

# Introducing Fidgets & Sensory Tools in the Classroom (Teacher Edition)

**Every child's body and brain regulate differently.** For some, movement, texture, or gentle pressure helps them stay **calm, focused, and ready to learn.** Fidgets and sensory tools are not toys or rewards—they're learning supports that help students manage **attention, energy, and emotions.**

By embedding sensory strategies into **daily routines,** we create a classroom that values **inclusion, self-awareness, and emotional regulation for all learners.**

**We created a guide for you** that outlines practical ways to use sensory tools and spaces:

**Option 1:** Individual Focus Tools at Desks

**Option 2:** The Calm or Sensory Corner

**Option 3:** Hybrid Regulation System (combining both)

These approaches to support:

- ✓ Normalize self-regulation
- ✓ Reduce distraction and support focus
- ✓ Encourage student ownership and empathy
- ✓ Maintain structure and fairness in class routines

## Individual Focus Tools at Desks

**Goal:** Normalize sensory tools per child as part of their regulation strategy—not a reward or toy.

**Pros:**

- Promotes inclusion and reduces jealousy
- Teaches self-awareness and responsibility

**Rules & Guidelines:**

1. Tool Is for Focus, Not Play: "Fidgets help our hands focus, not distract our minds."
2. Tool Stays on the Table: No throwing, waving, or sharing during class.
3. Use During Work Time Only: Not during teacher instruction or circle time unless agreed upon.
4. Tool Choice Changes Weekly (Optional): Everyone gets a turn to try different ones.
5. Consequences for Misuse: Tool gets put away if used incorrectly.

**Bonus Tip:** Have a "Fidget Menu" with options like stress balls, putty, textured strips, etc.—let students pick one based on what helps them focus best.

## The Calm or Sensory Corner

**Goal:** Provide a designated space for self-regulation breaks.

**Pros:**

- Helps students learn to recognize their needs
- Encourages emotional regulation skills

**Rules & Guidelines:**

1. Short Breaks Only (2-5 minutes): Use a timer or visual countdown.
2. Ask Before Going (or Use Pass System): Prevent overuse or disruption.
3. One at a Time: Maintain calm and quiet in the area.
4. Tools Stay in the Corner: No walking around with them.
5. Reflection Prompt (Optional): After using the corner, students draw or write how they felt and what helped.

**Bonus Tip:** Rotate new sensory tools or calming visuals to keep it inviting.

## Hybrid Regulation System

**Goal:** Integrate individual fidgets and a shared sensory space to support self-regulation for all learner

**Pros:**

- Promotes self-awareness, empathy, and independence
- Provides structure while offering flexibility

**Rules & Guidelines:**

- Each Student Gets One Focus Tool: Quiet, non-distracting, and stays on the desk.
- Tools Are for Regulation, Not Play: "Fidgets help our hands focus, not distract our minds."
- Sensory Corner for Bigger Feelings: Students may use it for short (2-5 min) calm-down breaks.
- Rules from 1 and 2 still applies

**Bonus Tips:**

- Hold short class reflections on what helps focus and calm — build shared responsibility.

