

# “I want you to want to...”

In the movie, *The Break-Up*, Jennifer Aniston and Vince Vaughn are having an argument. He has been doing the dishes, but she wants more. She says to him, “I want you to *want* to wash the dishes.”

I feel that way when it comes to children and math. I want them to *want* to know essential facts.

I want this because when children *want* to know these facts, they pay attention during lessons. They try harder. They study more. They develop grit and perseverance. They don't give up.

How do we get children to *want* to know math facts? My name is Mitchell Mark. I was a Third Grade Teacher and a Supervisor of Teacher Education at The University of California at Riverside. Over the years, I have developed challenges, contests, races, and games that get children excited about math facts. During recess, children will wait in line to take a turn at The Math Facts Mad Dash, a relay race with math facts. Children will ask to do the dash for PE.

However, when I wasn't there, teachers were too busy managing 30 students to do the dash. I realized that what teachers needed was a Math Facts Coach. Think of a sports team. The teacher is the manager or head coach. She or he oversees the whole team. There are coaches who handle specific parts of the game, like batting, or kicking. Math Facts Coaches help children learn basic facts, freeing the teacher to focus on other aspects of teaching math.

I have written a guide for educators, parents, and Math Facts Coaches, entitled, *Empowering Children to Study and Learn Math Facts on their Own*. It includes step-by-step instructions for a variety of activities.

Teachers and Math Facts Coaches agree on an activity. The Math Facts Coach takes care of the rest, freeing the teacher to do what he or she does best.

The other day I wrote the word *encourage*. I saw the word *courage*. I am sure I am not the first person to notice. I haven't looked up it's origin. I like the one I made up. *Encourage: To help another be courageous in facing a difficult task*. Above all, Math Facts Coaches *encourage* children. I am glad you are here.

Mitch

Teachers, send home the notice below.  
Coaches have access to a manual, instructional flashcard kits, and personal online support.

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## Be a Math Facts Coach and Make a Difference

Math Facts Coaches:

- ★Run a math facts station during math class, and work with students one-on-one.
- ★Run a Math Facts Mad Dash station during recess.
- ★Help teachers assess student progress.
- ★Help parents stay informed and involved.

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*I Would Like to Be a Math Facts Coach*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Best way to contact (Phone, text, or e-mail): \_\_\_\_\_

Availability: \_\_\_\_\_

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