

Use of Fidgets in School

What is the Purpose of a Fidget Tool?

- Fidgets are learning aids designed to help children regulate sensory needs and maintain focus during lessons. They are not toys but tools to support concentration and self-regulation.

A Good Fidget Should:

- Be quiet and safe
- Be used without looking, so the child can sit and focus on the lesson
- Stay out of other children's line of sight, avoiding distractions
- Meet the child's individual sensory needs
- Fit the child's physical abilities
- Be affordable and durable

Which Children Benefit From a Fidget?

- Those who need extra sensory input to concentrate
- Those who fidget to self-regulate when overwhelmed
- Hypervigilant children who need grounding and body feedback
- Children who pick at skin, bite nails or engage in self-stimulatory behaviours

Fidgets that can be Helpful Tools for Learning:

- Blu-tack – discreet, quiet, and provides great tactile feedback
- Kneadable erasers – multipurpose, practical
- Stress ball or small foam squish – silent, great for proprioceptive input
- Spiky rings – discreet fidgets
- Marble in net – discreet, moveable fidget

Boundaries for Fidgets in the Classroom:

- Fidgets are learning tools, not toys
- Used quietly and without distracting others
- Kept in hands or laps, not waved or thrown
- Put away if an adult asks
- Removed if they become a distraction
- Provided by teacher (unless agreed)
- Not for trading
- If not helping learning, it's not doing its job

Storage in the Classroom:

- Fidgets kept in a central box to prevent overuse
- Returned after task completion
- Needed during silent/independent work or high-concentration tasks

Other Items/Strategies Often Used Instead:

- Wobble cushions
- Theraband on chair legs
- Movement breaks
- Sensory circuit before learning

Before Fidgets Are Used, Adults Should Question:

- Does this meet the child's sensory needs?
- Can they use this without distracting others?
- Is there a better way to provide the input they need?