

**Teach multiplication tables and make it fun for your child.  
Easy strategies for mastering the math facts.**

When fifth grade arrives so do the dreaded times tables. Some kids glom onto the idea as a new fun challenge. But if your child doesn't fit into the "I love math" category then you need to make it fun for him.

If your child's attitude falls into the dull and pointless attitude towards multiplication tables, it's time for you to take a new approach. Make it fun, make it exciting and make it a game.

The best tactic when tackling those times tables is to use several different strategies for memorization.

Flashcards of course are a must, but take the flashcards a step further. Shuffle them up, and deal them like a card game. Each player lays a card down, and the first person to say the correct answer wins the hand...but the loser takes the cards. The person who ends up with no more cards wins the game.

Another fun game requires more people. Have a sleepover, and tell all the kids they're going to play a game for prizes. Have each child keep his own score. Hold up a flashcard and the first person to shout the answer wins a point. The first person to earn 100 points wins a prize. Dole out second, third and fourth prizes too, because it's important that everyone's efforts be recognized.

There are a number of math products available on the market today. One particular product is called a "wrap-up". This little gadget is plastic with a string. As the child does the math problem in his head, he must wrap the string around each correct answer. This teaches the child the math facts using a different strategy. Because the child is using his hands and his mind to learn the facts, he's using his brain in a different way to learn the tables. You can time how long it takes to complete one wrap-up, and the shorter the time the better the reward the child can earn. Kids can have races with wrap-ups too. The faster they complete the wrap-up the better they know the math facts.

Another simple, but effective strategy is the timed test. These can be purchased at any educational store, or your child's school will provide one to you for free that you can duplicate.

This test will present 100 multiplication problems on one sheet. Usually one test will present 100 problems, in random order of the ones, twos, threes, fours...etc...up through the twelves.

The public schools are pushing for students to complete one of these tests in less than five minutes. If you have your child work on one a day, he will be breaking records at his school.

Remember, the multiplication tables are the building blocks of all modern math, algebra and geometry. The better and faster a child can recall these facts, the easier the more advanced math will become in the future.

Tips:

- Always reward your child when he masters a new set of math facts.
- Don't overdo it! Stop working before your child becomes frustrated and tired. It's important to make the time spent learning the math a fun, positive experience. Bring it to a close before your child can become tired and bored with it.
- Challenge your child to meet goals and reward him when he achieves them.

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