# Eating with FASD – Children

Adapted from *Strategies not Solutions* - NOFASD Australia. For deeper guidance and practical strategies, see the full booklet.

## What's important to understand

Children with FASD may:

- forget to eat or lose track of meals
- swing between gorging and not eating
- be easily distracted at the table
- struggle with textures, temperature or knowing when food is too hot or cold
- have difficulty sitting still or staying in their own space
- not recognise hunger or fullness cues
- forget to drink water or not recognise thirst cues

These differences are linked to brain-based challenges with regulation, sensory processing, memory and impulse control — not defiance or poor manners.

## What can help

### Predictable routines

Regular meals, snacks, and water breaks at the same times each day (including weekends).

### Environmental structure

Calm, low-distraction mealtimes with minimal noise and interruptions.

### Clear physical boundaries

Assigned seating, defined personal space (e.g. placemats or tape), and feet supported if they don't reach the floor.

### Reduced cognitive load

Serving food for the child rather than expecting choices, unless they can manage them.

### Sensory-informed supports

Adjusting textures, flavours or temperature based on the child's sensory needs.

### Movement and regulation support

Short movement before or after meals; allowing standing or alternative seating if needed.

### Supervision without shame

Support around portion sizes, pacing, finishing meals, and drinking water without pressure or punishment.

## What can make it harder

- Expecting appetite or routines to be self-managed
- Strong smells, noise or visual clutter
- Pressure, bargaining or punishment around food
- Changes to routine without preparation

## When to seek extra support

If there are ongoing concerns about eating or growth, it's important to seek guidance from a health professional.

**A strengths-based reminder:** If eating is hard, the support needs adjusting — not the child.

nofasd australia | NATIONAL ORGANISATION for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
1800 860 613
www.nofasd.org.au