Hi Margi,

Great to receive your email today.  I think March would be fine for me, I'm not in a hurry just interested in becoming more involved.   However if your were visiting Wellington sooner I would love to have the opportunity to have a coffee and chat and maybe show you some of the ways I use Numicon myself.

I think that Numicon would fit in the early childhood curriculum with greatest of ease!  In fact I think it's a resource that works best amongst the activities that are already provided in the average kindergarten.  I don't see Numicon being introduced as a separate activity rather one that is integrated into children's natural play.  (not in early childhood)

If I were working in an Early childhood Centre I would have Numicon  available everywhere -

* playdough table,
* natural resource table,
* Mattime activities e.g. finger rhymes, music, action songs
* Daily routines e.g. Children can use 2 papertowels, can eat 4 pieces of fruit
* use it with physical activities outside - eg throwing bean bags into Numicon labelled buckets
* Sandpit
* family corner - pretending shopping, pretend food etc
* block corner, Duplo
* board games
* Books
* Waterplay
* cooking
* Musical instruments
* puzzle table (I would have the white board here)

What will make Numicon work well in EC is when the teachers begin to describe (using mathematical language) what children are naturally noticing about Numicon -  This is a strong teaching approach in early childhood - (allowing children to lead us in their learning) so they would naturally support children stage they're at.  In these early years it is alot about exposure and experimenting with Numicon.

I think the earlychildhood teachers in Kindergarten and Childcare Centres would accept it with ease especially if we closely link it to their curriculum Te Whaariki.

I have had a lot of experience in Montessori (not working there but having many children with special needs attending these centres)  While they are more formal in their learning they can be quite particular how this learning happens with respect to the Montessori philosophy.    For example all the equipment was developed by Maria Montessori and this equipment remains the same to this day!  Each centre will have these core activities.  What does differ from centre to centre is how the teachers **interpret** Maria Montessori's philosophy.  Some are purist and wont do anything that differs from what Maria did herself - e.g. One centre I visited used no digital cameras.    However some centres are not so strong about this.  If Numicon were to be accepted by Montessori centres it would be used as a separate activity for children to use a specific way.  They would not integrate Numicon with other activities what so ever (that I do know).  The other aspect is that they do already have specialised activities that support some basic mathematical understandings.   You see each activity at Montessori has a purpose and should only be used in a specific way.  (Oh you can see I am not a Montessori person)

What I like about Numicon is that it encourages us to be creative how we think about maths and it makes us feel COMFORTABLE about Maths - That I can promote without a doubt!

P.S I did attend your course at the beginning of the year.

P.SS My sister's name is Margi too - however it is officially Margit (Swedish)

Will keep in touch

Kind Regards

Soreen