How to teach your children times tables.

Many children struggle with learning their times tables. It is our duty to help. Knowing multiplication facts and their corresponding division facts off by heart and at speed will really help your child progress in maths and succeed in their SATs. All it takes is time, strategy, and patience to help your child work with and enjoy the quest of conquering these figures, but it's guaranteed to be worth it. (Better than working through SAT's papers!!!!)

Commit to a time. Sit down with your child when both of you are ready to make a dent into the subject. If you are preoccupied with work or if your child is too tired or hungry, learning won't occur as quickly as you want it to. Sit down for 10 minutes and don't allow any distractions. Energy and enthusiasm are very important for both of you. Turn off your cell phone(s), TV, and sit down at the dinner table with some munchies and attack those numbers.

If your child is unfamiliar with multiplying, put it in terms of adding. That is, 4x3 is 4+4+4.

Have the attached chart handy showing the numbers 0 through 100. A chart will give you the answers by correlating the row with the column. A chart is better for those just starting off as the answers are quicker to find. You could start by coding each number and its multiples with different colours.

First of all, your child needs to master 0-3 then, move onto 4-7, and then 8-10. If you want to go above and beyond, work with 11 and 12, too.

Discuss patterns in the whole chart. It doesn't all have to be rote memorization with no clues or hints. The chart will easily point out things to look for, e.g.]
All the multiples of ten end in zero.

All the multiples of 5 end in either 5 or 0 and are half as large as the multiples of ten. (10x5=50; 5x5=25, or half of 50)
Any number x 0 is still 0. No matter what.
Know the tricks. Luckily, math is full of shortcuts. Teach your child these tricks and they'll be impressed and, hopefully, quite thankful.

To memorise the 9's tables, use your fingers. Spread them all in front of you, palms down. For 9x1, put your left pinky down. What do you have showing? 9. For 9x2, put your second finger down (the left ring finger). What do you have showing? 1 and 8. 18. Put your third finger down--2 and 7. 27. This works all the way up to 9x9 (8 and 1. 81).

If your child can double a number, the x4's will be easy. Just double the number and double it again! Take 6x4. 6 doubled is 12. 12 doubled is 24. 6x4=24. Use this to make the answer become automatic. Again, this is about memorising.

To multiply anything by 11, just duplicate the number. 3x11=33. Two 3's. 4x11=44. Two 4's. The answer is in the question, just twice.

If your child is a math genius, teach them this trick to multiply 11's by double digit numbers. Take the double digit number and split it up. 11 by 17 is 1_7. Add the double digit number together and put it in the middle: 187.

Do speed drills. Now that your child is familiar with the entire chart, drill them. Drill them over breakfast, during the adverts whilst watching television, and for a few minutes before bed. As you progress, get faster and faster and faster. At the beginning, start in order, as you get more and more convinced that they have it down, start mixing it up. They'll slow down initially but then should spark right back up to where they were.

Make it fun. By this point, you both may be wondering what those squiggles in each number really are. Spice it up for the both of you with games and contests.

Have your child make a set of flash cards. Write the problem, like 4 x 9, on the front and the answer, 36, on the back. The act of writing out the multiples will provide another repetition/reinforcement. Use a timer to see how many cards they can go through in a minute. Can they beat that score tomorrow? Grab a deck of cards. This game is similar to War, but with multiplication. You each get half the deck to place face down in front of you--don't look at the cards! Each player flips their first card simultaneously--the first person to say the answer based on the two numbers gets both cards (the object of the game is to win them all). If the two of you flip a 7 and a 5, the answer to shout out is 35. For Jacks, Queens, and Kings, you can use 11, 12, and 13, use them as 0's, or take them out entirely.

Say a number, like 30. Can they list all of the possible combinations that multiply to it? 5 x 6? 3 x 10?

Say a number, then ask for the next multiple. For example, start at 30 and ask for the next multiple of 6. Or start at 18 and ask for the next two multiples of 9. You could even start at 22 and ask for the next multiple of 4, even though 22 is not a multiple of 4.

Try multiplication bingo. Your child fills in a six-by-six grid with whatever numbers they want. You read off a problem like "5 x 7." If they have 35 on their bingo card, then they mark it off. Continue until someone has a "bingo." What's the prize they could win?

Rewarding Your Child

Use incentives. You don't have to use money or material goods--that may spoil their love of learning. Of course, snacks, drinks and offering things they like to do are always good ideas. Save the big rewards for school tests. Once they can perform under pressure, you know you've been successful. Praise your child. Don't forget to pause and have fun between serious repetitions of the facts. If you're happy with their success, they'll be more likely to want to be successful. Tell them how awesome they're doing!

If they're going slower than you think they should, relax. Negativity may make them shut down. A bad mood can kill any learning ability. Encourage them to press on. Take breaks. No child can learn for hours on end. When you sense that they're wearing down, take a break. You probably need one too!

Learning can, and should, be fun! Little and often is the key to success!