SPARK: Simple Play Adaptations to Reference for Kids

Spiky Tactile Ball

Description:	Image:
Blue colored five inch textured ball made of PVC weighs 3 oz. Purchasing Information	

Who Might Benefit?

Those who…

- Are learning or need support with self-regulation.
- Need quiet, self-directed activities throughout the day to regroup.
- Can't sit still or maintain focus.
- May need to touch or fidget in order to focus.
- Seek sensory input throughout the day.
- Tend to mouth or chew their clothing.
- Need alternatives to touching things they have been asked not to.
- Have a weak or inefficient grasp.
- Engage in touching, poking, or fidgeting with items to calm themselves.
- Enjoy ball play.
- Need appropriate sensory materials to support attention to activity.

Why Use?

Provides an opportunity to…

- Explore opportunities for self-regulation.
- Engage in quiet exploration and self-calming activities.
- Explore the feel of the spiky ball.
- Work on eye hand coordination skills such as tossing and catching.
- Fidget quietly to help maintain their focus.

Instructions for Use:	Adaptation Ideas:
Environmental Considerations	Optional Additional Materials and Supplies • Velcro • Painter's tape

- Use during large group activities, small group activities, and one-on-one instruction.
- Use at school, home, or the community.
- May be helpful during transitions.

Positioning

- Use in any position; seated, standing, on the floor, etc.

Basic Play/Use

- Open ended exploration (ex. touch, roll, squeeze).
- When used as a fidget, these balls can be selected by or provided to a child during small or large activities when focusing or keeping hands to self is a challenge.

Play/Use with Others

- Play catch.
- Play basketball taking turns tossing the ball into a small laundry basket, box, or waste basket.
- Take turns "bowling" using the Spiky Tactile Ball and empty soda bottles or cans (Place a little sand or several marbles in the bottom of the bottles to stabilize them when setting up).
- Make a DIY Corn Hole Game.

Stabilize It

- Construct handle or wrist loop to aid in grasping.
- Velcro ball to a vertical surface for exploration.

Contain It

- Place the ball in a small open container so the child can explore it by brushing it with their hands.
- Store sensory item choices in a basket or tub.
- Determine boundaries for use when being used as a fidget (ex. on lap).

Communication Supports

- Visual supports (non-transient cues) such communication cards can be used for the child to communicate if a fidget or other sensory support is needed because they are feeling (e.g. anxious, angry, calm, squirmy) or to communicate to the child where to keep the fidget (e.g. hand, lap, table).
- Social stories with themes related to when to request and how to use a fidgets may be useful.

Alternatives

- Use like a "talking stick". During circle or share time, the student holding the ball is the one whose turn it is to talk.
- Use to play "Hot Potato".

DIY Alternatives

- Purchase inexpensive textured balls at discount stores or pet stores.
- Make squeeze balls by filling latex free balloons with various textures such as water beads, lentils, play doh, etc.
- Substitute or make bean bags.
- For additional DIY ideas see 31 DIY Fidget Toys That Are Easy and Inexpensive to Make from weareteachers.com.

Additional Considerations:

- Not all fidgets will increase attention.
- Fidgets may be distracting at first.
- Allow all children to explore the fidgets prior to use.
- Explain to children that everyone needs different things to help them learn.
- Offer and choose fidgets with the specific child in mind.
- Limit choices and observe whether the choice is a support or a source of distraction.
- Create an individual or class Social Story describing how fidgets should be used as *tools*, not *toys*.
- For older children, consider a Fidget Contract (See Additional Resources).

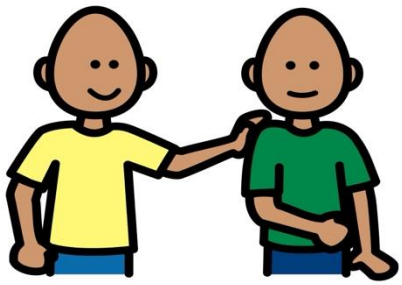
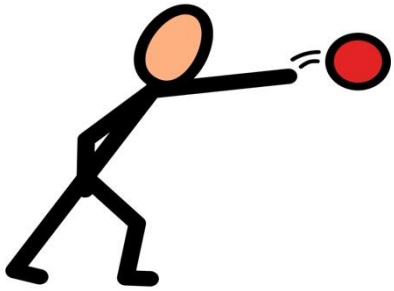
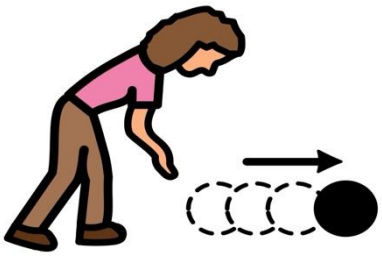
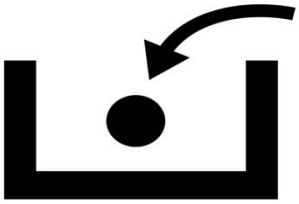
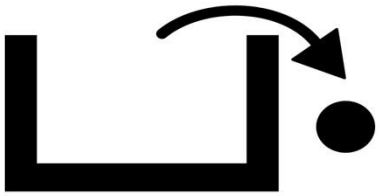
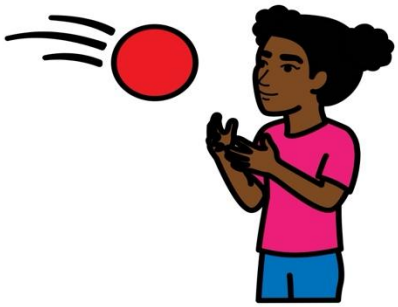
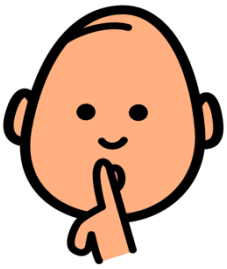
Resources:

- The Dos and Don'ts of Fidgets for Kids from Understood.org.
- See Health and Wellness Narratives from OCALI's Autism Center Grab and Go Resource Gallery of Interventions.
- For further information, visit the Social Narratives Autism Internet Module.
- Like Social Stories, Power Cards teach and reinforce academic, behavioral, organizational, and social skills. Power Cards are visual supports that include an individual's special interest. See Power Cards from OCALI's Autism Center Grab and Go Resource Gallery of Interventions.
- Reminder Cue Cards from OCALI's Autism Center Grab and Go Resource Gallery of Interventions help teach and remind individuals how to engage in positive behaviors. Reminder Cue Cards provide "what to do" suggestions when an individual is feeling anxious, stressed, or confused. They also support interactions with peers, and offer ways to self-regulate, and manage emotions.

Ohio Early Learning Standards:

- SE: Self-Regulation. Begins to manage emotions and actions (2.a.).
- AL: Engagement and Persistence: Persists in completing a task with increasing concentration (1.c.).

Words to Encourage Play/Use

Touch 	Toss 	Roll 
Push 	In 	Out 
Catch 	Quiet 	Calm 

*"Adaptations" adapted from: Haugen's Modes for Adapting Toys based on materials from the "Let's Play" Project at the University of Buffalo

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