Self-care & Hygiene 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:

- be hypo- or hyper-sensitive to touch, light, sound or smell
- struggle with sequencing steps for hygiene routines
- find change difficult, especially around daily care tasks
- may experience dysmaturity, where self-care skills don't match chronological age
- have difficulty with toilet training
- forget or resist hygiene tasks without support
- have difficulty noticing body cues like smell or discomfort

These differences are linked to brain-based and sensory differences, not laziness, defiance or lack of care.

What can help

Predictable routines

Doing hygiene tasks in the same order, at the same times each day, helps reduce confusion and stress.

Visual and step-by-step support

Picture charts, simple visual cues, and timers can support memory and sequencing for daily care tasks.

Demonstration and practice

Showing how to do tasks such as washing hands or hair supports learning more effectively than verbal instructions alone.

Sensory-informed products and environments

Using mild, familiar products and being mindful of scent, temperature and noise across environments (e.g. home vs public toilets) can reduce sensory overload.

Consistency over time

Maintaining routines that can carry into adolescence supports confidence and skill development.

What can make it harder

- Changes to routines without preparation
- Relying on verbal reminders alone
- Strong scents, noise or uncomfortable textures
- Expecting independence without ongoing support

When to seek extra support

If self-care difficulties are ongoing or affecting wellbeing, it's important to seek guidance from a health professional.

A strengths-based reminder: Self-care skills develop best when routines are clear, supported and free from shame. Parents and carers know their child best, and what works may change over time.

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