

## Using Fidget Tools

Fidget tools can reduce students' anxiety and improve their concentration. To get the most out of fidget tools, teachers and students need to know why they're using fidgets.

Start by asking the following questions:

- **Are students using fidgets during breaks from work/class expectations to support their relaxation?** If so, you can provide fidgets with a variety of interesting shapes and textures, and it doesn't matter if they're visually distracting.
- **Are the fidgets being used to support focus/attention?** Consider the following:
  - Some students have difficulty processing multiple kinds of sensory information simultaneously; other kids do well with 'high sensory loads.' It's not always obvious who's who because some students fidget quietly to tune-out when they need a break. It's important to check for students' understanding and monitor their work completion when they're using fidget tools.
  - Fidgets that have any kind of motion can be visually distracting to the student using them as well as others around them. Students should always keep fidget tools in their hands, out of sight.

Once you know why fidgets are being used, you can build one or more 'fidget kits':

- Teachers who have a **break space** within their classrooms may want to have a fidget kit that's used only in this space. Here's what I would put in it:
  - Two pieces of foam tubing (2 inches long) that students squeeze for heavy work.
  - One fidget that has pieces to manipulate (e.g. Tangle from Amazon.ca; FlexiCubes from [www.fdmtd.ca](http://www.fdmtd.ca)):



- One stretchy fidget (e.g. Wiggly Jiggly Ball or Stretchy Animal from [www.fdm.ca](http://www.fdm.ca)):
- One fidget with texture appeal that won't burst (e.g. slime, Bendy Man, or Bleh from [www.fdm.ca](http://www.fdm.ca)):



**Wiggly Jiggly Ball**

Code: 210300

**CAD \$3.95 /Piece**



**Stretchy Animal**

Code: 3889000

**CAD \$3.95 /Piece**

- When considering fidgets to **support focus/attention during instructional times**, choose ones that provide heavy work with limited visual appeal, such as 2-inch pieces of foam tubing. Many schools have foam grips from Action BC kits; these are great! In addition, encourage students to consider what they can do to **fidget with their own hands**:



**Bendy Man**

Code: 209600

**CAD \$2.95 /Piece**



**Bleh**

Code: 3588100

**CAD \$3.95 /Piece**

- Tug each finger sequentially
  - Hook fingers together and pull
  - Squeeze hands together at midline
  - Make circles with thumbs and fingers, starting with index finger and working toward pinkie
  - Hand massage
  - Students usually have many ideas of their own!
- Irrespective of when and why fidgets are being used, it's important that older students reflect:
    - "Did the fidget support what I was trying to do?"
    - "Did it help me relax during my break?"
    - "Did it support my focus and make it easier for me to listen and follow through with instructions?"