



Youth Classes

When a Youth student first starts training, they begin at the same level as an Adult beginner - the **"Shodan" or "First-Degree" level**. Everyone first wears a white belt. Before actually doing self-defense principles and techniques, the Youth are taught how to properly do shoulder rolls and break falls because in Jujutsu, these are important aspects in keeping him or her from injuring themselves. Falling and shoulder rolling also helps get the Youth coordinated to the movements and techniques that they will learn to apply in self-defense situations. Youth students are also taught how to do kicks, punches, defensive positions, and stances.

**These 7 fundamental principles are subsequently used in self-defense applications, as shown below.*

After learning all these essentials, we then introduce "Waza", which is a Japanese term that means in English - "Basic Technique or Movement." At the Shodan level, the Youth and Adults are taught 21 basic techniques that they will learn in the sitting, half-standing, and standing positions.

Within Shodan Waza, there's 7 fundamental principles that are taught and learned by both Youth and Adult Students. They are:

- **Hakko Dori** - "Eighth Light Art - Escaping"
- **Atemi** - "Light Striking To The Body"
- **Te-Kagami** - "Hand Mirror - A Turning Wrist Bend"
- **Nage** - "Causing or Making an Attacker Stumble or Fall"
- **Ni-Ho Nage** - "Two Way Throw", or using a wrist lock to throw an Attacker"
- **Osae Dori** - "The Shodan Wrist Bend"
- **Otoshi** - "Throwing an Attacker using one's body as a Fulcrum"



Sempai Justin demonstrates the beginning of an Otoshi on Youth Student Brandon.



Sempai Justin demonstrates the end of the Otoshi on Youth Student Brandon.

Occasionally, to make the Youth students' training a little more realistic, we will have some of the Adult Black Belts wear the "Red Man" suit. This suit is heavily padded and covers someone's entire body from head to toe, allowing hard strikes that you normally couldn't do to a person, unless you were on the street. With one of our Black Belts wearing the "Red Man" suit, we then play a game where we set up a mock car (with chairs) and then have all of the Youth class sit in a circle in the middle of the mat. Then, the "Red Man" will walk around the circle and randomly try to pick up, grab, and pull a youth student to the mock car. The whole goal of this exercise is to teach the youth students how to be LOUD, and to use their self defense skills that they have been taught.

Youth students are permitted to go 110% full go in hitting the "Red Man." If the "Red Man" happens to get a Youth student to the car, then him or her stay there and are eliminated from the circle. In real life, this is identical to kidnapping, so with this exercise we want to minimize a Youth student's chance of this happening to him or her.



Youth Student hitting the "Red Man"

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Youth Classes *(Continued)*

The way a Youth student makes progress, or moves up in belt color, is by testing. Generally, if you are a white belt (beginner), your next belt you will test for is yellow. Here, you will be asked to do all 21 Shodan Waza, to see how proficient your Waza has gotten. Every time you test for a belt, or the higher you go, your Waza will be expected to be smoother and smoother, until it is at near perfection (this is when you would test for Black Belt). You will also be asked to do self-defense applications using the 7 principles mentioned above. **The color rank of belts - White, Yellow, Orange, 2 Greens, 3 Browns, and finally Black.** Once a Black Belt is achieved, you are considered a "1st Degree Black Belt", or termed in Japanese - a "Shodan" Black Belt. To test for Black Belt, you need to be at least 16 years of age and the reason for this is that we don't want a youth to use his knowledge the wrong way at an earlier age because of the amount of harm that he or she may do to someone else. We feel that this is best for the youth because he or she will be at a more mature level and they will have had at least a minimum of 2-3 years of training. If a Youth student receives a Black Belt, their training isn't done at all! If he or she wants, they will be permitted to study for their 2nd Degree Black Belt - which is termed "Nidan." The Youth student will then be technically considered an "Adult" and will be training in the Adult class for now on.



A Youth Student Blocks the "Red Man's" Attack!



Shihan Chris LaMonica shows the Youth how to evade an attacker!



Sensei Erica helps two Youth Students properly do one of the Shodan Waza.



Sensei Drew helps two Youth Students properly do one of the Shodan Waza.

Our Current Teachers, or Senseis' of the Youth class are Shihan Chris LaMonica, who is "Soke" Michael J. LaMonica's wife, Sensei Erica(Shodan), Sempai Drew(San-Kyu), and Sensei Steve(Nidan). Shihan Chris LaMonica, along with "Soke" Michael J. LaMonica, have raised 5 daughters and are very experienced in teaching the Youth students and Adults. **Youth classes are offered on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 pm- 7:30 pm and on Saturday mornings from 9:30 am - 10:30 am.** Adult classes immediately follow both Youth classes. If you have a son or daughter and are concerned about their safety and would like to come out to our dojo, feel free to do so and don't be afraid to ask questions about our unique martial art. Remember, the only dumb question, is a question that's not asked. Bring your son(s) or daughter(s) with you so they can see what a class is actually like. Usually, some of the more experienced Youth will put on a demonstration for you, so you can gain first hand knowledge of the principles and practices we teach.