

## "Well Begun is Half Done"

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*"Keeping parts organized and easy to find can inspire students."*



Sorting bins in a robotics classroom at a school



My team's rolling cart

*If you start out well, the rest of the tasks becomes a lot easier. In the case of a robotics team, "well begun" starts with being organized.*

**Why Bother?** Students on your team will find it much easier to build if their LEGO parts are organized and easy to find. It is also much easier for a coach to visually see which parts they are running out of to order more. I have found that students get inspired while looking through their parts.

**Portable boxes** are useful both for daily storage and also for transporting parts to events.



**Plastic Boxes.** We started out in our first year with simple plastic storage boxes. These had small compartments in them. A big negative for this box was that you could not change the size of the compartments and they were rather small for anything other than pegs and smaller beams. Although we outgrew these small boxes for daily use in our robotics room, we still continue to use them to carry spare parts to tournaments.



**Tool boxes.** Tool boxes can be easily repurposed for LEGO. A big advantage to the above smaller plastic boxes is that each compartment is bigger (and often adjustable). We know many teams that buy these or similar Stanley tool boxes.

**Tackle Boxes.** Some FIRST teams like using tackle boxes (like this one from Plano). They have many smaller boxes inside for easy sorting and a handle to carry them all together.



**What about options for storing equipment in your robotics**

**room?** If you have the space, individual bins for parts are useful. The kids on the team sort the parts into bins and leave them on a shelf. They determine the organization that is most useful to them.



**Sorting Bins.** If you have bookshelves in your room, consider removable bins (like this IRIS Medium Stacking Bin). We like the clear bins so that you can see inside them, but they are available in many colors.

**Rolling Tool Cart.** A rolling cart such as the TRINITY Double-Sided Bin Rack on the left can be very useful if you don't have shelving and want the flexibility of moving the parts to different areas of the room. Each of the bins come off the shelves.

**Who cleans up?** No coach or mentor should be left with the clean up work. I realized a few weeks into my first season of coaching that the kids just go when their parents come, leaving me to clean up. So, we instituted a clean-up rule. Ten minutes before pickup time, we stop to discuss what we got done that day and also to clean up!

