



Sensational OT Tip of the Month

Hand Tools & Fidgets

Do you know children that...?

1. Struggle to concentrate: too active or too lethargic
2. Are constantly on the move, restless, or fidgety
3. Are anxious

Hand tools and fidgets may help children regulate their sensory systems throughout the day. They can be used for calming or alerting, to promote focusing and attending, or to relieve anxiety. They need to be taught how to use them as “tools” not “toys” and prompted initially for what tool and when it might be helpful.

Sensational Ideas about Hand Tools & Fidgets

1. Provide quiet fidgets/hand tools during times of heavy concentration (taking a test) including stress balls, therapy putty, pencil grips, and bracelets (be sure to teach rules for use - i.e. hand tools vs. hand toys)
2. Attach various textures to the bottom of a child’s desk to stroke during structured classroom activities for increased tactile input (Velcro, fabric scraps, textured paper)
3. Explore use of hand tools/fidgets made of various textures during work or circle time to improve attention, including pencil toppers, textured balls, and Wikki Stix
4. Allow child to squeeze, stretch, pull, twist stretchy resistive hand tools/fidgets to organize and maintain an optimal level of arousal for effective learning

Ask the occupational therapist at your school if you are interested in more information about **hand tools and fidgets in the classroom**.

Google “fidgets” for a variety of hand tools and fidgets available commercially.

Go to www.cintiOTInstitute.com/privateschools and scroll to the bottom left corner for more tip sheets.

For information about occupational therapy services at COTI go to www.cintiOTInstitute.com.

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