

How to Guide...Sensory Chews



What are they?

Chew pendants and calming fidget chews are sensory support tools designed to provide safe and appropriate oral input for children who seek to chew or bite objects as a means of self-regulation. They are typically made from durable, non-toxic silicone and come in various shapes and resistance levels to suit individual sensory needs. These chews can be worn as necklaces or held discreetly, allowing children to access calming sensory input throughout the day.



Why would they be used?

For some children, chewing offers deep pressure input to the jaw that helps organise the sensory system and promotes calm alertness. It can reduce anxiety, support focus, and provide a safe alternative to chewing inappropriate objects. The rhythmic action of chewing helps regulate arousal levels and can be especially beneficial during moments of stress or sensory overload.

By providing a safe outlet for oral sensory needs, chews can reduce anxiety-related behaviours and help children maintain engagement in classroom learning and social activities. Used appropriately, they contribute to a child's overall sensory regulation and emotional wellbeing.

Who would use them?

Chew pendants and fidget chews are most often used by children who demonstrate oral sensory-seeking behaviours, such as chewing clothing, pencils, fingers, or other non-food items. They are particularly beneficial for pupils with Sensory Processing Difficulties, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), or anxiety-related needs.

They may also support children who find it difficult to maintain attention or remain calm in stimulating environments. However, chews are not suitable for every child and should ideally be used under the guidance of an Occupational Therapist (OT) or SENCO. Children who mouth items due to developmental delay, or who are at risk of biting through or swallowing non-food objects, should be assessed carefully before use.

How are they used?

Chew pendants are used by placing them around the neck or keeping them to hand for safe chewing when required. Staff should model safe use and remind pupils to chew only on the pendant, not to share it with others, and to keep it clean. Chews should be checked regularly for signs of wear or breakage, replaced when damaged, and removed if the child begins to bite through them or uses them excessively. Over time, as the child's regulation and coping strategies develop, the need for a chew may naturally reduce. This can be reviewed termly or in line with sensory plans.

Use of a chew should always be monitored and reviewed to ensure it continues to serve its intended calming or focusing purpose and remains appropriate for the child's developmental stage.

When/where can chews be used?

Chew pendants can be used throughout the day as needed, particularly during times of stress, transitions, or focused desk work. They are often most effective when included as part of a structured sensory support plan.

They can be worn/used in class, during assemblies, transitions between lessons, or when moving through busy environments such as corridors or playgrounds. Staff should observe patterns of use and offer the chew at appropriate times rather than allowing constant access.



Chews come in different shapes and sizes. You can also get chews that children can wear on lanyards, that can go on top of pencils or be worn as a bangle.



For more information on chews, visit: [SEN Resources: Sensory Fidgets & Chews | TTS](#)

Many thanks to Abigail Hawkins (SENSible SENCO) for writing this for us.