

How to Guide...Weighted Resources



What are they?

Weighted resources include items such as lap pads, ankle weights, blankets and soft toys that provide deep, even pressure to the body. Some also include gentle vibration for additional sensory feedback. These resources are designed to deliver proprioceptive input, the internal sense of body position, which helps the brain organise sensory information and regulate emotional and physical responses. When used correctly, they can calm an over-alert system or help focus an under-responsive one.



Why would they be used?

The deep pressure created by a weighted item stimulates proprioceptive receptors in muscles and joints. This input tells the nervous system, “You’re safe”, which lowers stress hormones, steadies heart rate and promotes a calm, alert state. Weighted tools can reduce anxiety, improve focus, support body awareness and encourage self-regulation. Vibration, when included, provides rhythmic sensory feedback that can further support either calming or alerting responses, depending on a child’s needs. The overall effect helps pupils remain present and engaged in learning, reducing sensory overload and increasing participation.



Who would use them?

Weighted tools are suitable for pupils who experience difficulties with sensory processing, emotional regulation or attention. They are commonly used by children with Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), and anxiety-related needs. They may also benefit pupils who become restless or distracted in busy environments or who seek constant movement or pressure to stay focused. Use should always be tailored to the individual and, where possible, guided by an Occupational Therapist (OT) or SENCO.



How are they used?

Choose a weighted item that suits the child's size, strength and preferences. The total weight is usually around 5–10% of body weight, but the ideal amount depends on individual response rather than a fixed rule. Position the resource where it provides even pressure, across the lap, shoulders, or lower legs. The child must always be able to move freely and remove it independently.

Observe and record the child's reaction. If they become lethargic, agitated or uncomfortable, remove the item immediately and reduce duration next time. Vibrating items should be used briefly to avoid overstimulation. Check all equipment regularly for wear, clean as directed, and store safely. Weighted resources work best as part of a wider sensory regulation plan, supporting calm, focus and comfort so pupils can access learning with confidence.

When can they be used?

Weighted resources can be used both at school and at home.

In classrooms, they are effective during carpet time, story sessions, independent work, or transitions between activities.

At home, they may support bedtime routines, quiet reading or relaxation periods.

Use should always be short and purposeful, around **15–20 minutes for weighted items** and up to **5 minutes for vibrating tools**, with adult supervision and regular review of impact.



For more information on weighted resources, visit:
[Weighted School SEN Resources | TTS](#)

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