

Early Number with Numicon Pilot Study

Setting Information Sheet

Oxford University Press (OUP) is delighted to invite applications from private, to evaluate the Early Number with Numicon programme. The programme has been designed by and will be delivered by Numicon professional development experts from OUP.

What is Early Number with Numicon?

Early Number with Numicon is a 14-week programme designed to support childminders and practitioners in the private, voluntary, and independent early years settings to deliver early maths sessions to 3-4 year old children. Developed by Oxford University Press (OUP), it aims to prepare practitioners to introduce children to the fundamentals of numbers using Numicon manipulatives. The EEF Improving Mathematics in Early Years and KS1 guidance report highlights research evidence that suggests using manipulatives and representations can be particularly effective in teaching mathematics. Using resources such as Numicon is proven to develop maths talk and provide children with opportunities to explore maths concepts at an early age.

The Early Number with Numicon programme provides training for nursery practitioners and childminders to deliver weekly small group sessions using Numicon manipulatives and guidance on how to promote maths in the wider environment. Each session lasts approximately 10-15 minutes with the aim of:

- Helping children to develop an understanding of early number: counting, labelling, identifying patterns, the language of comparison (more/less) and the numbers to 5
- Increasing children's enjoyment of and motivation towards maths

The programme will run from September 2024 to January 2025. Training includes two face-to-face sessions and two twilight online sessions delivered by experienced Numicon trainers. All of the activities to be implemented with children will be clearly demonstrated step by step so that practitioners will know exactly how to deliver the sessions and will have opportunities to practice and ask questions.

The programme has been designed to be simple and easy to implement with no prior knowledge of teaching maths needed. Settings will be provided with all the resources they will need to implement the programme including a set of Numicon shapes.

The sessions will equip practitioners with:

- Improved knowledge and understanding of how children learn
- Knowledge and strategies to engage a small group of children in maths talk
- Confidence to develop the wider environment to support maths development

We are looking for **30 early year settings** in Bradford who will be able to:

- Commit to releasing one early years practitioner to attend two face-to-face training sessions and two online sessions. Other staff members may attend, but at least one practitioner must attend all the sessions
- Commit to one senior member of staff or setting manager to attend the first session
- Provide time for the practitioner to deliver the weekly sessions with all suitable groups of children (3 and 4 year olds)
- Provide time for the practitioner to record their reflections
- Support the pilot evaluation by taking part in the research activities summarized below and detailed in the evaluation's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The pilot is recruiting in West Yorkshire. Settings are not eligible if they are participating in another EEF-funded programme or a Stronger Practice Hub-funded programme delivered in the 2024/25 academic year.

What are the benefits for my setting?

- By taking part in this pilot evaluation, your setting is adding to the evidence base and knowledge on what works in early years education in England
- Your setting will receive a promising approach that aims to improve children's mathematical development
- Your staff will receive high-quality professional development using a resource that has been tested for impact in previous studies
- Your setting will receive a set of Numicon shapes and a copy of *Making Numbers: using arithmetic to teach mathematics* (OUP, 2022)
- You will receive the Early Number with Numicon training for FREE
- In recognition that there are costs associated with taking part in training, we will reimburse nurseries and childminders at £7.50/hr for the time the practitioners attend training
- If a setting or childminder agrees to be a case study and takes part in additional research activities (e.g. allowing researchers to visit to observe the setting and interview practitioners), you will receive a payment of £300 to thank you for your time and engagement

How will Early Number with Numicon be Evaluated?

The EEF have asked IFF research to evaluate Early Number with Numicon. IFF Research will carry out research to understand how well the programme works. All schools that take part in the pilot of Early Number with Numicon will deliver the programme and **must** participate in the evaluation.

The evaluation will investigate whether the pilot of Early Number with Numicon:

- Provides promising indicative evidence that the intervention can deliver on its expected outcomes
- Demonstrates that the intervention can be delivered using an approach that is feasible and acceptable for settings, staff and children
- Suggests that the intervention is ready to be delivered at scale to test for wider impact

Your setting would be expected to take part in evaluation activities including online surveys and interviews of staff. You might also be asked to take part in additional activities, including practice observations. The full requirements of the evaluation are set out in the MoU and you will need to agree to take part in the evaluation if you want your school to take part in the Early Number with Numicon pilot.

What do I need to do now?

If you are interested in taking part in the pilot evaluation, please fill in the expression of interest (Eoi) form at: <https://eef.li/g6tKUz>

The deadline for expression of interest is **31 July 2024**. Please note that settings will be selected **on a first come, first serve basis**.

For more information, email: numicon.trial@oup.com

Where can I find out the results of this pilot evaluation?

At the end of the pilot evaluation, a final report will be written by the evaluation team. This report will be published on the EEF's website (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) in Spring 2025.