

Student \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
OT \_\_\_\_\_

## Occupational Therapy Rx: Fidget toys

Students with ADHD and other diverse learners often get in trouble at school for fidgeting with pens, papers, etc. Rather than fight the student's nervous system, a more helpful technique is to give the student a teacher or occupational therapist (OT) approved fidget toy. This means that the toy is provided under the teacher or OT's direction. It also means that the teacher or OT should carefully pick out fidget toys that won't drive them crazy. The rationale for fidget toys, is that for some students the effort to listen and not fidget is too much and they stop listening and instead focus on not fidgeting...and then not on learning. The second rationale is that it works! The majority of students will listen better and take better notes if allowed to fidget. It is important however, that this be under the teacher's control. There are hundreds of possible fidget toys. These include clothespins, rubber bands, "koosh balls", play dough "wiki stix", surgical tubing, flour balloons, "stress balls", etc. It is very important, however that before giving these items to a student that the teacher/OT specifically teaches the student how to use the item/s. The three general rules are:

1. If it gets thrown, it's gone.
2. If it gets used inappropriately, it's gone.
3. The student needs to be looking at and listening to the teacher to continue to use the fidget toy (this usually means keeping it on the student's lap, out of sight).

If the error occurs, in one of the rules, the fidget toy is removed, but for only a brief time.

Many teachers find it helpful to have a box of fidget toys in the room, by the door. This way, student's can grab a toy as they enter the room. Teachers shouldn't worry, however, about a class of 25 children fidgeting continually, all year. After the novelty of the first week wears off, only the students who need it will continue to use it.

Additional Instructions: \_\_\_\_\_