

STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN WITH FAS

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Keys to working successfully with FAS/FAE children are structure, consistency, variety, brevity and persistence. Because these children lack internal structure, caretakers need to provide external structure for them. It is important to be consistent in response and routine so that the child feels the world is predictable. Because of serious problems maintaining attention, it is important to be brief in explanations and directions, but also to use a variety of ways to get and keep their attention. Finally, we must repeat what it is we want them to learn, over and over again.

Effective strategies include:

- * Fostering independence in self-help and play.
- * Give your child choices and encourage decision-making.
- * Focus on teaching daily living skills.
- * Encourage the use of positive self talk
- * Have child get ready for next school day before going to bed.
- * Establish a few simple rules. Use identical language to remind them of the rules. "This is your bed, this is where you are supposed to be."
- * Establish routines so child can predict coming events.
- * Give child lots of advance warning that activity will soon change to another one.
- * For unpredictable behavior at bedtime/mealtime, establish a firm routine.
- * Break their work down into small pieces so they do not feel overwhelmed.
- * Be concrete when teaching a new concept. Show them.

Discipline:

- * Set limits and follow them consistently.
- * Change rewards often to keep interest in reward getting high.
- * Review and repeat consequences of behaviors. Ask them to tell you consequences.
- * Do not debate or argue over rules already established. "Just do it."
- * Notice and comment when your child is doing well or behaving appropriately.
- * Avoid threats.
- * Redirect behavior.
- * Intervene before behavior escalates.
- * Avoid situations where child will be overstimulated.
- * Have child repeat back their understanding of directions.
- * Protect them from being exploited. They are naive.
- * Have pre-established consequences for misbehavior.

For additional information on FAS contact: The National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, 418 C Street North East, Washington, DC 20002, Phone: (202) 785-4585, Fax: (202) 466-6456, Electronic mail: nofas@erols.com, or visit their Web site at www.nofas.org.