. Absorb the activity. This is a good thing.

Bags are brought out and kids start flying into them. The things they were practicing earlier are being used differently. They are laughing and challenging each other to go farther. Some do better than others but all participate and encourage each other. Class ends with high-fives all around.

This is a regular day.

Look around the room. Mirrors, padded floors, chairs, punching bags, bright lighting, coat hooks and cubbies. Everything seems to have a place, things are tidy for this much activity in one open room.

The noise level is to be expected. Martial arts are vocal and shouts are part of the training.

You should see organization. The room should be orderly with equipment and fixtures in good repair.

The gym, called a *do-jang* in Korean or *dojo* in Japanese - is a place where people train, so it may smell like a gym once in a while. This should not be constant or extreme.

Use the restroom. This often doubles as the locker room. Look for clean and in good repair. The occasional paper towel on the floor is ok, grimy is not.

Someone should come and talk to you in detail, repeating back what you told the young man. What results are you seeking? What goals do you and your child have for this practice? The question is key and your answers are critical. Martial arts can bring many things to a person's life but it has to begin with the student and family understanding they have a need for these disciplines.

An introductory offer with an evaluation of your child should follow. This lets you decide if it is a good fit for you.

This does not mean it should feel easy or comfortable. All things new and different bring a level of discomfort.

It does mean you should feel positive about coming in. You should recognize it can bring personal and physical development to your child and your family.

At Midwest Tae Kwon Do, this describes the first visit experience we strive to deliver. Stop in and see for yourself. 8815 Blondo Street, Omaha, NE. 402-932-2999