Teen numbers, facts and the equal sign

One child at a time. Read the steps, watch without helping, and note what the child does. Real objects are best; each card has a picture to use when there are none.

Activity 1 Build a teen number

1. Give the child 2 ten-sticks and 9 single cubes. No cubes? Cut out the ones on this card.
2. Say: “Show me 17. Use the sticks and the cubes.”
3. Then ask: “How many tens? How many ones?”
4. Watch without helping.

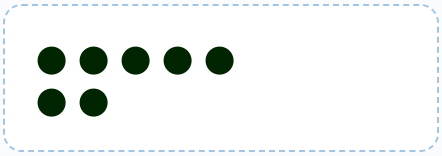


Look for: Takes 1 ten-stick and 7 single cubes, and says “one ten and seven ones”. Taking both ten-sticks or taking 17 single cubes does not meet the task criteria.

What the child did and said: _____

Activity 2 The equal sign and a balance

1. Show the child the equation 4 + 5 = □ + 6, written on paper.
2. Ask: “What number goes in the box? Why?”
3. If you have a pan balance, put 4 cubes and 5 cubes on one side and 6 cubes on the other. Ask: “How many cubes make it level?”
4. Counters are on this card if the child wants them. Do not give the answer.



Look for: Says 3, because both sides must be the same amount: 4 + 5 is 9, and 3 + 6 is 9 too. With a balance, adds 3 cubes and says the sides are now equal.

Not yet: Saying 9, or that the equal sign means the answer comes next.

The child said: _____

Activity 3 Facts to 20

1. Ask aloud, one at a time: 3 + 5, 9 + 8, 10 + 9, 10 + 10.
2. Then, in another order: 20 − 10, 19 − 10, 17 − 9, 8 − 3.
3. Note each answer and whether the child knew it straight away or worked it out.

Look for: 3 + 5 = 8, 9 + 8 = 17, 10 + 9 = 19, 10 + 10 = 20, 20 − 10 = 10, 19 − 10 = 9, 17 − 9 = 8 and 8 − 3 = 5, each said without counting on fingers.

Not yet: A wrong answer, or a fact worked out by counting one by one. Working it out is fine for now; ask the same facts again in a few weeks.

Facts known straight away: _____

Teen numbers, facts and the equal sign: class record

▯ did it on their own ○ not yet – not seen yet. Write the date beside a mark to see progress over the year.

Child	1 Build a teen number	2 The equal sign and a balance	3 Facts to 20