

These tips are a compilation of everyday strategies and approaches used by parents and caregivers and parents of individuals with FASD. Each individual impacted by FASD has unique strengths and challenges. Therefore, not all strategies suggested will necessarily work for your situation. We recommend finding the best approach and routine that works for you and stick with it!

Strategies for Infants & Toddlers

Memory

Grocery shopping - I tell the child 4 or 5 things that we need and repeat them to her a few times, usually in a sing-song voice, and then I ask her to remind me what we still need. (age 2)

Visual schedule of days of the week to remind them of what is coming up. (age 2)

Falling Asleep

Use calming strategies before, such as reading stories and back massages. (age 1+)

Use consistency [at] nighttime, and practice patience with the time it takes for the child to feel secure enough to try to fall asleep. (age 1+)

We use white noise machines for both our children. The machines can make different sounds (rain, waves, heartbeat, etc.), but we use mainly the white noise setting. It blocks out other noises in the house and seems to soothe them. (age 0-3)

Waking from Sleep

Keep his room scaled-down, warm, and have quiet music on. Cuddle up and reassure, but do not talk or put the lights on. (age 8 months)

My son used to be horrendous waking up from a nap. I started identifying something fun he wanted to do BEFORE he slept and having a key object/phrase etc. attached to that activity to remind him about it when I woke him up. I also would start to wake him up 15 mins before he truly needed to get up, allowing him to do it slowly. (age 2)

Making Friends

We always review the basics before play sessions, i.e., use your words, listen to other's words, gentle hands. (age 1 ½+)

Avoid books, movies, TV programs that demonstrate poor friendships or social skills. (age 1 ½+)

Irritability

He is a very cranky baby and needs a lot of reassurance. I may give him up to 5 baths a day, as he loves the warm water.

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(age 8 months)

A preventative strategy: we avoid setting any precedents for activities we didn't want to have to deal with repeatedly, such as granting a stop at an ice-cream shop, or permission to open the car windows or to touch the car's instrumentation.

(age 2+)

Strategies for Preschoolers

Comprehension

Read 2 or 3 sentences and ask the child to explain what is happening in the story. (age 4-7)

If reading a story that has been read before, make some changes to the story and see if the child catches the altering of the story. Usually, I change the names of the characters in a humorous manner. (age 4-8)

Read to them, pointing to each word as you read. Ask what is happening on each page. (age 3+)

When reading stories, I point to words as they are slowly being read and ask the child to repeat after me. (age 4-7)

Writing

Practice printing individual letters and numbers in an attempt to learn the skill of legible writing. (age 4+)

Work with copying the alphabet. Then expand to stringing letters together, [in order] to teach letter spacing. Eventually, go on to printing words, practice stringing sentences together, using case letters to start sentences, using periods at the end of sentences, and then using uppercase for names. (age 4+)

Language - Spelling/Letter Recognition

Walking to and from school, we do spelling verbally - eliminates fine motor struggles of printing and thus less frustration. (age 3-5)

Look for letters everywhere (sticks that get picked up become. I or T or C.) - both my children are incredibly observant, and thus this lets them use that skill to find letters. (age 3-5)

Language – Speaking

Spoke back to the child whenever she asked a question or gave an opinion or suggestion. Rephrased, repeated, or said phrase correctly, but not in a negative way, so she could hear the proper way to say something. Constant reminders to use names of people or objects, he and she,

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etc. Sing answers to encourage more talking. Our daughter loves music, so we tried to incorporate it into a game. (age 3+)

Read a phrase and have the child repeat to assist in pronunciation skills. (age 3-7)

Understanding Abstract Concepts - Time & Money

Used a calendar in his room to cross off days and show the concrete length of time until whatever date arrives (birthdays, Halloween, Christmas, etc.). Now he always knows how to use the calendar and see the time. (age 5+)

Attention Span

Whenever he needs to focus on something, I try to make it happen in a visually boring place. If he is getting dressed, I often have him do it somewhere other than his room, so he doesn't start playing with toys. I also check on him often, asking how it's going. That is generally enough of a cue to get him back on track if he has strayed. He can only focus on one task at a time, so I try not to give him two or three-step instructions. This is difficult for me, but necessary for him to be able to accomplish things without getting worried, flustered, or lost. (age 3-4)

Memory

Use flashcards with pictures to assist with memorizing animals, objects, numbers, and colors. (age 4-7)

I used scavenger hunts to help the child remember where he placed items around the room. (age 4-7)

Repeat, repeat, repeat! (age 3+)

It took him four weeks at age four to learn the colour red. We decided in February he was going to learn his colours. So, every day of the month, I dressed him in red. The teacher had to say .X you're wearing a red shirt today. Show me your shirt. It's red. X you're wearing red pants today. (age 4)

My son is quite visual and has an auditory processing disorder, so strategies to help him remember things must be visual. Primarily, I try to have routines, as well as place items that he needs every day in the same place. For example, I always put his lunch box in the same place on the table every morning so he will remember to take it to school. Everything from school must also go into a well-made, strong folder that goes in his pack and is always next to his lunch box. (age 5)

For home routines, I made up a poster with pictures and arrows, showing how, say, the morning goes. There is a picture of him with pictures of his clothes and arrows from clothes to him. In

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winter I add a hat, coat and boots to the picture. Then there is a picture of his lunch and folder going into his pack. Then a picture of us getting into the car. I also have an evening set of these posters. Things like shoes must always be in their spot. Otherwise, he has a frightful time finding them, even if they are in plain sight. Then he gets flustered, and it gets worse. (age 5)

Making Friends

Start a conversation or make the first move for the child. (age 5+)

Self Confidence

PRAISE, PRAISE and more PRAISE! (age 3+)

Falling Asleep

Gentle back, neck, and head rubs. Reiki helps too. Realizing she may not be ready to sleep, but being consistent with, she must be in her room even if not sleeping. Very little if any stimuli in the room. Our daughter has a bed, dresser, and chair. Only a few things on the dresser. Toys are discouraged and not used as a playroom. Painted walls, with stick-ons for a bit of effect. Blackout blinds on the window. Very quiet room. Only used for sleeping and rest times. Realizing that sometimes we go to bed and she is still awake, reinforce it is a quiet time, time to sleep. (age 5+)

Bad dreams sometimes woke up my child, and then his active imagination would take hold, and he would be unable to fall asleep again. When he was about 4, a family friend made a dream catcher to catch the bad dreams. This worked for a while, but the dreams came back after about two months. Then we talked about how a brain needs to get out and play, just like a body does, and the time it can do that is at night. Since my son liked to play fight (little army men), it was easier for him to understand that his brain had to play with scary things too. (age 4-5)

Began using melatonin at age 5. It helps him to fall asleep, and once asleep, he tends to stay asleep. (age 5+)

Toilet Training

Finally realizing she will not do what is asked until she is ready. Reinforce and realize it is okay not to have full control. [Kids] bodies are giving many messages that our kids are unable to interpret at this time. Being consistent with times on the toilet, i.e., before and after meals, before going out, right after she gets up in the morning before she goes to bed. Keep [toileting] times as close to regular time as possible. Reading picture books to increase comfort and time on the toilet. Having lots of underwear and willing to throw [them] out if not up to the challenge of cleaning them (depending on the day you are having). (age 3-5)

Irritability

Try to think of what is coming up/going on at home, school, with or without friends (if there are any). Remind her we are a part of a family, and how should we talk to each other. Also suggesting, sometimes insisting she go lay down in bed, she does not have to sleep but rest. When she gets up, or we get her from her bedroom, remind her we all have times we are not happy but try our best to talk about issues or be better towards the others in our family. Think about nutrition and what she has eaten/drunk lately. Maybe a protein snack/drink will help. (age 5+)

Confabulation

When I recognize what is happening, I look at her and remind her that what she is saying is not true. (age 3-6)

Stealing

Most of our kids do not steal. They take things because possession is too abstract. If it is in someone's hand, then it is their possession. But if it is just lying there, then it belongs to no one. Their lack of impulse control causes them to pick up items that catch their eye, and then they usually to forget to...put the item back where they got it from. This is a continuous job of reminding them that if it is not theirs, then it belongs to someone else, so do not touch. Reinforce always to ask if they can look at something that is not theirs. (age 4)

Impulse Control

The most important thing has been not to get angry or distraught when she repeatedly does things, I've asked her not to do. If I stay calm and loving, then it is easier to redirect her because we are not in opposition to each other since punishments & rewards do not work; it leaves only love or anger. (age 5)

Alcohol Use

My strategy for keeping my son from trying alcohol, because he's very interested in it, is not to have any alcohol in the house. If it were available, he would try it. And he did once when my older son left a partially used bottle of vodka in the cupboard. Either don't have it or keep it locked up. (age 5+)