

Contact our dedicated FASD Advisors via our Advice Line 0300 666 0006 (option 2) (Tues-Fri, 10am to 2.30pm) or by emailing fasdhub.scotland@adoptionuk.org.uk

"FASD stands for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. It can arise from alcohol exposure in pregnancy and affects the developing brain and body of an individual before they were born. FASD is a life-long, neurodevelopmental condition, often referred to as a hidden disability. Each person with FASD is affected differently. Each person with FASD has both strengths and challenges, they and their families need support to learn FASD-informed strategies to help them prosper. When an early diagnosis is made, the right supports are put in place in education, at home and in the workplace, then individuals are more likely to succeed and achieve throughout life." ('Basics: What is FASD?', FASD Hub Scotland)

FASD
IS A LIFELONG
CONDITION

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A **Key Adult** can be available to check-in with your child/young person regularly, even when it seems like things are going well. During a transition it is important for your child/young person to have time to get to know this person and begin to trust and feel safe with them before being required to spend long periods in an unknown environment. This person might also be the main point of contact for you as parent/carer, communicating with you regularly.



Visual Supports such as photos, video clips or social stories might help to prepare your child/young person for the new people and environment. Many schools have produced videos and other resources that share information about their school environment and staff. The advantage of photos and video clips are that you can share them with your child/young person whenever you feel is appropriate, and can go back to these as often as they wish.

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A **Transition Object** may provide comfort to younger child, but can also be useful for older young people. They help as reminders of their attachment and relationships when separated from you. This could be anything from a photo or cuddly toy to a scarf sprayed with perfume or other comforting scent. It might be possible to create a box for your child/young person containing special items that they can access at school/nursery when they need some comfort and familiarity.



A **Phased Introduction** can make sure your child/young person feels safe in the new environment and have time to decompress and regulate their emotions before requiring to separate from you for long periods. A very short, positive experience that can be built on is better than a long day where your child/young person might begin to struggle.

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Ask if your child/young person can have access to a nurture/wellbeing area or other **safe space** if they become overwhelmed. Some schools have a nurture classroom or wellbeing base that children/young people can access when needed (dependent on staff supervision). Some children/young people prefer using a designated area within their classroom such as a tent/den or cosy corner. They may require adult support initially to help them recognise when they might need to access this area. A visual support could increase independence and provide an alternative to using or responding to verbal language when feeling dysregulated.



An individual **'Pupil Passport'** or **'All About Me'** record for your child/young person could be very helpful for school staff. Your child/young person could be involved in creating this and sharing it with staff. It could contain photographs and other visuals connecting home and school as part of their life.



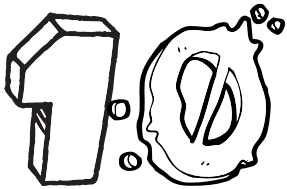
A **Sensory Box and/or Movement Breaks** can be an excellent way of helping your child/young person to stay regulated throughout the school day. Ideally they should have access to sensory supports whenever they need them. Movement breaks can be planned and/or requested by your child/young person and/or initiated by an adult who knows them well. They could involve specific exercises or even just a walk around the playground/taking a message to another class. Generally it's a good idea to have planned breaks as well as additional experiences when needed. More information on sensory differences can be found here: [Joining in with sensory differences](#)



Ask the school to work with you and your child/young person to create an **Action Plan** to put in action when things get too much. This could perhaps include a favourite activity, quiet time in their safe place or some outdoor learning. It's important to communicate with the school about unsettled periods or difficulties before or after school. This will enable family and school to work in partnership to identify possible triggers or environmental factors that could be contributing to the child/young person being overwhelmed. Together everyone can consider how best to support them, and what further adjustments could be put in place.



A **Soft Start:** slightly adjusted start/finish times or permission to use a different entrance/exit can be very helpful. Some children/young people may benefit from avoiding the sensory overload of crowds and lines by entering through a different door, or attending five minutes early or late at the beginning and end of the day. If your child/young person can engage in an enjoyable activity which supports their individual sensory profile at the beginning of each day it can help them regulate and get ready for learning. Some children/young people might benefit from an energetic activity with lots of movement, whereas others might need a quieter activity to help regulate their sensory system.



Breaks and other unstructured times can be particularly challenging. Trying to anticipate possible issues and having a plan in place could be really helpful. For some children/young people a 'Buddy' might be helpful in the playground, or a specific activity/resource that could be adult led or even supported by older pupils might be effective and this could vary according to individual's interests. Other children/young people might respond well to a special daily responsibility such as holding the door to support the transition back to class. At Secondary there might be an identified place such as a wellbeing/support base, library, or other area the young person can access if they are struggling during breaks.

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FASD Hub
Scotland is funded
by the Scottish
Government

Factsheet created with input from
Educational Psychologists Morag Murray and
Miranda Eodanable, Edinburgh City Council