

Widcombe C of E Junior School

Times Table Tips for Parents

1. Familiarise children with multiplication concepts

The first step with multiplication is to make sure your child is familiar with what the numbers in multiplications represent. Before they can cope with multiplication, they need to be confident with sequences of numbers. Start by practising counting in twos and threes, making number patterns and solving simple mathematical problems. Counting objects, making sets of similar objects and using blocks such as LEGO can all help to increase your child's confidence with number bonds and multiplication facts.

2. Make sure they can walk before they can run

Start with the foundations first. Teach your children the simpler tables first and only move on to trickier ones once they are secure. The two and ten times tables are a good starting point. Learning to double will also help them to make connections between different times tables and to be able to find other key facts efficiently. e.g. 2, 4, 8. Likewise, through introducing halving, children can quickly find 5×7 a number by halving 10×7 . Once they have mastered the basics, your child's confidence will help them tackle more difficult tables.

3. Use the correct vocabulary

Make sure you are using the right language when talking about multiplication. Take a simple multiplication sum, such as $3 \times 5 = 15$. The 3 and the 5 are factors of 15 and 15 is a multiple of 3 and 5. You can also demonstrate this by looking at the whole 3 times table written out in a list. Point out that each answer is a number that is a multiple of 3.

4. Use a number grid or times table sheet

Printing off a simple 12×12 number grid can be a great way to demonstrate how times tables relate to number sequences. You can ask your child to colour in multiples of different numbers on different number squares so that they can clearly see the number patterns. Hang the sheets in a place where your child will see them regularly and set regular time to run through set times tables. The more often they see and practise their times tables, the more likely they are to learn them.

5. Rehearse the 'tricky' ones and make it memorable

There are usually one or two multiplication facts in each times table that are more difficult. When you notice that your child is stumbling over the same fact each time, try to give them extra practice. There are lots of ways to make these facts memorable and to help them 'stick' e.g. songs, rhymes, jokes etc. Making posters of these tables and displaying

them in familiar places could also help. There are various tricks to support learning times tables. For example, the finger trick for the 9 x table. This can be a useful kinaesthetic stepping-stone between learning and knowing key facts. When teaching children these tricks, do encourage them to ask why these techniques work and explore the mathematical reasoning behind them.

6. Practise times tables as a time-filler

When you're sitting at traffic lights or in a queue at the supermarket, it is the perfect opportunity for a bit of times table practice! Little and often is always better (for both your child and you!) Spending a few minutes reciting or testing times tables is more effective than long sessions.

7. Make links to division facts

As well as learning the times tables, your child should also know the division facts for each times table. (For example, if 3 times 5 is 15, 15 divided by 5 is 3, and 15 divided by 3 is 5.)

8. Make it real

The danger with too much rote learning of times tables is that children can fail to see the use of times tables in real life. Try to take opportunities to get your child to use multiplication in real life and in problem solving. Examples could include working out quantities for scaling up a recipe or calculating the price of more than one item of shopping.

9. Add an element of challenge/enjoyment

Make it fun by turning times table practice into a competition or challenge for your child by timing them and keeping a record of their scores or by playing various games with an element of competition. You could even join in yourself and set a challenge to learn a more difficult times table such as the 13 times table and get your child to test you at the end of the week in exchange for testing them...

10. Reward efforts

This goes without saying! When encouraging children to pursue something important, like times tables, there's no harm in heightening their enthusiasm with a little reward. Remember that you shouldn't just reward your child for getting answers right. Don't be afraid to give them a treat if you can see they've been trying hard but haven't quite mastered their times tables yet. This encourages persistence. Also, remember not to judge them if they get the answers wrong - learning should always be an enjoyable experience!

Useful links:

https://assets.oxfordowl.co.uk/2014/05/13/10/30/08/349/PX_MathsContent_BK_TimesTablesInSchool_01_CH.pdf

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/times-tables-the-best-ways-to-learn>

A great book with ideas for games:

