

# Classroom Strategies

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a diagnostic term used to describe impacts on the brain and body of individuals prenatally exposed to alcohol. FASD is a lifelong disability. Individuals with FASD will experience some degree of challenges in their daily living, and need support with motor skills, physical health, learning, memory, attention, communication, emotional regulation, and social skills to reach their full potential. Each individual with FASD is unique and has areas of both strengths and challenges.



## Self-Regulation

*is an umbrella term that can relate to:*

- Our ability to self-monitor,
- Our control over our thoughts, behaviours, and emotions,
- How we manage our impulses, and
- How our sensory systems interact with our ability to manage or make sense of our environment

**Individuals with FASD often struggle with self-regulation.**

**Strategies to support self-regulation include:**

- Provide structure,
- Consider physical environments,
- Support social and environmental functioning,
- Provide guidance and support, and
- Adjust teaching strategies

## Auditory Strategies

Students with FASD may have trouble processing auditory information, which may make them unfocused, overloaded, or anxious.

- Limit intercom announcements,
- Use a sound field system to override background classroom sounds,
- Use ear protectors or headphones to filter out background noise, and
- Use noise-reducing materials like carpets throughout the classroom where possible



## Sensory Processing

Individuals with FASD who have sensory processing difficulties are often confused or overwhelmed by everyday sensory information.

Some students with FASD may be oversensitive to sensory input, while some may be under-sensitive.

School classrooms are often overwhelming places for students with FASD. This can make learning more difficult because when students become overwhelmed by the environment, they may tune out, shut down, or act up.



## Visual Strategies

Children with FASD are often visual learners and possess visual processing strengths.

- Reduce visual stimulation and clutter,
- Adjust the amount of light ,
- Create visual schedules,
- Colour coded binders for different subjects, and
- Use visual timers to help prepare for transitions



## Accommodations

- Instructional
- Assessment
- Environmental
- Transitions

## Tactile Strategies

The mouth plays a big part in the touch system, so strategies that focus on stimulating the mouth can help calm and organize the nervous system.



- Stress balls,
- Soft, stretchy keychains,
- Chewing gum,
- Sucking on a candy,
- Sucking on a straw or water bottle, and
- Sandpaper on bottom of the desk



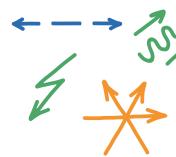
## Targeted vs. Universal Approaches

Universal approaches refer to the strategies that you can implement to support all students but will also be beneficial for students with FASD, such as:

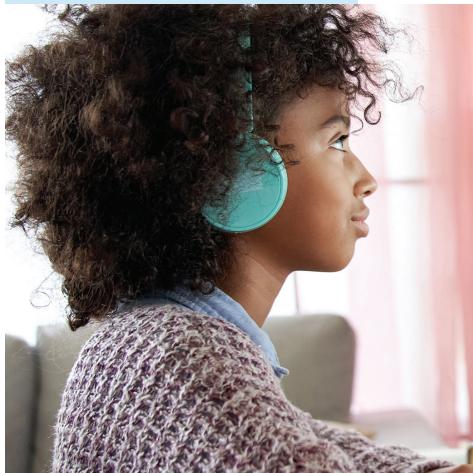
- Building relationships with students,
- Be aware of your tone of voice and language, and
- Be predictable

## Body Position, Movement, and Balance Strategies

Children with FASD often have difficulties with body awareness and body boundaries. They may also have difficulty adjusting their muscle movements appropriate to the task.



- Visual boundaries in locker areas and hallways,
- Visual lines using tape on the floor, and
- Incorporate movement breaks into schedule



## Environmental Accommodations

Calming spaces are quiet, safe spaces for the student to self-regulate. Calming spaces should be non-threatening and non-punitive but should provide students with a personal space. Other environmental accommodations might target specific areas of sensory processing:

### ▼ Body position/Movement

- Use a pass key and signals for restroom, water, and body breaks

### ◀ Tactile

- Use moderate temperatures in the classroom

### ▲ Auditory

- Use chair and desk mufflers to eliminate scratching and squeaking

### ◀ Visual

- Use calm colours on walls and bulletin boards



## Strategies Outside the Classroom

### ▼ Recess

- Consider alternatives to recess but only if the student agrees,
- Have teacher aides supervise a select group of students, and
- Find a student to act as a special buddy

### ▲ Lunchroom

- Post lunchroom rules in print and visual formats, and
- Assign seating with appropriate peers in the lunchroom

### ◀ School Bus

- Teach and reteach routines and expectations, and
- Provide extra supervision on the bus for students with severe difficulties, if necessary