

45 ideas for
classroom friendly

Fidget TOYS



Bec Dakley

What are fidget toys?

Kids who have trouble regulating sensory input can easily become distracted, seeking out sensation to either stimulate or calm their nervous system. Fidgeting gives them this input, usually in a way that is disruptive to both them and their classmates - wriggling, biting their nails, doodling, moving about the classroom.

A fidget toy is an object that the student can use to get this input in a less distracting way. They can help improve concentration and attention to tasks by allowing the brain to filter out the extra sensory information.

Who needs them?

Most children can be fidgety at one time or another, but kids with ADHD, autism and sensory integration disorder are particularly prone to be distracted in this way.

What makes a good fidget toy?

A good fidget toy is one that is both effective at helping the student to concentrate and can easily fit into a classroom environment.

That means that it needs to be:

- * Safe
- * Small
- * Quiet
- * Inexpensive
- * Able to be used without distracting others

Choosing a toy that will be a satisfying fidget replacement for your students will depend on their individual abilities, challenges and sensory needs:

- * Which times of the day do they most need one?
- * What are their fine motor skills like?
- * Do they have the hand strength to manipulate the toy?
- * What sensations and textures do they seek out?
- * Which ones do they avoid?
- * Do they tend to put objects in their mouth?
- * Do they like to throw things?

Tips for using fidget toys

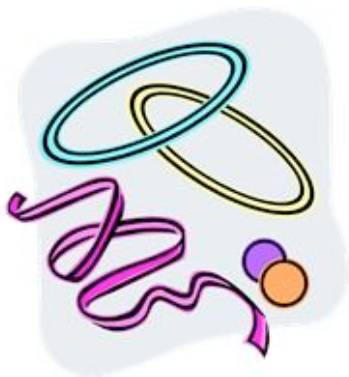
Use them intermittently

Students can often become desensitized to the sensory benefits of an object, so use it for short periods at times when concentration is most needed or swap between toys over the course of the day.



Try toys with a variety of surfaces

Lumpy, squishy, different materials, bits that move

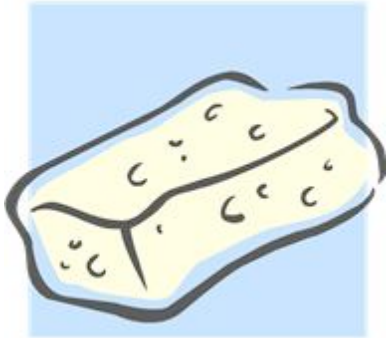


If they're likely to lose it or throw it...

Attach the toy to a ribbon and let them wear it as a bracelet or necklace.

You could also attach a retractable cord and clip it to their belt, so they can easily access it when they need to.

Tactile fidget toys



Sponges



Bumpy shells



Play dough



Unfilled balloons



Bull or alligator clips



Origami



Packing away toys

Silly putty

Pencil grips

Stress balls

Bubble wrap

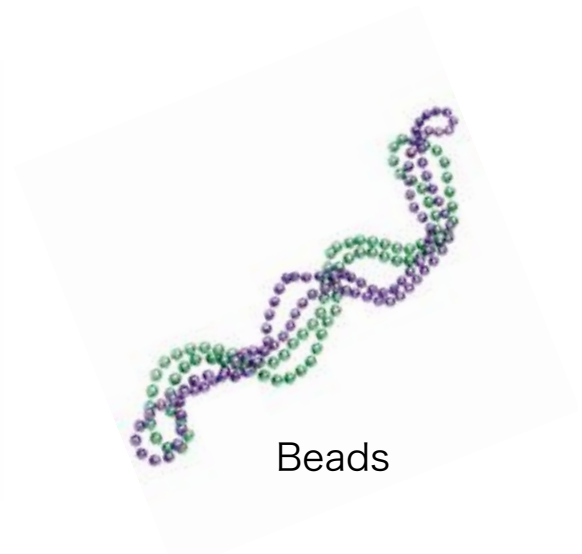
Tactile fidget toys



Abacus



Smooth stones



Beads



Plush and beanie toys



Hide toys in a bucket of sand or rice



Rubber bands



Bumpy piping



Paper clips

Tactile fidget toys

Bean bags
Push puppets



Rubber duck



Fill balloons with sand, rice,
or play dough using a
funnel or squirt bottle



Pin art



Linking rings



Newton's cradle



Slinky



Bendable dolls

Visual fidget toys



Snow globe



Spinning top



Flashlight

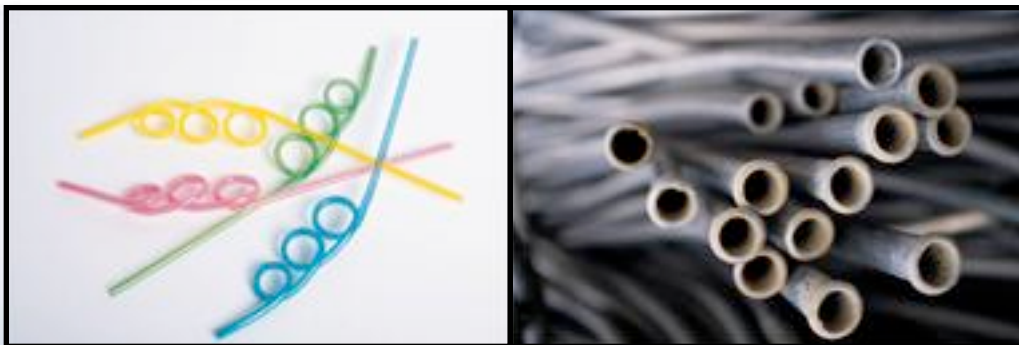
Lava lamp
Glow sticks



Sand timer

Chewable fidget toys

Chewable jewellery



Drinking straws

Plastic piping

Vestibular & deep pressure fidget toys



Mini trampoline



Fill socks to make a
weighted lap toy

Microwaveable wheat heat packs

Fingerless gloves with weights attached

Toys with a rubber mallet



Hacky sacks



Wrap an elastic bungee cord
around the chair leg for
student to pull with her feet

I hope this guide has inspired you to make fidget toys for your students from things you can find around your classroom!

For more tips on kids with sensory needs (especially autism), visit my my blog at

www.snagglebox.com

See you next time!

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