Fidget to Focus

What Is a Fidget?

Experts believe that engaging in an activity that uses a sense other than what's required for your primary task — listening to music while reading a social studies textbook, for example — can enhance focus and improve performance in children with attention deficit disorder. These secondary tasks are called fidgets — mindless activities you can do while working on a primary task.

1. **Walk and Talk:** When your ADHD child gets restless and tunes out an important conversation, try walking and talking. Any non-strenuous activity, like playing catch or doing a jigsaw puzzle together, will also work. This is a powerful strategy for talking over your child’s day or talking about an important matter.

2. **Stand Up and Move Around:** Talk with the teacher about small school accommodations like letting your child stand, when appropriate, during the school day. A child can do this discreetly at the back of the room or at his desk.

3. **Use Colored Pencils and Pens:** This fidget works well when your child needs to complete an assignment or read for comprehension (he can underline words as he reads). Scented markers may also help.

4. **Busy His Hands:** This facilitates focus when a child is listening, talking, or thinking about how to answer a tough essay question. Fidget toys for school or home include cool-looking pens or pencils, beaded bracelets, paper clips, and clothes with interesting textures or doodads.

5. **Tune In:** Plugging into an MP3 player helps children stay on task when studying, reading, exercising, or even going to sleep. Choose music that is appropriate to the task: a stimulating beat when exercising, calming tunes for sleep, and something in between when studying or reading.

6. **Chew Gum:** This helps your child when he has to concentrate for an extended period—doing homework or taking a test. If gum is not an option, sucking on a lemon drop or other hard candy will also do the trick.

7. **Go Ahead, Doodle:** A creative learning trick is to encourage your child to draw or write words or numbers when listening to a teacher’s lecture.

Adapted from Additude magazine
**NCIFAPA Support Group**
- "Questions You Were Always Afraid To Ask", Natalie Clapp, DHS
- Tues., November 18, at DHS Liberty Room, Mason City
- 6:30 pm Social Time and Snacks, Training 7-9 pm (2 hrs credit)
- Note this is a date change due to Veterans Day events!
- This is a great opportunity to get your questions answered!!

**HHWW Foster/Adoptive Parent Support Group**
- Wed, Nov. 12th @ Hamilton Co. Extension Office
- 5:30- Meal (RSVP number attending to Julie by Nov. 11th)
- 6-8 training "Just a Bite:Managing Food Allergies!" by Holly Van Heel (2 hours credit)
- Childcare is available
- Contact Julie Schroeder for more information at 515-291-3029

**Ames Foster/Adoptive Support Group**
- Thurs., Nov. 13th, 6-8 pm
- Cornerstone Church-56829 US HWY 30-Ames (note this is the NEW LOCATION)
- Childcare WILL NOT be offered at this meeting
- "Handling a Behavior Crisis"- Dr. Warren Phillips, 2 hours of credit
- Contact Christie McGuire for more information at 855-929-2005

**Fort Dodge Lunch and Learn**
- Next meeting will be in Thursday, November 20th, 11:30-1:00
- Grace Lutheran Church, South 9th Street, Fort Dodge
- Training: "Pediatric Integrated Health Care", by Jamie Ferguson
- Contact Julie Schroeder for more information at 515-291-3029.

**MARSHALL COUNTY SUPPORT GROUP**
- New Hope Christian Church-3901 S. Center, Marshalltown
- Tues. Nov. 11, 6-8 pm (NO DECEMBER MEETING)
- "Placement Preferences"-Bambi Schrader-2 hrs credit
- Contact Mindy Speake for more information at 515-291-1292.
- Child care is offered-donations accepted.

---

**FALL TIDBITS**

Please note my email address is changing:
cmguire@ifapa.org

**November Activities**

November is National Adoption Month. Adoption Day events will be going on around the state. Congratulations to all families finalizing their adoptions during this special event!

**Friends of Children in Foster Care** has funds through a special grant. These grants will be available for up to $300 per youth. For details and to fill out the Friends Application go to www.ifapa.org

**IFAPA TRAININGS**

Remember no trainings are scheduled for the month of December so please plan ahead. Sign up for IFAPA trainings at www.ifapa.org

**Touching Base**

I will be checking in with each of my families quarterly by mail, email, or phone calls. Can't wait to chat!