

Important Update for Nurseries, Schools, Alternative Providers, Colleges and Families Supporting Children with High-Level Needs

Guidance for Children with FASD During Cold Weather

Understanding FASD and Temperature Regulation

As the colder months approach, it is vital for schools and families to be aware of a specific challenge faced by children with prenatal alcohol exposure, likely or diagnosed Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

Due to damage in the brain, notably in the hypothalamus, these children often struggle to 'feel' the cold. This difficulty stems from the hypothalamus's crucial role in regulating body temperature, among other bodily functions.

The Role of the Hypothalamus

The hypothalamus is a small, but vital, part of the brain responsible for managing various bodily processes, including:

- Temperature regulation
- Hunger and thirst
- Sleep cycles
- Emotional responses

When the hypothalamus is affected by prenatal alcohol exposure, as in FASD, children may not experience sensations such as cold in the same way as their peers. This increases their risk during colder weather, as they may not be aware that they need extra layers of clothing to stay warm.

Practical Steps for Schools and Families

To support children with FASD during the cold season, it is crucial for parents and carers to communicate with their child's school.

Here are recommended actions:

1. Identify a staff member responsible for ensuring the child puts on appropriate layers when going outside, during playtime, and when leaving for home.
2. Ensure staff are aware that the child may not recognise the need for extra clothing due to hypothalamus-related difficulties.

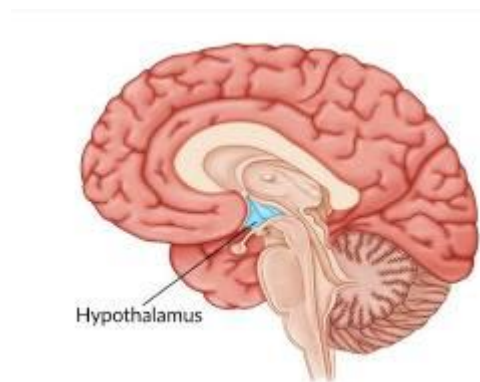


3. Arrange for regular reminders and checks, so that the child is fully dressed for the weather at all times.

In conditions like FASD, Autism and ADHD, children may have interoception sensory needs, which can also influence their ability to feel pain, temperature, hunger, thirst, or the need to use the toilet.

However, in children with FASD, the issue is more likely specifically related to brain damage in the hypothalamus, making temperature regulation a particular concern.

By taking these steps, schools and families can work together to support the safety and wellbeing of children with FASD and similar high-level needs, ensuring they stay warm and protected throughout the winter months.



Become 'FASD Informed' to foster a deeper understanding in creating a more supportive environment for those impacted by Prenatal Exposure to Alcohol.

Find out more about our new portfolio of carer, parent & professional 'FASD Informed' courses at <http://www.fasdinformed.co.uk>

