

## **Fidget Spinners: sensory fidgets or just spinning toys?**

The craze of Fidget Spinners has swept through South Australian schools but are they all they are cracked up to be?

This craze begs the questions ... Are Fidget Spinners fidget toys or sensory fidgets? Sensory fidgets are typically small, silent, unobtrusive, and usually hand held items that are used to redirect a child's fidgeting to allow the child to think effectively and to remain calmly 'on task'. Children with sensory processing difficulties often do very well using such items. Conversely, fidget toy are more often novel, noisy, distracting, annoying to others and keep the child from performing the task at hand.

While fidget spinners are silent, you only have to see the children using the spinners on their forehead, nose, elbow, knee, toe, finger or even tongue to see that they are in fact a distraction. Failing that, ask any parent at school pick up or any classroom teacher and they are likely to share the same opinion.

In addition to the distraction, the fact that you can buy a fidget spinner in just about every supermarket, petrol station and airport suggests that they are not really a sensory fidget item with therapeutic intent. You Tube is well stocked with videos of 'extreme' spinners, and children are actively collecting spinners.

Sensory fidgets? ....I think not. A bit of fun .... sure. If they do work for your child that's great, but if you are looking for a sensory fidget either get creative or spend a little more time researching on therapy supply websites. Cheap and easy to find sensory fidget toys might include: paperclips, small bits of scrunched

paper, tiny blobs of blue-tac, a textured rock, or one of the many stress balls available. Commercially available sensory fidgets might fidget cubes, manual spinners, or bendy smiley fidgets to name just a few. It is also worth trying a variety of fidgets as different sensory fidgets suit different children. But be sure to persist in finding the 'just right' sensory fidget for your child because true sensory fidget toys really do make a difference to a child with sensory processing difficulties.

We'd love to hear what sensory fidgets work for your child!

Contact us today to make an initial enquiry or book an assessment for your child  
on 1800 KID SENSE (1800 543 736)

