

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

MAKING YOUR CHILDCARE CENTRE FASD FRIENDLY

THE PHYSICAL SPACE

Child care settings can be overwhelming places for children with FASD. There are many things to see, movements to observe, sounds to hear, things to smell, and things to feel. Help make the room environment more suitable to their sensory needs using some of these tips.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Determine the child's developmental level and work with them at that level
- Expose children to supportive environments where their strengths are recognized
- Encourage a multi-sensory, concrete approach to learning
- Model appropriate behaviours and social skills
- Keep instructions simple
- Understand their various ways of communicating and identify behaviours which indicate frustration
- Maintain a calm and gentle, yet firm attitude and provide structure rather than control
- Establish partnerships between home, child care program and school

SUPPORTING KIDS WITH FASD

Suspected or Diagnosed

TIPS FOR YOUR CENTRE

1. Keep decor minimal and focused
 - Colours should be neutral and calming
 - Areas should have minimal distractions
 - Busier class decor should be concentrated in one area
2. De-clutter whenever possible
 - Toys and supplies should be organized and kept out of sight when not being used.
3. Invest in noise reducing class decor
 - Curtains and carpets also provide a sense of comfort and control over lighting and visual stimuli
4. Have a quiet, comfortable space for sensory breaks

HELPFUL TOOLS

- Fidget toys
- Air filled chairs
- Tactile hand immersion toys
 - Water-tables
 - Finger paints
 - Play dough
- Visual timers
- Picture schedules

CONNECTING WITH PARENTS & MAINTAINING OPEN LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Start the year off with an intake meeting and maintain regular meetings to discuss progress and challenges. Healthcare professionals within the child's circle of care might also be involved. It is important to establish:

1. What does the ECE need to know about the child?
2. What are the parents priorities for the child?
3. What is the connection between home and the child care program?

LEARNING STRATEGIES & SUPPORT

Tips for learning, understanding, remembering, and implementing new skills

- Break into small groups
- Repetition, routine, and predictability
- Model the behaviour you want to see
- Use pictures and visual representations, words, physical models, lively expression, and imagination

Reading

- Use an animated voice and expression
- Point to pictures
- Make comments and ask questions

Concept development

- Use imagination
- Focus on concepts one at a time
- Incorporate learning into other aspects of the daily routine

Handling transitions

- Concrete warnings (i.e., sand timer) and visual or auditory cues (i.e., lights)
- Prepare them for what is coming next and strive for continuity
- Structured, limited choices for decision making

Social skills

- Avoid abstract phrases and questions
- Give immediate/direct feedback
- Anticipate and prevent problems

Math and numbers

- Use hands on material
- Matching and sorting activities
- Pattern activities

Tantrums

- Ignore negative behaviour and redirect misbehaviour
- Ensure a safe space for physical responses from the child
- Recognize cues and discuss cause and effect