

What Are Math Manipulatives?

Math manipulatives are objects or materials that **allow students to engage in hands-on math activities and exploration**. Students use manipulatives to build concrete representations that **help them conceptualize abstract or complex mathematical ideas**.

The following list shows some examples of activities that help students learn about and understand math.

With manipulatives, students can:

- Show how they solved a math problem
- Practice counting, sorting, and grouping
- Develop number sense
- Construct math models
- Represent different quantities
- Make sense of fractions
- Learn about money



The table below shows some of the manipulatives used in your student’s mathematics program as well as substitutions you can provide to support learning at home. The last column in the table indicates when there is a corresponding Digital Math Tool that could be used, which can be accessed by logging into the student digital experience.

Manipulative	At-Home Option	Digital Math Tool (When Applicable)
Assorted Buttons	Any objects with sortable attributes, such as attribute blocks, cereal, Legos®, buttons, dried beans, etc.	Counters and Connecting Cubes
Base-Ten Cubes, Rods, and Flats	Sugar cubes, cube-shaped game pieces, straws to use individually and to make bundles of tens	Base-Ten Blocks
Bear Counters	Any items to count, such as buttons, marbles, beans, pasta, etc.	Counters and Connecting Cubes
Bills (\$1, \$5, \$10, or \$100)	Play money, Monopoly® money	
Centimeter Cubes or Tiles	Sugar cubes	Counters and Connecting Cubes
Connecting/Linking Cubes	Legos	Counters and Connecting Cubes

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Manipulative	At-Home Option	Digital Math Tool (When Applicable)
Counters	Any items to count, such as buttons, pennies, cereal, candy, etc.	Counters and Connecting Cubes
Digital Stopwatch	Digital stopwatch, second hand on a clock/watch	
Geometric Solids	Balls or other spheres, shoe/tissue/cereal boxes or other rectangular prisms, cans or other cylinders, clay models	Geometry
Measuring Jar Set	Any cup, pint, and quart containers	
Meterstick	Meterstick, tape measure	
Number Cubes	Dice, homemade spinner made from paper, pencil, paper clip	Counters and Connecting Cubes
Plastic Pennies, Nickels, Dimes, or Quarters	Real pennies, nickels, dimes, or quarters	
Spinner	Dice, homemade spinner made from paper, pencil, paper clip	
Two-Color Counters	Any objects with one color on one side and a different color on the other, such as checkers stacked red/black, Othello® game pieces, painted side of large dry beans, etc.	Counters and Connecting Cubes
Write-On/Wipe-Off Ten-Frame Mat	Egg carton with the last two sections cut off	Counters and Connecting Cubes
Yardstick	Yardstick, tape measure	

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