

Oral sensory seeking advice

Information for parents and carers

For children with sensory preferences, oral sensory seeking helps with self-regulation. Chewing, mouthing and sucking may help to self soothe and is a strategy that can be used to help calm.

When your child wants to chew and mouth objects, re-direct them to a purposeful and motivating play activity. You may need to take child's hand and lead them to this activity and play with them in order to distract them from mouthing objects. Your child can use the chewy tube/chewellery at the same time if they still want to mouth objects.



Including crunchy food and snacks into your child's diet is also an excellent way of providing safe and appropriate oral sensory input to provide the feedback they are seeking. Examples include:

- Raw vegetables
- Fruit e.g. apples
- Bread sticks
- Crisps
- Dry cereal
- Nuts
- Crackers
- Popcorn.

(Always avoid foods that the child has food allergies/intolerances to.)

Strategies

Please see below some strategies that you can use to try and limit your child mouthing items and unsuitable materials, we would recommend that you implement these strategies consistently into everyday routines.

When child begins to mouth objects and non-food items direct them to alternative and more appropriate options for example:

- Sucking yoghurt, fruit puree, smoothies or thickened milk through a straw or sports bottle

- Sucking frozen fruit, ice lollies or ice cubes
- Sucking lollipops
- Using a sports bottle for all drinks
- Blowing bubbles
- Blowing bubbles in a cup/bowl using a straw
- Blowing into a musical instrument e.g. mouth organ, recorder
- Singing along to a favourite song or humming.



Chewy tubes or chewy jewelry (bracelet/necklace) are a good option for children seeking oral sensory input. They provide a safe opportunity for this and limit the risk of choking on unsuitable materials. Included below is information about purchasing a chewy tube and an example of what you will be looking for:

Sensory Needs – Chewy Tubes:

<https://sensoryneeds.co.uk/collections/chewy-tubes>



Sensory Direct:

www.sensorydirect.com



Chewigem:

www.chewigem.com



Chewelry – Amazon:

www.amazon.co.uk/chewelry/s?k=chewelry



Neckerchew:

www.exploreoursenses.co.uk/neckerchew-various-colours.html



Children and Young People's Occupational Therapy Service

