



FASD-CAN

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
Care Action Network

Nine-brain-based tips for FASD.

- **Use 'Pause Power'**. Don't engage in argument, even if every ounce of your being says 'but they're so wrong' ... 'I need to show them'. We must resist the urge to win – arguing is pointless and creates more problems. Find the 'pause', the gap between act and react, because this is what helps us get that space between our child's challenging behaviours and our knee-jerk, visceral reactions to them. It can also help us to de-personalise things, so we're not feeling so attacked by it, which we know is especially difficult when it's a verbal or physical assault. Remember, this takes practice, don't be hard on yourself! Let things cool down so that your thinking brain can come online and you can approach the situation in a softer, gentler way that does not clash with your child's rigid thinking.
- **Stop talking!** Many of our kids experience slow processing pace and what we know about our kids is that when things are heated, when they are emotionally dysregulated (and often we are too), no-one can process information very well. Talking can be aggravating to them and so talking as little as you can is beneficial. We can easily talk louder and faster when things are heightened without realising it as well, which will only add to their (and your) dysregulation.
- **Slow down.** Remember FASD produces 'ten-second kids in a one-second world'. Slow down your speech, but also slow down your body movements, and stay in the moment. Give more time and then give more time, and more time – we rarely give our kids enough time.
- **Think 'Brain not Blame'**. Try to pause and ask yourself "what if this is a brain thing?" The symptom might be throwing a chair ... what's behind this? Low frustration tolerance, poor memory, not understanding time, cognitive rigidity... find a mantra so you can soften towards not away from them e.g. "She would do better if she could". Try to accept that they have on days and off days.
- **Think 'Stage not Age.** Try to meet the child or rangatahi where they're at in terms of psychological age. Think younger - what age does this behaviour look like?
- **Accept the need to re-teach.** We often think "I've taught this 100 times, they must have got it by now surely!" but it may need more. It's difficult to accept the need to re-teach. It can raise issues for us of grief and loss, as well as of course complete exasperation! Try to accept graciously that re-teaching is a necessary accommodation.
- **Keep it simple.** Only one step at a time, even when it is routines or tasks that your child does every single day. Some days are better than others, so be responsive and consider using visuals – some days they need fewer words.
- **Don't take it personally.** This is hard to do, we know! But their dysregulated nervous systems need your regulated nervous systems to recalibrate. 'Be their green' – a place of rest.
- **Be gentle with yourself.** This is a really hard job! Get your emotional cup filled any way you can. Find [glimmers](#) (micro-moments of joy) to refuel and nourish your nervous system. And reach out to others who get it – be each other's rock.

'With shared strength, guidance and wisdom, those with FASD can grow and achieve.'

