

# TIPS

---

## For Teachers

---



# TIPS ON TRANSITIONING

---

Transitions can be large and small events, such as coming back from recess or graduating.

- Give warnings for transitions.
- Show the student what activity they will be doing.
- Use a visual timer that counts down.
- Use visual or verbal prompts to indicate transitions.
- Minimize the impact of changes to routines by scheduling them for later in the day.
- Adjust workloads so tasks can be completed before transitioning to a new activity.
- Make the schedule predictable so transitions can be anticipated.
- Ensure the schedule for each day is posted in a visible spot.
- If there is a change, take the time to explain what is happening and then proceed.

Example:

- The student will be leaving your Grade One classroom soon and moving into the Grade Two classroom.

How you can help:

- Introduce your student to his or her new Grade Two teacher before the end of Grade One. Take pictures of the student in his or her new classroom and include these pictures in a transition book. The transition book could also include tips and trends that you have noticed worked well for the student while in your classroom, such as teaching math in the morning.

# TIPS TO HELP WITH ENVIRONMENT

---

How can I adapt the environment to help this student succeed?

- Create a positive emotional atmosphere around the student.
- Allow fidget toys when a student needs to be listening or sitting still.
- Have a separate quiet place for when the student needs to calm down.
- Avoid things that may trigger sensory issues such as strong smells or lighting.
- Try to reduce the activity/noise when the student needs to focus.
- Keep the room arrangement simple and easy to navigate. Visuals can be used as concrete reminders as to where things belong.
- Supervision should be provided in advance to avoid negative behaviour.
- Ensure extra staff are available to support success.
- Develop individualized programs keeping the student's skills in mind.
- Allow the student to take body breaks when needed.

Example:

- The student has trouble focusing when it is time for individual reading. He is fidgeting and distracting the other students.

How you can help:

- Have a quiet place for the student to read with little distractions; a tent may work in the classroom. This also may be a good time for a body break if supervision is available.

# TIPS ON ROUTINE & STRUCTURE

---

- Try to use the same schedule each day so that the student can predict activities.
- Help the student to keep binders, books and his or her desk organized.
- Post separate morning and afternoon schedules. Colour code subjects and activities.
- Make necessary changes to routine in the afternoon instead of in the morning so that the entire day is not disrupted.
- Give the student as much advance notice as possible when routines change.
- Out of school activities should be planned on consistent days with visual reminders.
- Allow the student to make choices but ensure the options are structured. For example, provide activity centres in gym class instead of free play.
- Build structured free time into their schedules.

## Example:

- The students are all allowed 20 minutes of free play during their one-hour gym class. The student living with FASD seems to take this time to harass the other students.

## How you can help:

- Give the student structured options during the free time. Create stations that the student can choose from. Keep the options to a maximum of 2 or 3 so that the student doesn't get overwhelmed by the choices.

# TIPS ON TIME & SCHEDULES

---

- Set up the day so the student can be successful. Allocate enough time for activities to be completed.
- Focus on strengths first thing in the morning and at the end of the day, so the student is excited to come back.
- Alternate subjects and activities the student likes with ones he or she does not like.
- Alternate easy, challenging and fun activities within the schedule for the day.
- Plan a resource period, or one-on-one time, for the student to complete homework during the school day.
- Allow the student to have visual schedules, rules and routines on his or her desk.
- Consider whether a digital clock or an analog clock is better, based on the student's strengths and abilities.
- Create as much predictability as possible so there is no room for anxiety.
- Make a visual schedule by using pictures of activities along with times.

## Example:

- The classroom schedule is posted on the board each day for all the students to see. The student living with FASD is constantly asking what you are doing next. When you tell him to check the schedule on the board he tells you it doesn't say anything.

## How you can help

- Create a smaller schedule that can be posted on the student's desk. Be sure to include pictures. A digital clock may be useful so that the student can match up the schedule times with the actual time. You can also color-coordinate classes to their corresponding time.

# TIPS FOR REPETITION

---

- Repeat rules and routines daily in various ways – written, verbal, pictures and actions.
- Re-teach concepts using consistent wording. For example, use “small letters” or “lower case.”
- Re-teach concepts and rules in different environments and settings.
- Use repetition initially to teach new skills, then continue to use repetition to support the maintenance of the new skills.
- Use repetition with patience and understanding.
- Be consistent with wording, modelling and actions at home, during school and after school programs, etc.

## Example:

- The student knows to walk in the hallways when they are going from gym class to math class, but as soon as the bell rings for recess, she runs out the door before she even has her shoes on.

## How you can help:

- Be sure to repeat the rules in every setting and make sure that the other students are modelling those rules. Give extra time to get ready for recess before the bell rings. Include a picture of shoes on the door to remind the student that they need shoes before they open the door. Practice getting ready for recess, and praise when done properly.

# TIPS ON CAUSE & EFFECT

---

- Say exactly what you mean in fewer words so your message is better understood.
- Have fewer, or if possible, remove distractions when a student needs to be listening.
- Make consequences as immediate and relevant as possible. If you take away an activity that is happening in the future as a consequence, the student may not make that connection when he or she receives the consequence.
- Map out decision-making so the student has a concrete visual path.
- Use social stories to describe possible effects of actions and inactions.
- Use a calm clear voice so that the message is not lost.
- Keep language consistent.
- Create consequences that are labour vs. brain based so that the student can link that feeling to the behaviour.

## Example:

- Before class starts in the morning, the student decides to take 3 pairs of other students' gym shoes and throw them in the snow outside.

## How you can help:

- Take the student to a quiet space so that they aren't distracted when you let them know that this isn't OK. Have the student bring the shoes in and dry them out for the other students. It is important to deliver the consequence right away so the student can connect it to the activity. We should avoid taking away activities that the student enjoys and are successful at.

# TIPS TO HELP WITH SOCIAL SKILLS

---

- Build on strengths and interests that can engage the student in social activities – sports, art, etc.
- Adjust expectations to fit the student’s developmental age vs. his or her chronological age.
- Help to identify positive friends and healthy relationships.
- Avoid large groups of people for social interactions – one or two friends is often much more significant than a group.
- Engage the student in one-on-one or individual sports and activities – group and team settings are sometimes difficult for individuals with FASD.
- Teach relationship repair.
- Help the student to identify social cues and the emotions related to those cues – crossed arms, no eye contact, backing away from someone.
- Allow for mentors when possible.

## Example:

- The other students get mad when the individual is on their team for kick ball. They call him No Kick Rick which then makes him mad and he runs away.

## How you can help:

- Choose activities that are still group sports but focus more on an individual’s skills. Dodge ball is a good example. This way, if the individual is tagged out, the attention is not focussed on just him. You can also build off his strengths. If he is a really good runner, have him play outfield. He can play for both teams instead of switching to bat.



# TIPS ON OWNERSHIP & IMPULSE CONTROL

---

- Write names on items and colour code items.
- Do not leave things out in the open. Cover cupboards and shelving when possible.
- Practise borrowing – have a student borrow your pen and return it. Lead by example as well and borrow their pen and return it.
- Establish and implement appropriate consequences for taking other people's items. Ensure this is done in a timely manner.
- Avoid situations where the student has not been able to control their impulses in the past.
- Model impulse control out loud.

## Example:

- The student is constantly taking things off of your desk. She says she just wanted to borrow it but it never gets returned to your desk.

## How you can help

- Place a specific coloured dot such as red, on all of the items that you would like returned to your desk. Place a piece of red paper on the front of your desk. Each time the student borrows something remind her that she needs to return the red-dotted item to the red desk. If she forgets, walk her through the rules again and have her practise returning objects. You can also colour-coordinate their items and practise borrowing from the student to help teach ownership.

# TIPS FOR SIMPLICITY

---

- Rules and expectations should be kept simple and to the point.
- Break down tasks for the student.
- Establish achievable goals by working with the student's interests and strengths to help him be more invested in positive outcomes.
- Always include step-by-step directions with simple language.
- Provide immediate feedback and recognition.
- Set the student up to succeed. Allow time for him to get the answer when teaching something.

## Example:

- During gym class, the student is not understanding how to play with the parachute. You are trying to explain by standing behind the student while the other students continue to lift it up, but this is not working.

## How you can help:

- Limit distractions while you are trying to explain the instructions. You may need to take the student aside and explain it to her separately. Use visual and verbal instructions when explaining the motions. Once the student gets it, be sure to praise her and tell her she is doing a great job at it!

# TIPS FOR CONSISTENCY

---

- Make sure that the entire school team has consistent expectations of the student's academic and behavioural abilities.
- Try to keep the student's routine as consistent as possible.
- Be consistent with visual, verbal or physical cues. Ensure all staff are using the same strategies.
- Maintain consistency between home and school keeping in mind language and expectations.
- Use language that is consistent for the student at school and at home. For example, a jacket is called a jacket at both home and school; it should never be called something different such as a coat.
- Provide consistent support people from year to year whenever possible.

## Example:

- The student has no problem getting ready for recess when you are teaching class, but when your educational assistant is instructing he just doesn't want to listen. By the time he is ready, the bell is already ringing for recess to end.

## How you can help:

- Be conscious of consistent language. Is the educational assistant using the exact same words that you use when you tell the student to get ready? For example, decide whether to use the word "coat" or "jacket." Make sure that the expectations and verbal instructions are consistent from teacher to teacher.

# TIPS ON CONFABULATION

---

Confabulation is a story the individual believes to be true, but parts may not be true.

- Remember, when the student confabulates, she is trying to give you information that she thinks you want to hear and that will please you.
- Help the student to recall the real story by asking her to describe what took place, rather than interpret events.
- Avoid asking questions you already know the answer to.
- Ask short questions to elicit definite answers.
- If confabulations are not serious or indicating danger, allow the student to engage you in the story.
- Use the student's confabulations as social stories to teach lessons.
- Ask the student to retell the story in a different setting or to draw it for you.
- Always ensure questioning is respectful and understanding to maintain a student's dignity.

Example:

- You overhear the student telling his friends how he smokes cigarettes at recess by the monkey bars. You know this isn't true because all the teachers rave about how good a climber he is, and when you are on supervision you've had to ask him many times to come down from the monkey bars and go inside.

How you can help:

- Encourage his good behaviors. Talk about how fantastic he is at climbing on the monkey bars. Use the confabulation as a social story. For example: "one time I had a student that smoked and none of the others kids wanted to play with him because he smelled funny."

# TIPS TO HELP WITH MEMORY

---

- Don't assume the student will remember. Do not put unreasonable expectations on them.
- Prioritize information that the student needs to be able to recall without visual reminders. For example, prioritize their phone number over multiplication tables.
- Repeat, repeat, repeat.
- Say the most important word last when giving direction.
- Give the student time to process and retrieve information – slow down when speaking.
- Assess what they know, not their memory. Test them as they learn as opposed to during an exam.
- The student may do better with multiple choice questions.
- Never put a time limit on a test.
- Use agendas, cell phones, planners or any other item the student is comfortable with.
- Use notes or pictures as reminders – try using a series of both if that is more helpful.
- Remind students of the time they need to leave, the lunch they should bring, and where they are going.
- Re-teach rules in different settings, such as no running in the classroom and in the computer room.
- Use visual charts and reminders to teach rules.
- Do not ask the student to repeat what you told them; ask them to either show you, draw it for you, or explain it in their own words.

## Example:

- The student is having trouble with multiplication tables. When the EA walks her through the assignment, she gets it – but then come test time, she is lost.

## How you can help:

- Does she need to memorize multiplication tables? Math is a very abstract concept for individuals living with FASD; they may never memorize things like multiplication tables. Can you print out their multiplication tables and let them have a copy on their desks? Can you teach them a life skill such as using a calculator to solve the problem?

# TIPS ON LANGUAGE

---

- Remember that individuals living with FASD struggle to understand abstract concepts like jokes and figurative language. For example, “keep your shirt on.”
- When possible use real objects and examples relating to the lesson being taught, such as real money, or real clocks.
- Provide hands-on learning to help the student understand what is being taught.
- Practise reading together.
- Use words or statements that are specific to the desired behaviour you wish to achieve. For example, say “walk” instead of “don’t run.”
- Consequences need to be concrete and directly related to the undesirable behaviour. Practise modeling the appropriate behaviour.
- Avoid intonations and verbal tones that are attached to abstract meaning, individuals with FASD may not pick up on the hidden meaning behind a change in pitch or intonation.
- Allow extra response time. An individual with FASD is a “ten-second child in a one-second world.”
- Support your instructions by providing a visual representation. You may wish to provide a step-by-step breakdown of the activity for complex tasks.
- Teach social cues.
- Know their levels of expressive and receptive language and teach to that.

## Example:

- You are constantly telling the student not to run in the hallways. He continues to run even after you tell him not to.

## How you can help:

- Instruct the desired behaviour instead of what he is doing wrong. Ask him to “please walk” instead of “don’t run.” Model the behaviour by having the student walk next to you or another student who is a good rule follower.

# TIPS ON STRENGTH-BASED APPROACHES

---

- A strength-based approach not only draws on the strengths of the individual but on the strengths of his or her support system
  - family, services providers, community, and friends.
- Use an individual's strengths to accommodate his or her deficits.
- Individuals living with FASD can have tremendous strengths. They can be creative, happy, eager to please, tell amazing stories, be good with smaller children, etc.
- Use these strengths to help set them up for success.
- People with FASD are willing and able to learn strategies that match learning styles and build on strengths rather than deficits.
- Strength-based approaches shift our understanding away from conventional practices and encourage us to think outside the box.

## Example:

- You have a student that has a really hard time doing tests, but when you ask her a question in class ,she always knows the answer.

## How you can help:

- Try having the tests read to her and have her verbalize her answers. She may not be good at reading and writing, but using her great verbal skills to her advantage can help her succeed in class.

# FASD NETWORK OF SASKATCHEWAN

510 Cynthia St  
Saskatoon, SK  
1-866-673-3276  
[www.saskfasdnetwork.ca](http://www.saskfasdnetwork.ca)