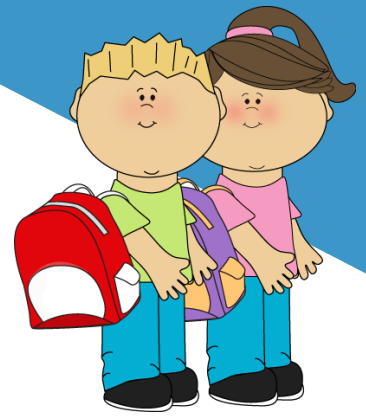




Counsellor's Corner



September 10, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Today, I had the pleasure of visiting your child's classroom to talk about strategies to help students learn to focus. As adults we often "fidget" with pens, hair, jewelry, etc. Children often need more intense input for the same sensory benefits of keeping awake, alert and being able to listen. When teaching children to use fidget tools the long term educational goal is to develop self regulation skills to be calm and attentive.

During the lesson, we read *It's hard to be a verb* by Julia Cook. Through the book, students learned to to be in charge of their wiggles by "wiggling your wiggles before they wiggle you". Students learned the power of moving their body to help them focus. They learned to do this with and without a focus tool. Students then practiced using fidget tools to help with focus. To prevent fidget tools from being toys, students were introduced to the following rules

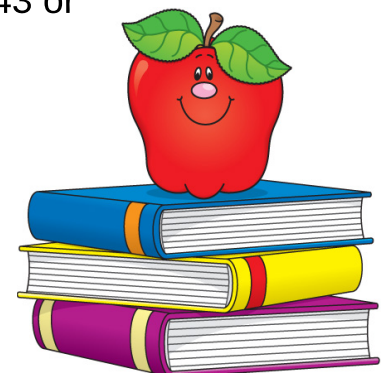
- Fidget tools are a tool not a toy. They are meant to help, they are not meant to be played with.
- Be mindful of the use of the tool. Ask yourself, do I really need it? If the answer is yes, ask yourself, which tool would be most helpful right now?
- Fidgets are meant to stay invisible. This means that they stay in hands so that no one can see it, they are silent so no one can hear it and your eyes are on the person who is talking.

To further students learning, I encourage families to discuss refocusing strategies and fidget tool rules.

If you would like to learn more about self-regulation, focus or fidget and how you can support your child, please feel free to contact me at 780-467-5143 or shelley.boswell@eips.ca.

Sincerely,

Mme Boswell
École Campbelltown
School Counsellor



FIDGET TOOLS: WAYS TO SUPPORT AT HOME

In today's lesson, students learned how to refocus. Students were introduced to fidget tools as a focus strategy. Families may enjoy making their very own stress balls. They can then practice the fidget tool rules at home.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Balloons
- Baking soda
- Hair conditioner
- Spoon
- Bowl
- Scissors
- Funnel (made from a plastic bottle)

STEPS

1. Mix 2 cups of baking soda with about a 1/2 cup of hair conditioner. (You can add more conditioner to make them more squishy or less to make them more firm.)
2. Once it's all mixed together, cut off the top end of a plastic bottle. You'll use it as a funnel.
3. Attach the balloon to the bottle opening and fill it with your stress ball mixture.
4. Once the balloon is full, make sure you don't have any air bubbles and then tie it closed.

Instructions for stress balls found on <https://www.weareteachers.com/stress-balls/>

Tip

Try different fillers (rice, flour, sand). Depending on the individual, different consistencies may be more or less effective for helping with focus.

The importance is establishing a routine and practice following the rules of using fidget tools. Routines and rules will help ensure that the stress ball continues to be used as a tool and not a toy.