

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 Adolescents

#### **Language - Reading & Comprehension**

We read a lot to her, plus try to buy the books that interest her [that use] simple wording. (age 13)

Lots of learning issues, so have lots of extra school support. Meet with resource people daily to keep up to date with assignments etc. (age 15-16)

Have a teen read "younger" books daily to our 7-year-old. This helps with our teen's confidence and his improvement in reading skills. (age 15-16)

#### **Learning**

Use short sentences and photo (picture) chore lists etc. (age 14)

#### **Understanding Abstract Concepts - Time and Money**

Lower or let go of my expectations. Use digital clocks. Repeat, repeat, repeat. (age 14)

Use a countdown clock (timer). (age 13)

#### **Managing Money**

Our teen had no concept of money management; spends freely and impulsively. So, I got a joint account and discussed every purchase to a "need vs. want". This has greatly reduced impulse buying. (age 15-16)

#### **Attention Span**

Only ask her to do things that take limited time (15 minutes). (age13)

#### **Making Friends/Keeping Friends**

My daughter has trouble keeping friends. So, I do a lot of reminding her about social graces/rules. (age 14)

**Waking from Sleep**

I'm still experimenting, as my 16-year-old son does not believe there is any connection between when he goes to sleep and how easy or difficult it is to wake up. Currently, I am using a vibrating alarm (sold by Canadian Hearing Society), which seems to raise his level of consciousness slightly, and also shaking him slightly while speaking loudly. I try to keep my voice at a normal tone and do not show frustration. I also will scratch his back or head, as this seems to help. Regular alarms do not have any impact on him - he can sleep through the loudest buzzer for an hour. (age 16)

**Self-confidence & Self-esteem**

For a year, I kept a notebook beside my child's breakfast plate, with two to six non-instructive examples of successes from the previous day. For example, [Daughter's name] held on to the disk she wanted to throw down the stairs. For difficult days, I often ended up with more examples, from having to think really hard. The notebook persuaded my daughter that I understood and appreciated her struggles. I'd said nothing about it and didn't know if it meant anything to her, but one day when I forgot to make any entries, she said, what? I didn't do anything good yesterday? (age 13)

Insist that she try new things as she would not try or do anything. Yet once she does, she usually likes it. (age 14)

**Sexual Activity**

Educate, educate. Use birth control. (age 13)

**Confabulation and Stealing**

Lots of talk, brainstorming about antecedents of behaviour, identifying feelings around the time of the incident, i.e. anxiety, past issues that continue to replay. (age 15-16)

In response to an appeal to precedent (i.e., child saying. You let me..), after which a refusal would produce an outburst, I would say, "That was a mistake". I'd wish I learnt this earlier. (age 16+)

### Strategies for Adults

#### **Memory**

Keep a calendar on the wall in the kitchen with all appointments or important info. Each day needs a lot of space. He checks the calendar daily. Print notes (i.e. for tasks) with bullets beside each point to check off when it is completed. (age 20)

Remind him a lot! (age 20)

I phone and remind him of appointments, either the day before or the day of. (age 19)

Repetition, repetition, repetition. (age 19)

#### **Reading Comprehension**

I pay for [name of son] text messaging on his cell phone, and he uses the internet to talk to friends. I always give him spelling or decode words (in syllables) for him immediately when asked, so he doesn't get frustrated, and he trusts me that I won't make it a teachable moment (that only made him crazy at school). Now he is reading and writing [and] has learned to spell words and decode many words and is much more receptive to communicating in print. (age 19)

#### **Living Independently**

Trying to develop habits (taking out the garbage every night before bed) in place of the internal motivation that's lacking. (age 18)

Placing the bed and box spring directly on the floor, so that items couldn't accumulate underneath (her idea!). (age 18)

Using see-through plastic bins or open hanging storage units so that she could see her clothes. (age 18)

Buying "non-break" dishes and other household items. (age 18)

#### **Waking from Sleep**

Most times, I would call him on his cell phone or in-person I would do the following: when I wake him, I explain the reason, "You wanted to go to the movies, and it is one hour before you want to go.." Then I ask him if he wants me to wake him up again in 5 minutes. The next time I wake him (in 5 minutes), I say, "Five minutes have passed, and you wanted to wake up". (age 20)

**Self Confidence and Esteem**

We casually speak of FASD often regarding him and others, as I am so interested in learning about it. I point out his behaviour (days after an incident) and explain how it is typical of FASD, or I ask him to explain. I point out his good qualities over and over with great awe. For example, he has an amazing visual memory. I make a big fuss over this skill every time he uses it, i.e. finds a lost object. I say how rich we would be if we could find a way to make money from his giftedness. I brag about it to others in front of him. I have overheard him tell others that he is dumb in school, but he is really smart at other things like visual memory. (age 17-20)

**Managing Money**

Letting [my] child know that I was doing the big job of applying for Disability Support Payments, on condition that I [would] be her trustee and showing her the complicated forms involved. Also, arranging for rent to be paid directly from [disability support agency]. (age 18)

[Government] cheque goes to me; I put it in a joint account. I take out cash for housing. I take out cash for public transit. I transfer money into his account on Fridays for the weekend. I take him grocery shopping. (age 19)

Stressed the complexity of applying for [disability benefits] and made an agreement that in return for my doing so, she would agree to have me as trustee. This was made easier because she'd been in a group home where they were the trustee (and I was preferable). (age 18)

**Confabulation**

I would prepare him for my question, and then I would ask for the truth; then, I would leave it for a day or so and ask again; then, I would ask if he is lying. Sometimes it would take weeks before he admitted it was a lie. I never gave him a reason to think I would get mad. I just wanted the truth. (age 20)

**Irritability**

I do not get angry, but I say, I will talk to you about this later when you are feeling better. (age 18+)

A preventative strategy: we would 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 18)

**Getting a Job**

I focus on my son's special interests. My son likes food, so I signed him up for a kid's cooking school at a major grocery store. Now he works at a bakery. (age 18)

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Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder  
Newfoundland & Labrador Network

My son always wanted to be a pilot, so I would take him to the airport to be around planes. His love for the airport has led to him getting a job at the airport. (age 18)

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