

# The Centre for Child Development

**Chewys provide an alternate oral- motor activity instead of chewing on clothing or other less desirable objects.**

## Guidelines for Selection and use of a “Chewy”:

Who needs a Chewy?

- Individuals that use chewing to calm or refocus.
- Individuals with speech or eating related issues that need to make muscles stronger.

How to choose a Chewy:

- Try to pick a chewy that the individual is most likely to USE. Each person’s sensory system has preferences related to texture, pliability and shape.
- Try to choose a chewy that will reach to the muscles in the back of the mouth (to enable biting down using molars if desired)
- Some people like to keep a chewy with them at all times (anxiety can occur when you least expect it!). As a result, you want to select a holder that is safe for the child. Be sure that cords, necklaces or holders do not present a strangulation risk for the child.
- If you are choosing a chewy for self-regulation or strengthening, the easier to access the chewy, the more frequently it will be used.
- Some students carry a Ziploc bag or small plastic container in their school bag that contains their chewy. Upon arrival to school, the bag/container can be kept in the student’s desk or in an easily accessible area.

## PRECAUTIONS:

- Choose items that are labeled as non-toxic.
- Try to avoid items that contain latex.
- Although many items found at the dollar store may look similar to chewys seen in therapy catalogues there is no way of knowing if the items are safe for chewing. If in doubt, go with the item that is advertised for chewing.
- Many items sold for infant oral care or teething are suitable for infants to chew but are unable to withstand heavy chewing from older children. If you choose to use one of these items with an older child/student, inspect it regularly for rips and tears to ensure your child/student is not ingesting any materials. **DISCARD RIPPED/TORN CHEWYS IMMEDIATELY.**
- Wash chewys with mild soap and water for hygienic purposes.
- Like all jewellery, Chewys that are clipped to a child’s/students clothing, or worn around the neck or wrist should be removed when on playgrounds and environments where it could catch on something.

This information has been adapted from product description found in the Premier Integrations: Abilitations Sensory Solutions catalogue, Spring 2005 edition.