



**ORIENTATION INFORMATION  
FOR OUR CHILDREN'S PROGRAM**

*Parents are required to read this  
and make sure their children are appropriately informed*

Welcome to Aikido of San Diego :-)

My name is Dave Goldberg. The kids (and most all students) call me “Sensei.” I’ve been teaching and directing our youth program ever since I founded the dojo in 2000. I consider our youth program to be an important element in our public offerings, which also includes classes for teens and adults nearly every day of the week.

My full-time profession is teaching the art of Aikido. I have, in fact, been a teacher since 1990. First, in the academic world at the university and high school level, and then as a dedicated teacher of Aikido. By 1990 I earned a B.A. in philosophy, an M.A. in teaching, and was off to Japan to continue my Aikido training and teach English in two well-known universities. I returned to the United States in 1994 and continued with teaching and Aikido. I gave up academic teaching in 1998 after three very nice years at Francis Parker School to focus on building a dojo community. I have never regretted it, and the success and impact of our youth program is one of the reasons. Oh, and I also think it’s worth mentioning that I’m a dad of twin boys who are now teenagers. Like you, I’ve been through it all and know a little something about kids ;-)

I have several goals regarding our youth program. The biggest one is that kids are simply developing foundational body-mind growth skills like attention and responsiveness, centering, coordination, self and group awareness, and empathy. It’s also important to me that they are learning, and always improving upon, their techniques and engagement skills. Lastly, I want the kids building embodied faculties for working *with* people and challenges—not against them. This program is intended to be a life-affirming experience, and not one framed in competition or fear. It should also be fun. If your child isn’t having fun then I don’t think they should be here.

What follows here is everything you need to know about our program. There isn’t any excess, so please read it all. It includes expectations of you (the parents), expectations of the kids, and information regarding the program’s belt system (8-12 year olds only).

If you ever need to contact me, my email address is [sensei@aikidosd.com](mailto:sensei@aikidosd.com), or just use any email link on our website at [www.aikidosd.com](http://www.aikidosd.com). My number is 619-993-2454.

### ONE PROGRAM. TWO CLASSES

Our youth program is made up of “Aikido Action Hour” for 5-7 year olds, and the “Aikido Kids” class for 8-12 year olds.

The younger class is designed to be very foundational and playful. Aikido technique is introduced but kept to a minimum. There are no ranks in this class. Everyone wears a uniform with a white belt.

In the older class we place more emphasis on Aikido technique, which also means that they are working with a partner more often. This class includes a traditional ranking system with colored belts, etc. You can read all about this in the pages ahead.

Whichever class your child is in, there are expectations of parents and students. For the parents, there is little difference in expectations between classes. The general expectations for

the kids are also similar, but of course, accepted at different levels. After all, 5 year-olds are not 9 year-olds.

## EXPECTATIONS OF KIDS' CLASS PARENTS

***Please make sure your child is class ready.*** That means they should (1) have their whole uniform, (2) have clean feet and hands, (3) have short nails, and (4) be completely free of jewelry, cosmetics, fragrances, face paint, glitter, etcetera. Changing rooms are available.

***Parents are welcomed to stay and quietly observe class.*** For our younger class (5-7) it's highly recommended that you stay. Please silence your phone and take phone calls outdoors. Please do not unnecessarily communicate with your child(ren) while they are in session. Needless to say, Aikido is not Little League, and parents who coach from the sidelines will be given a time out ;-)

***If you are dropping off your child and not staying,*** do not do so more than 15 minutes before the start of class. No children are permitted to be dropped off until at least two adults are present at the dojo. Please do not leave other children (siblings/friends) at the dojo if you are dropping off. If there is a compelling need for it beyond convenience, please ask in each instance. You are expected to return to the dojo by class ending time—not after it, please.

***If you are bringing your child to class and staying throughout,*** please do not arrive earlier than 30 minutes before class time. If you do decide to come early, know that it is quiet time at the dojo up until 15 minutes before the start of class.

***Please bring a drink for your child, especially in the warmer months.*** Bottled water is available at the dojo and costs one dollar. Please give your child a dollar for bottled water if you don't supply them with a drink.

***I sometimes send emails with class announcements and information. Please open and read them.*** All are sent for good reasons—some of which may be specific to your child. My expectation is that if you want your child in Aikido class then you want to be informed about it. To stay informed about the dojo community at large, please “like” our Facebook page. You can do it from our website.

***Please assume that business matters are done “by the book.”*** Our membership and billing policies are outlined in your copies of the paperwork you signed upon registering. They are simple and transparent, and should be considered the financial rules for participation.

## EXPECTATIONS OF CHILDREN

***The primary requirement of all participants in the children's program is attention and appropriate behavior and participation.*** The kids simply have to be able to meet me half-way. If your child generally has challenges with extending a reasonable level of attention or behavior, it should be brought to my attention from the beginning. It does not mean that your child won't be allowed in the class or treated differently. I have had many kids in the class with such issues, including many with diagnoses. That's okay. There are limits, though, and mine is when the child consistently needs me to pull him/her towards “half-way.”

Here's the policy on that:

***When inappropriate behavior or attention deficit in class becomes a consistent pattern,*** I will let you know and make some actionable requests for improvement. If sufficient progress has not been made after a reasonable period of time then, sadly, you will be thanked for your time at the dojo and I will need to let the child go. It's a very rare occurrence, but it happens.

***The following is a minimal list of expectations for behavior at the dojo:***

When bowing in or out of class, or when I (or another instructor) am demonstrating or explaining, kids are expected to sit upright with their attention on the subject of the moment.

While engaged in practice, kids should be doing what they were asked to do, and not hopelessly lost in unrelated activity or conversation.

Kids in the children's class are expected to display awareness on the mat that extends beyond themselves. That means sharing space, being attentive if/when they are waiting for a turn, and displaying a cooperative interest in group activities.

Children are expected to treat one another kindly. Speaking negatively of a classmate, hitting a classmate, or inappropriately forcing a technique on a classmate are examples of unkind behavior. Thanking a training partner after practicing, speaking with classmates in positive and supportive ways, and treating the bodies of training partners respectfully are examples of kind behavior.

Children may not be argumentative with me at the dojo. The instructor's word on any matter during class is final, and needs to be accepted willingly.

#### ABOUT CHILDREN'S AIKIDO EXAMS

***Children moving up from the younger class are tested for yellow belt*** as soon as I feel they are prepared for it.

***Children in the older class (8-12) are offered exams for promotion after they have:***

1. Reached the minimal amount of training days required for their next level.
2. Displayed they can demonstrate the content.
3. Displayed a consistently positive training spirit.

***Exams are scheduled either on Saturdays when we have dojo-wide exams, or during kids' class hours when a group is ready for promotion.*** The dates are posted well in advance. On Saturdays there is a class before exams that the child is expected to attend. Certificates and belts are presented after all exams are completed. If you cannot stay until that time, the presentation will be done at the next children's class.

***There is a small fee for each exam administered, and is due before your child's exam date.*** It's currently \$25 and is payable in cash or check. Please do not wait to be asked for the exam fee.

**After receiving an exam date, your child's attendance is expected to be consistent.** I will not administer an exam, even if it was initially offered, if your child was not present often enough to prepare.

<b>Yellow Belt</b> <i>minimum 30 practice days as white belt</i>
Challenge course with tenkan/irimi and forward/back rolls
Tai-no-henko
Gyakute-dori: Ikkyo
Katate-dori: Sumi-otoshi
Kokyu-dosa

<b>Orange Belt</b> <i>minimum 40 practice days after yellow</i>
Challenge course
Tai-no-henko
Gyakute-dori: Ikkyo, Kokyu-ho, Kokyu-nage
Katate-dori: Sumi-otoshi, Kokyu-nage
Ukemi freestyle
Kokyu-dosa

<b>Green Belt</b> <i>minimum 50 practice days after orange</i>
Challenge course
Gyakute-dori: Ikkyo (omote and ura), Kokyu-ho, Kokyu-nage
Katate-dori: Sumi-otoshi, Kokyu-nage, Shiho-nage
Morote-dori: Kokyu-nage
Ukemi freestyle
Kokyu-dosa

<b>Purple Belt</b> <i>minimum 50 practice days after green</i>
Challenge course
Kata-dori: Ikkyo (omote and ura)
Gyakute-dori: Ikkyo (omote and ura), Kokyu-ho, Kokyu-nage
Katate-dori: Kokyu-nage, Shiho-nage, Kokyu-ho
Ryote-dori: Tenshi-nage
Morote-dori: Kokyu-nage
Freestyle as Nage and Uke
Kokyu-dosa

<b>Blue Belt</b> <i>minimum 50 practice days after purple</i>
Kata-dori: Ikkyo (omote and ura)
Gyakute-dori: Kote-gaeshi, Irimi-nage
Katate-dori: Kokyu-nage, Shiho-nage, Kokyu-ho, Kaiten-nage
Ryote-dori: Tenshi-nage
Morote-dori: Kokyu-nage
Ryokata-dori: Bypass
Freestyle as Nage and Uke
Kokyu-dosa

***Those who go through the entire children's belt system*** will prepare for a 4<sup>th</sup> Kyu demo upon entering the adult program. The minimum age to enter the adult program is thirteen. I reserve the right to graduate them to the adult program at my discretion. Usually they're ready. Sometimes they're not.

#### SOME INFORMATION ABOUT OUR SATURDAY MORNING CLASS

***The Saturday class at 9:00am is open to kids (8-12) in our youth program who have a parent in our adult program.***

This is so you have the opportunity to train together. So, to be clear, both parent and child must be in class, and training together. You are responsible for your child in this class and should not expect other adults to train with your child unless they explicitly offer. If you have more than one child there, you will be training in a trio.