



USE PHYSICAL AND  
VISUAL TOOLS

When you think of a *math tool*, a calculator or perhaps a ruler might come to mind. Although those are, in fact, math tools, there are a variety of other math tools as well. Before we move on, let's talk about what a math tool actually *is*. We define a math tool as any item that will help you make sense of a particular problem and find a precise solution.

As said before, it is important that students have access to a wide variety of math tools. What works well for one child might not be the best tool for another. To be successful with using the various math tools, it is important that students have lots of opportunities to see modeling of *how* to use the tools and to practice using the tools on their own, as well.

Here are some (but not all) of the math tools your child might choose to use:

- calculator
- ruler
- protractor
- graduated cylinder
- paper and pencil
- concrete model
- colored counters or other counting objects
- tangram shapes
- pattern blocks
- Unifix Cubes
- tens frame
- dominoes
- dice
- measuring cups/spoons

### **How You Can Help Your Child with This Strategy at Home**

1. Have some math tools available for your child to use at home.
2. Model how you use various math tools to help you when you're doing math.
3. When your child uses a math tool, have them explain to you why that tool works well for them and how it helped them solve their math problem.