

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 School Age Kids

Memory

The repetition of basic concepts by using visual reminders in various key areas throughout the house. For example, when learning the alphabet, the letters with pictures were in different places, such as on his bedroom door, refrigerator, and family room.

We used pictures of activities in order of execution - evening routine of brushing teeth, washing hands, going to the washroom. This is still on the bathroom wall. (age 6-7)

My son had a hard time recognizing numbers. We counted everything in sight, and also played the card game UNO every night. This helped him recognize numbers, and even when he was slightly older, helped him with math operations as there is a scoring component. We used similar strategies for repetition for learning the alphabet. (age 6-12)

Learning

My strategy to get through to the education system (although many teachers and resource teachers knew it too) was to get another psychological, educational assessment done by a psychologist who understands FASD. This assessment showed real abilities and disabilities, and he finally qualified to be placed in a Life Skills program where he understands what is required of him. He is comfortable with the learning level. (age 12)

During grade 2, she was diagnosed as having a short-term memory. She was involved in resource help her whole school career. The resource teacher gave her homework to do at home to repeat things that she learned at school. It was difficult at times, but she has her grade 12 diploma. (age 6+)

Language

Read stories, listen to books on tape, and watch the movie [related to the book]. (age 10+)

My son was enrolled in speech-language/speech therapy classes from 4 years old until he was about 8. I would often do the lessons while driving somewhere. I chose this time because he was held captive by the seatbelt, and we could do small chunks of work - for example, making the "k" sound. I still use the time we are in the car for short, difficult conversations. Since we are not

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facing each other, it feels more like we are working together than being confrontational. (age 6-9)

Consistently touch base with teachers and administrators. (age 6+)

Understanding Abstract Concepts

Fact vs. Fiction: We continuously talk about every situation (including seen on TV) and ask is this real? Is this pretend? The school did the same, so now [child's name] asks the question before we do, and we get him to think it through on his own (he needed lots of practice to get to this point at age 12). (age 8)

Understanding Abstract Concepts - Time & Money

Since he understood the length of recess, I used this measurement for other time issues. It might be one recess or two recesses etc. (age 7-15)

We began using digital clocks and saying the time as if reading the digital clock. He did not understand expressions like "quarter to four"; or "half past six" but understood 3:45 or 6:30. I also asked all his teachers to use the same way of expressing time, so that he did not get confused. He still understands digital time much more than another phrasing. (age 7-16)

Money understanding has come along with the use of it and the need to make change. At first, he thought that when he got money back that he was being given money and thought that the change was more than the amount that he had paid. Now he seems to understand that change is less. (age 7-15)

Managing Money

Small steps of responsibility, starting when my son was about 12. I began by having him have an allowance and made him responsible for buying any candy for himself. Last year, I started also giving him money at the beginning of the school week for lunches. That money was his if he chose not to buy lunches. This year, I have increased his allowance to include lunches and video rentals. I have also had him start two bank accounts with access cards at different banks so that he can use one account for saving and one for everyday use. (age 12-16)

Attention Span

Having him focus on things of interest to him. Gradually increasing the time spent starting at 1 minute and going to 10 minutes. (age 7-9)

Finding what interests him. Finding ways to do things that are more fun. For example, counting cars to increase his ability to count. (age 7-9)

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We use medication. (age 7-15)

Focus on one thing at a time and keep it simple. (age 7-15)

Let's say, for example, something happens at, and he's just out of control. So, I have to get him talking...and I ask. "What's happening for you?"... I have to say. No, X, you're not hearing me. What do I want to know what's happening right now? What's going on right now? What's going on with you? No, no X, what's happening for you right now? It's bringing him back into focus, really getting him to. That takes a lot of energy just working through with him. It works if you can get him focused, it works great when I do that. It does take a lot of energy to get him to focus, but I also walk away with him not being so stressed out. He also walks away, feeling okay that he has accomplished something. (age 6+)

Fine Motor Skills

Getting him to print using different tools, i.e., chalk on a sidewalk, finger paint on paper, a stick in the sand. (age 7)

Sensory Integration

Having the fan of the car on or the window of the car open, even when not weather appropriate. (age 12+)

Preservation

We have only recently developed preservation problems. The only thing I have found that can break the hold of some thoughts is to scoop her up in my arms and swing her around till she giggles. At first, she is reluctant to let go, but it does not take long to change her thoughts. (age 6-12)

Prioritizing

He makes a list and then selects what is most important at the time. Then we will go back to the list and select another item etc. (age 7-15)

Self Confidence

Giving him simple tasks that we know he can be successful at, e.g., getting the mail, taking one bag of groceries from the car and onto the porch, putting the table cloth on the table. He likes to use the stove, so with close supervision, he makes scrambled eggs. (age 11)

Focus on success and try to state all ideas that need to be carried out in the positive. (age 7-15)

Telling her that others have issues with their bodies. Sometimes hands or legs not strong enough to let someone walk or use hands. Reinforce that all of us are different, and it is okay to think

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differently. Let her know she is doing a great job at thinking things out, doing things. Encourage her to do things she cannot do, giving time to do them and allow her to decide if it is the right time. Remind her of what she does really well, and others cannot do those things. (age 8)

I went to her school and took tactile objects for classmates to hold and close their eyes. I asked classmates to give a word describing what each thing felt like. I asked them who was right. Each child said they were correct, but I explained that they were all right. It is how each of our minds tells our bodies what things feel like, and no one is wrong. They finally understood what a different world our daughter lives in, and began to appreciate it, and became more tolerant of her ways, feelings and how her mind thinks differently. (age 8)

Falling Asleep

We have nightmare problems and preservation regarding replaying the pictures and actions of past nightmares. The only solution I have found is for her to sleep with me whenever she has been in a stressful situation. That means on school days, she mostly sleeps with me. On weekends things are easier. (age 6)

The use of medication. (age 7+)

We use a routine. i.e., cookies and milk prior to bedtime. (age 6-11)

She slept reasonably well, though waking often. We used a fan on her face even in winter and a heavy blanket, even in the summer. (age 12+)

I had a whole evening routine I would do with my son. It started with racing to put on pyjamas, then doing teeth together, then reading a story before getting him to lie down. My son loves having his back scratched, so my rules were he had to stay still - mouth shut (no talking), eyes closed, and body still. I would scratch his back for about five minutes and often found that he was asleep by then. If not, I kept scratching. As he got older, I would scratch his back for a few minutes, then tuck his blankets all around; him like a cocoon, before leaving the room. I often had to check as he has never fallen asleep easily. (age 3-10)

Sexual Activity

At age 13, we started our daughter on the pill, though she wasn't sexually active for several years (to regulate her periods and her moods). Once sexually active and at risk for seeing pregnancy as a plan, got her on an IUD as an alternative to having to take the pill. (age 13+)

Stealing

Taught the concrete notion [that] everything has a home (lives somewhere), and they need to go back or remain there. After a month, this behaviour ceased and has not yet recurred. (age 7+)

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We remove money from wallets and pockets so he will not steal. After a while, he stops checking and then for a while, we can keep money in the wallet. Then something triggers him to start checking again, and we again remove money from the wallet. (age 11)

Confront him. I always know what money is in my wallet so I can with confidence say you took \$5.00, etc. (age 7-15)

I would mark bills in my wallet so that I would know what I was dealing with. But we had to take responsibility for making the opportunity available and accept that missing money was our fault. So, I locked my purse in the car trunk or wore the strap around my body, once hiding it stopped working. (age 12+)

Confabulation

Confront and question carefully, directly and keep it simple. (age 7- 15)

When we were dealing with lying, I read a book that encouraged me not to get our daughter to admit her wrong but restating my desired expectation, i.e. Don't hit your sister. (age 12)

Alcohol/Drug Use

No alcohol in the house or unopened bottles. (age 10+)