



Ideas to help your child learn their Foundation (Basic) Facts

You may be feeling a bit lost with how you can help your child to learn their foundation facts while they are at home. If you are not sure about which facts they need to learn, get in touch with their teacher and ask which facts they need to be working on. Only give them a few facts to learn at a time. If you give them too many, this will overload them, and the aim is for them to learn the facts with understanding as opposed to an isolated fact they memorise.

For younger children, they will require some objects they can use to count with. Some ideas could be marbles, milk bottle tops, apples, pegs, toy cars, dolls, a selection of pens, books, or anything that you have multiple amounts of. If all else fails, you could always rip up pieces of paper they can use to count with and join sets together. Remember that all children have fingers and these are a great tool for our younger students as well.

Playing games and making it fun are some of the best ways to learn foundation facts. Here are some ideas you can try with your child/children – you may like to make up games and activities of your own too:

- Make the basic fact out of playdough or mud. For younger children they may represent it as 3 balls of dough and 2 balls of dough make 5 balls of dough altogether. For older children it could be that they make the fact itself as $3 + 2 = 5$.
- Cut the fact up into individual numbers and symbols for your child. Give them these pieces and ask them to put the fact together.
- Have them say the fact aloud. For example: “ $8 + 9 = 17$.”
- Write the fact down several times.
- Write the fact in the air.
- Trace over the fact with a pencil, finger or marker.
- Draw the fact in sand, dirt, or whatever you have available. For younger children, they may draw it as sets of objects as opposed to using numbers and symbols.
- Use the fact in context to help them understand it. This helps your child with knowing what it means, and how they can use it in real life. For example: “If I had 7 apples this morning and we’ve eaten 3 today, how many do you think we have left?” or “I need to know how many sausage rolls I can fit on the tray. I’ve worked out I can do 5 rows with 4 in each row. How many sausage rolls will fit on the tray?” Use this for facts from all the operations – addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.
- Create flash cards for your child. Write the fact they are practicing on the front of the card and the answer on the back of it.
- Use a dice, some playing cards or make a spinner and add the number that’s rolled, flipped over or spun to a number you set. For example: I could add 3 to what I roll on the dice, flip over on the cards or spin on the spinner. You can use this game for any level of learning facts.
- Use playing cards numbered Ace to 10 (Ace represents 1). Lay them out in a 3 x 4 grid with the cards face down. Continue placing the cards on top of each other to create piles in the 3 x 4 grid until all the cards in the pack are used. Turn over the top card on each pile. Have a number they are aiming to find the facts for. For example: if they need to make 8, they could find cards such as 5 and 3, 4 and 4, 7 and Ace, etc. When a pair has been made, take those cards away and flip over the next card on the pile. Again, you can tailor this to work for any level of learning and vary the answer they are making. If your child is working on adding to 5, only place cards Ace to 4 down in the grid. For younger children, let them count the symbols on the cards if they need to (the hearts, diamonds, spades and clubs). Children at this level need to have a representation of the objects to count.
- When your child is learning a fact, it’s always a good idea to have them see and learn the other facts that can go with the one you are focusing on. We call this the family of facts (triplets). If I am learning the fact $3 + 5 = 8$, I can also learn the following facts in that triplet family. For example:

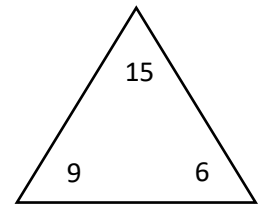
$$3 + 5 = 8 \quad 5 + 3 = 8 \quad 8 - 3 = 5 \quad 8 - 5 = 3$$

You can use this triplet family of facts approach for learning addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

- Skip Counting – this is good for when your child is learning their times tables and is a simple strategy they can use. Counting in 2s, 5s, 10s, and so on can be fun to do together as your child hears patterns in numbers. Don't forget to count backwards too.
- Seeing that numbers can be made up of two parts. This strategy can work for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to help them learn related facts. Here's two examples of how it works – one for addition and subtraction, and one for multiplication and division:

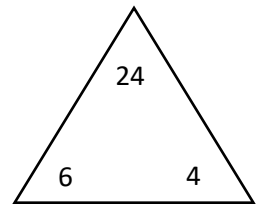
Whole 15	
Part 9	Part 6

If I add 9 and 6 together, I get 15. $9 + 6 = 15$
 If I add 6 and 9 together, I get 15. $6 + 9 = 15$
 If I take 9 away from 15, I get 6. $15 - 9 = 6$
 If I take 6 away from 15, I get 9. $15 - 6 = 9$



Whole 24	
Number of groups 6	Size of group 6

If I multiply 6 and 4 together, I get 24. $6 \times 4 = 24$
 If I multiply 4 and 6 together, I get 24. $4 \times 6 = 24$
 If I divide 24 by 6, I get 4. $24 \div 6 = 4$
 If I divide 24 by 4, I get 6. $24 \div 4 = 6$



These can also be used as fact family cards to help your child understand the relationship between addition and subtraction, or multiplication and division. Fact families are simply 3 numbers (a triplet) that are related and make a set of math facts. Have a go at making a set of your own.

- Draw a hopscotch with chalk and write facts inside each square. Your child must say the fact and the answer when hopping on each square.
- Have your child say some facts while they doing something rhythmic such as jumping on a trampoline, skipping, hopping on one foot, clapping to a beat, or bouncing a ball. The combination of co-ordination, speaking and learning facts requires different parts of the brain to work together.
- Create fact trading cards. You can design these as themes or colours that suit them, family members, or an interest or hobby. Display or play games with the cards to practice the facts they are learning.
- Toss a balloon or ball around the room with your child. As you toss, call out a fact. The goal is for them to say the answer before catching the balloon or ball. If this is too challenging at first, modify the rule so that instead they call out the answer before passing it on.
- If your child is having difficulty with a few facts, choose one of them at a time and make it the 'fact of the day.' Post the fact in a place where it will be seen often. Then ask your child frequently during the day to tell you the answer. Another use of this is to have the fact of the day become the 'password' for doing certain things or substitute it for someone's name.
- Place some facts on certain things you know your child will want to do during the day. If they get the answer right, they can do the activity, or have the item of food, etc. Pick some facts for this off the appropriate sheet for their level of learning.