Understanding Numicon: Helping Your Child See Numbers

Key points

- Numicon is a set of colourful shapes with holes that help children in Reception (the first year of primary school) see numbers as physical patterns.
- Each number from 1 to 10 has its own unique shape, which helps children recognise a quantity without needing to count every hole one by one.
- The shapes make it easier to see 'one more' or 'one less' by comparing two pieces side-by-side.
- Children can learn about odd and even numbers by looking at the 'feet' (the bumps at the bottom of the shapes).
- Fitting two shapes together is a playful way for children to start understanding simple addition.
- Because every school uses resources differently, you can ask your child's teacher how they use Numicon in the classroom.

Things to try at home

- Go on a 'number hunt' around the house to find things that match the number of holes in a specific shape.
- Play a guessing game by hiding a shape under a cloth and asking your child to name the number just by feeling the pattern.
- Use the shapes to help with everyday tasks, like counting out pieces of fruit for a snack.
- Let your child build 'towers' or patterns with the shapes to explore how they fit together.

Find out more

- Your child's class teacher or the school's maths lead.
- The official GOV.UK guidance on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum.