



Education Techniques for Junior and Senior High School Students with FASD

These techniques were developed by the
South Dakota Affiliated Program, University
of South Dakota School of Medicine.

The intent is to provide a handout suitable for
parents or workshop presenters to give teachers
at a particular grade level.

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I. Environment

A. Calm and quiet.

1. Soft calm music may relax the classroom during breaks.
2. Tone down classroom so rooms are not overly stimulating.
 - a. Keep a minimal number of objects hanging from the ceiling and on the walls.
 - b. Use calm colors of paint on the walls.
 - c. Reduce classroom clutter.
 - d. Use bulletin boards as reaching tools and soft colors. (Bulletin boards could be covered when not in use.)
3. Use headphones for quiet time. (Students with FAS/FAE are not always able to block out other noises and may be distracted by a teacher talking with another student and even a ticking clock.)

B. Structure.

1. Establish a few simple rules.
2. Enforce the same rules in the same way.
3. Use the same language when enforcing the rules.

C. Transition from one activity to another activity.

1. Give the student reminders for the ending and beginning of activities. Use a tactile signal. Touch shoulder, tap elbow, and say, "the bell will ring in five minutes, you need to finish up. We will go to lunch when the bell rings."
2. Have the student follow a fairly consistent routine every day.
3. Provide notebooks which have all the students' classroom activities in order for the day. This gives the student a concrete item with which to structure his/her day.
4. Have the students carry the book to the reading area.
5. Give students several breaks during the day. Students may need sleep during the day or some may need to get up and move around more frequently than other students, and may need food snacks. Plan activities to facilitate movement and creative work between seat work assignments.
6. Class periods should not exceed thirty minutes.

II. Language Development

- A. Recognize that students with FAS/FAE may have delayed language development. Use concrete basic language when giving instructions. Use simple sentences and avoid giving more than one instruction per sentence.
- B. Sign language may be helpful to teach students even when they do not have a hearing loss. Sign language is concrete and visible and can be used along with verbal language.

III. Mathematics

- A. Teach functional math-money, time practical uses of addition and subtraction.
- B. Encourage students to use strategies for counting, such as fingers or counting tools, such as a calculator. These techniques should not be the first choice but should not be ruled out.

Note: Math seems to be the most difficult subject for the students with FAS/FAE. Memorizing the multiplication table may not be successful with all students who have FAS/FAE. Division may also be difficult.

IV. Reading

- A. Teach left to right direction. Some students may have difficulty focusing their eyes on the left side of the page and moving their eyes to the right.
 - 1. If a student uses a piece of paper to follow the line across the page, the student may have an easier time reading.
 - 2. Use a green marker at the left side changing to red at the right side for written work.
 - 3. Use colored arrows to signal starting points and left to right direction.
- B. Provide the student with books that follow student's interest and independent reading levels. (Independent reading levels means the student can read 90% of the words in the book.)
- C. Encourage reading for enjoyment and developing independence.
 - 1. Incorporate popular magazines, newspapers, and school paper into reading program.
 - 2. Emphasize reading as a means to communications - note writing, letter writing, memos, posters, etc.
- D. Read aloud to the students daily and provide uninterrupted silent reading periods.

V. Sensory Stimulation and Concrete Activities to Teach Each Concept

- A. Provide hands-on materials whenever possible.
- B. Take students to actual site to teach learning objectives
- C. Allow the students to make concrete choices. Instead of asking the abstract question "What do you want?" give the student choices he/she can see, feel, touch, hear.

VI. Managing Hyperactivity and Attention Deficits

- A. Provide structure, predictable routine, and as few rules as possible.
- B. Allow the students to sit in their chairs as comfortably as possible. Rapidly growing students are often unable to maintain strict posture and enforcing it can be frustrating for both teachers and students.
- C. Limit time frames for one activity to no more than thirty minutes if possible.
- D. Help the student control tantrums.
 - 1. Remain calm and quiet. Teacher's body language should not get the student excited. Talk in a calm voice and walk slowly. If the teacher is relaxed, this will help the student relax.
 - 2. Let the student know there is a protocol for loss of control. Taking the student's hand and holding it a short time will give the student a signal that the teacher thinks the student is losing control. If restraint is necessary, the teacher needs to exercise care and control. Talk to the student, telling him/her that you are helping him/her to control his/her behavior. Example: "I am going to hold on to you until you are calm. Are you feeling better? Let me know when you are ready for me to let go."

3. Take the student to a different room if necessary. Soft music and soft colors in the room may help calm the student.
Talk to the student in a calm, soft voice. Ask the student to tell the teacher when he/she is ready to go back to the classroom.
4. Determine what happened before the tantrum occurred. Look for antecedents, what caused the student to lose his/her temper.
5. Look at different ways to eliminate the chances of the student throwing a tantrum. If the student has an extremely difficult time with loud noises and lots of activity, the student should be taught in a relatively quiet and calm area.
6. Reduce the likelihood of the student having a tantrum by teaching the student new ways of dealing with his/her stress. Teach the student to say, "I'm mad."
- E. Enclose shelves and book cases if possible to eliminate visual distraction.
- F. Use vivid colors, sound, and movement to emphasize important concepts.
- G. During organized activities, give hyperactive students structure. They need to know the sequence of the activity, what is expected of them, and what behaviors will be acceptable. **Example:** "During this activity we will stay in our chairs. There will be no talking. Keep your eyes on your own paper. If you want help, raise your hand and I will come to help you."
- H. Balance loosely structured activities with highly structured activities to give the students opportunity to move about, visit, and relax.
- I. Balance active and quiet activities.
- J. Structure the day alternating quiet time and active time.
- K. Observe the student for any contributing health problems. For example, with an ear infection, the student may pull at his/her ears. Ask the student to "Show me where you hurt." Look for behaviors which may signify visual problems: abnormal head posturing, squinting, holding paper close to face, obvious errors made when working from the chalk board.
- L. Ignore negative behavior whenever possible and avoid overreaction.
- M. Build in positive reinforcement.
 1. As the student finishes each activity on the picture calendar, give student positive reinforcement for his/her efforts in completing the activity.
 2. When the student does a good job on a project, tell the student he/she did right. **Example:** "I really like the way you read the whole story."

VII. Social Behavior

- A. Teachers need to consult the school the school counselor. It is important that teachers and counselors work together using complimentary techniques to best serve the student in the following areas:
 1. Inappropriate sexual behavior.
 2. Depression
 3. Loneliness and isolation
 4. Inappropriate expectations for work, school, and independence.
- B. Be emphatic, firm, and realistic about expectations and performance from students.
- C. Treat students with FAS/FAE as valuable, worthwhile human beings with gifts to share.

VIII. Vocational Education

- A. Continue practicing the basic skills necessary to live independently as adults, especially daily living and survival skills.
- B. Help student learn how to transfer their skills using a variety of settings and people.
- C. Curriculum should focus on recognizing and coping with being labeled as "different."
- D. Curriculum should focus on assisting students to function as social human beings.
 - 1. Understanding the rules of social interaction.
 - 2. Taking on responsibilities.
 - 3. Making decisions and realizing their consequences.
 - 4. Developing and practicing independent living skills within a group setting such as getting along with others in the same living space, sharing, responsibilities, cooking, and personal hygiene.
- E. Curriculum should assist students function in the world of work.
 - 1. Identify individual interests and aptitudes.
 - 2. Develop self scheduling skills, community mobility skills, rule-governed behavior, etc.
 - 3. Develop and practice job related skills.

IX. Other Considerations

- A. The following evaluations maybe helpful in learning more about the student's development and assist in planning the teachers activities.
 - 1. Speech and language evaluations.
 - 2. Psychological evaluations.
 - 3. Motor evaluations.
- B. Children with FAS/E usually need more one-to-one teaching.