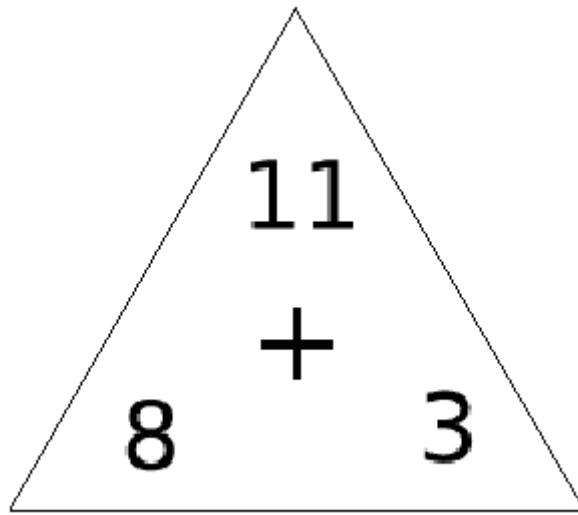


## How to Use Triangular Addition/Subtraction Flash Cards



The addition facts can be seen as "families" of numbers: two "terms" and a "sum." In the case illustrated here, the two terms are 8 and 3, and the sum is 11. If the parent presents the card to a child with the top number covered, it is an addition problem. The goal is to add 8 and 3 to get 11. However if one or the other of the bottom numbers is covered, it becomes a subtraction problem:  $11 - 8 = 3$  or  $11 - 3 = 8$ .

One important advantage of using the same triangular cards to practice addition and subtraction is that subtraction becomes seen as "puzzle addition": find the missing term. The subtraction problem  $11 - 8 = ?$  literally means, "What do you have to add to 8 to get 11?" Subtraction is the inverse operation of addition; learning the combinations in this format is a good way to learn what that concept means (the opposite of addition). If a person doesn't recognize when a situation calls for subtraction in a real-life problem, he or she will not be able to get the right answer even with a calculator.

Another advantage of learning addition and subtraction on the same set of cards is that subtraction can be introduced informally without even giving it a name. Once the child becomes reasonably fluent in adding pairs of numbers, covering other corners of the card becomes a game of "find the missing number." The parent need not even introduce the word "subtraction" until the child has mastered the activity.

Finally, learning to subtract in this context reinforces addition skills. By the time the child can give the answer no matter which corner is covered, he or she has literally learned addition "backward and forward"!

