

Things to know when



TEACHING STUDENTS WITH FASD



1

Memory can be inconsistent—something learned one day might not be recalled the next. Repetition, along with using multiple senses and learning styles, helps strengthen understanding and retention.

2

Executive function deficits can be significant, including poor impulse control, initiation skills, planning, organization, judgment, and ability to learn from consequences. Create a collaborative atmosphere, with supervision and structure, where impulsivity cannot thrive.

3

Generalizing skills is a common challenge. Teach and practice in all environments where the skill is expected to be used.

4

Students with FASD often develop unevenly. Understand and respectively teach to their developmental level. Slower transitions to independence and ongoing interdependence—even into adulthood—support success.

5

Concrete instruction works best. Abstract language—like idioms and sarcasm—is often confusing. Keep communication short, clear, and concrete.

6

Language challenges are expected, especially with understanding. Strong expressive language can mask deeper difficulties, making students appear more capable than they are.

7

Processing speed—whether auditory, visual, or motor—may take longer or vary from moment to moment. Slow the pace and allow extra time for responses.

8

Sensory processing differences are typical. Collaborate with an OT, the student, and parents to find supports. Fidgets, sensory breaks, and low-stimulation classrooms often help.

9

Students may have superficial social skills and need help with both social thinking and social skills. Speech therapy can support these areas. Scaffold and guide peer interactions.

10

View behavior as the result of brain differences behind points 1–9 not as willful or oppositional. Approach learning from a strengths-based perspective to nurture confidence and growth.

11

Create a supportive environment where the student can thrive. Building trust and understanding with your student helps calm their nervous system and creates a safe space to think, learn, and try new things.



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