

Universal Classroom Tools

In a **“universally accommodating”** classroom, students can benefit from a variety of different learning tools to meet their various learning needs. Examples of learning tools are having access to a variety of pencils, pencil grips, scissors, self-regulation tools, options for workstations, etc.

All students should have opportunities to practice their self-regulation skills in safe environments (such as schools) as all students have unique nervous systems, and all students have unique ways of responding to their environment.

As Occupational Therapists, we can provide information and education to resource teachers, teachers and EAs, to help them know why, how, and when to use these universal tools for learning. We can provide specific examples of ways to incorporate the tools into daily classroom tasks. If you have any questions or concerns about implementing any of these learning tools, please do not hesitate to contact your schools Occupational Therapist.

Learning Tools to Include in a Universally-Designed Classroom (Tier 1):

- ☐ Visual schedules and visual timers
- ☐ Visuals of movement break cards, hand warmups, letter strips on desks
- ☐ Golf pencils
- ☐ Weighted pencils and/or weighted pencil top erasers (as a sensory strategy to provide proprioceptive input)
- ☐ Mechanical pencils (to aid in mediating excessive pencil pressure)
- ☐ Pencil grips (cross over grip, Sakolla grip, egg grip, handi-writer, pinch grip, claw grip, etc.)
- ☐ Fidgets (Pencil fidgets, Tangle, stress balls, pop-its, “variety pack” of fidgets, etc.)
- ☐ Scissor styles (i.e., left-handed scissors, easy-open scissors, spring scissors, loop scissors, etc.)
- ☐ Variety of papers (i.e., large graph paper, tri-lined paper, Abilitations Hi-Write paper, readi-space paper, bold wide lined, paper with margins, etc.)
- ☐ Therapy putty or silly putty
- ☐ Slant boards or 2-3 inch binder (to encourage functional wrist positioning during written work)
- ☐ Mousepads (to place under written work to mediate excessive pencil pressure)
- ☐ Craft foam sheets (to place under written work to mediate excessive pencil pressure)
- ☐ Headphones (noise reduction)
- ☐ Sucking on ice-water from straw, water bottle
- ☐ Theraband (to be placed on bottom of chairs for kick bands) (accessible to all students, at discretion of educator; if a safety or risk is observed with this item, provide education and alternatives to the teacher)
- ☐ Air cushions (consider that an air cushion may NOT be the best strategy for children having difficulty with visual scanning or other visual perceptual issues or with vestibular sensitivity; teacher education re: appropriateness and alternative options may be needed if observed)
- ☐ Move’ n’ sit cushions (multiple sizes) (accessible to all students, at discretion of educator; if a safety or risk is

observed with this item, provide education and alternatives to the teacher)

- ☐ Howda Hug Chair (accessible to all students, at discretion of educator; if a safety or risk is observed with this item, provide education and alternatives to the teacher)
- ☐ Scoop Seat (accessible to all students, at discretion of educator; if a safety or risk is observed with this item, provide education and alternatives to the teacher)
- ☐ Wobble stools (adjustable) (accessible to all students, at discretion of educator; if a safety or risk is observed with this item, provide education and alternatives to the teacher)
- ☐ Rocker Chairs (multiple sizes) (accessible to all students, at discretion of educator; if a safety or risk is observed with this item, provide education and alternatives to the teacher)
- ☐ Standing desks offered as alternative workstations in classroom (accessible to all students, at discretion of educator)
- ☐ Universal access to exercise balls and/or exercise balls with stationary base (accessible to all students, at discretion of educator; if a safety or risk is observed with this item, provide education and alternatives to the teacher)

***Disclaimer – as with any equipment (playground climber, gymnastics equipment in gym class, etc., common sense and parent/teacher communication would be required for unique circumstances where some children may have difficulty or be unsafe using certain pieces of equipment).*