



Handy Handouts®

Free, educational handouts for teachers and parents*

Number 261

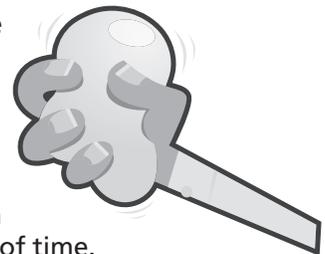


Fidgets—Tools that Take Away Stress!

by Julie A. Daymut, M.A., CCC-SLP

Fidgets are objects we touch or “play with” when we experience good or bad stress. We also fidget with different items when we have restless or nervous energy. Fidgets can be toys, games, or everyday things such as pens, jewelry, or pocket change. Moving, or manipulating, these objects helps us manage stress from different situations because the movement helps regulate, or balance out, our sensory systems. While it might seem like fidgets are distracting, they actually take care of “antsy” behavior—making us more relaxed and evening out our energy levels.

Fidgeting is a normal behavior for children and adults, and most everyone fidgets to some degree. We often fidget when we are trying to concentrate or pass time, and we may switch from one fidget to another depending on the stress level. Some common examples of fidgeting include biting nails, tapping a foot, twirling hair, and chewing on a pencil. Some common situations for fidgeting include talking on the phone, listening to a presentation, or riding in the car. In school, students may feel stress and fidget when struggling to come up with an answer, when getting ready to accept an award, or after sitting for a long period of time.



Sometimes, individuals show inappropriate or socially unacceptable fidgeting. These behaviors include biting hands, picking the nose, and chewing on clothes. In the school setting, educators may work with students to find more socially-acceptable fidgeting behaviors or *replacement behaviors*. Replacement behaviors often include using objects that are common, less distracting (no lights or noises), and more hygienic. Educators may also use fidgets to help students regulate their sensory systems throughout the day, which can lead to better focus, attention, and listening for tasks. As well, children with certain diagnoses, such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), may especially benefit from the sensory feedback of fidgets.

Examples of Fidgets

Fidgets come in different sizes, shapes, weights, and textures. These different characteristics provide different pressures and sensations to the nervous system. Some fidgets are for the hands. These include stress balls, therapy putty, clay, pencil grips, zippers, beanbags, gloves, bracelets, hand-held games or toys, and drawing/notepads. Other fidgets are for the mouth. These include gum, plastic key chains without the metal ring, chewing tubes, and suckers. Foot fidgets include foot rests/massagers and resistance bands. At school, an educator or therapist, such as an occupational therapist, can help determine which fidget(s) is age-appropriate and effective for an individual. At home, be sure to provide guidance and supervision when using fidgets as tools with your children.

For more Handy Handouts®, go to www.handyhandouts.com.

Helpful Products

The list of Super Duper® products below may be helpful when working with children who have special needs. Visit www.superduperinc.com and type in the item name or number in our search engine. Click the links below to see the product description.

Super Duper® Prize Bucket
[Item #SD-609](#)

Chewy Tubes™ (3 Ea. Red/Yellow)
[Item #OM-414](#)

Super Duper® Treasure Chest
[Item #SDC-33](#)

Webber® Neon Pressure Brushes
[Item #OTS-365](#)

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