

FASD-Informed® Declarative Words

Use one calm sentence. Keep words short. Give time.

Body and Heat “Your body is working hard.” “Water may help.” “Shade is cooler.” “Cooler bodies think easier.” “The brain thinks better when cooler.” “Hot bodies need help to slow.” “A cool drink gives the body help.” “Your body may need a rest.” “Cool air can help the body.” “The fan can help cool down.” “Slow bodies stay safer.”	Big Feelings “This is a lot.” “A break can help.” “We can make this smaller.” “Big feelings use brain energy.” “The brain may need calm first.” “We can try after a pause.” “Quiet helps feelings settle.” “Safe space helps feelings slow.” “I’m taking a slow breath.” “I’ll stay nearby.” “The feeling can pass.”
Safety and Behaviour “Fast feet are hard to stop.” “I’ll stay close for safety.” “One thing at a time helps.” “The brain may need help to stop.” “This is walking-feet space.” “We can pause before choosing.” “My body can help keep space.” “Safe hands help everyone.” “I’ll move this to keep safe.” “I can help block danger.” “Safety comes first.”	Thinking and Processing “One step helps the brain.” “Pictures can hold the plan.” “Changes can feel hard.” “The timer shows how long.” “Thinking time helps.” “First this, then decide.” “The plan can stay visible.” “I’ll say it again slowly.” “The next step can wait.” “The brain may need a cue.” “Memory may need a picture.”
Communication “I’ll use fewer words.” “I’ll wait for the words.” “Pointing can help.” “You can show me.” “The brain may need more time.” “I’m checking I understood.” “We can try one word.” “I’ll say it slowly.” “Pictures can help words.” “Your way of telling counts.” “We can use yes or no.”	Environment “This space is busy.” “Quiet helps brains settle.” “We can change the space.” “The brain may need less noise.” “Familiar places help.” “Noise and lights are a lot.” “Less stuff can help brains rest.” “Dim lights can help.” “A quiet corner is ready.” “The door can stay open.” “A smaller space may help.”

FASD-informed holiday support... keeping change manageable

Holiday changes to routine, people, places, sleep, sensory input and expectations can increase cognitive load for children and young people with prenatal alcohol exposure/FASD, making the brain more likely to get stuck, overwhelmed or rigid.

Cognitive rigidity can be misread as stubbornness or refusal, but is better understood as difficulty with flexibility, set-shifting, memory, processing speed, sensory regulation and anxiety. Support is often most effective when adults reduce surprise, add structure, and help the child or young person move from calm body to next step.

Try to think brain, not behaviour: when change feels too much, the brain may get stuck. Calm adults, fewer words, visuals and one clear next step can help.

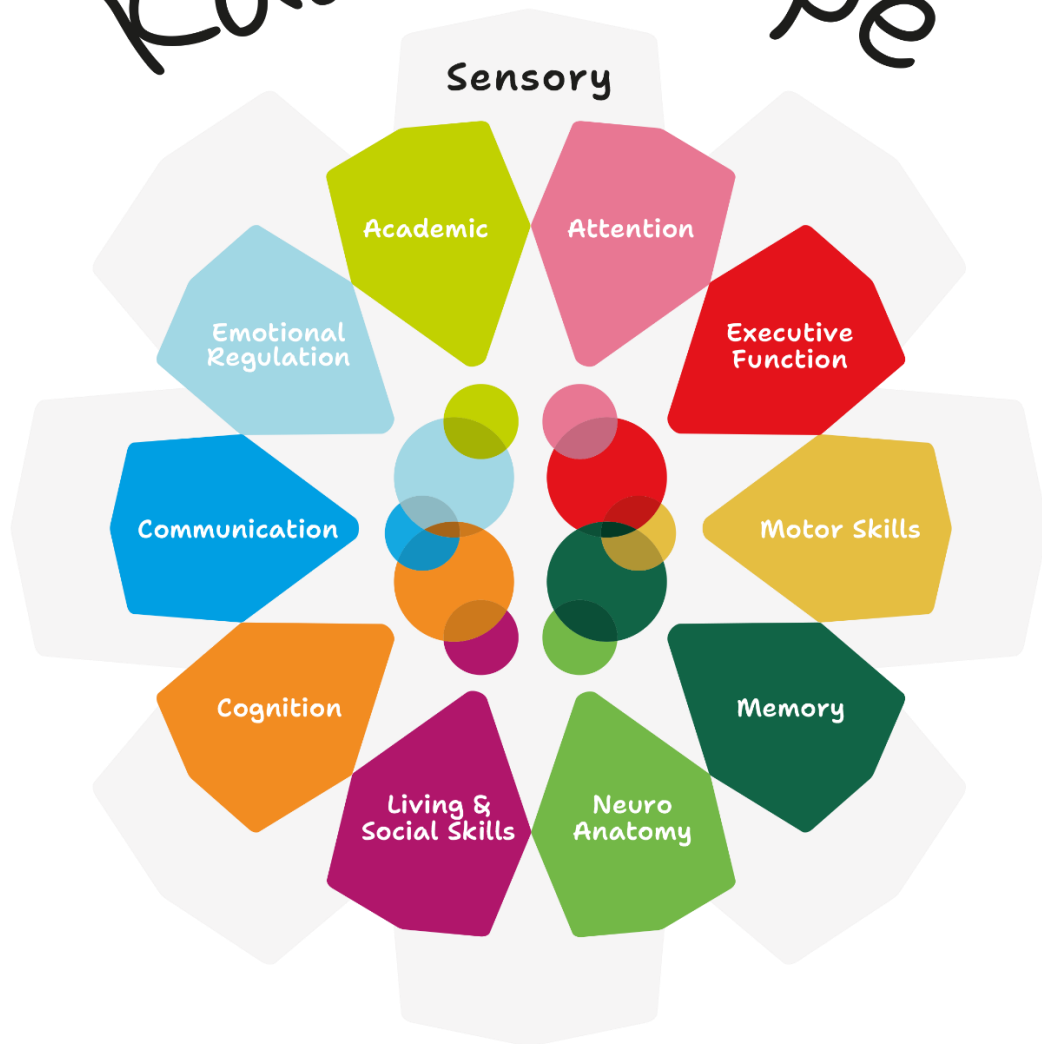
- Keep routines as predictable as possible, using familiar words, repeated scripts and known transition cues.
- Show what stays the same (day to day routine), what changes, and what happens next.
- Use photos, objects, gestures, visual timetables, now-and-next photographic boards or short lists so 'the plan' can be seen as well as heard, for example: a photo of who is visiting, a picture of dinner, a quiet-space card, a car-journey sequence, bedtime steps, or now: park / next: home.
- Prepare for visitors, trips, meals or gifts by naming what will happen, what may feel different, and where the child can pause.
- Give notice at the right time for the child or young person. Too long a lead time can increase worry, repeated questions or looping.
- Offer one simple idea, direction or question at a time, then allow quiet processing time.

Communication: Consider FASD-informed declarative language; calm statements that describe what is happening or what comes next, rather than telling, asking, testing or persuading. Use fewer words, a slower pace, and the same wording where possible. Ask one simple question, wait quietly for up to 20 seconds, then repeat once if needed using the same words and calm tone.

- If the child gets stuck, acknowledge briefly using one of the FASD-informed sentences or similar wording. Keep demand low.
- Try not to reason, limit words, avoid rushing, negotiating or explaining repeatedly when the child is dysregulated. Prioritise regulation, safety and supported switching.
- Use bridging tasks to help the brain move on, such as carrying a bag, checking the next picture, putting shoes by the door, placing a plate on the table, choosing a quiet toy, or doing one small practical job.
- Plan a quiet exit, or low-demand reset before busy activities, family gatherings or noisy environments.
- Try not to overload the brain. One busy activity may need a quiet, calm day to reset and recover.

Looking after you matters too: FASD-informed support starts with a regulated adult. Keep demands low for yourself as well as the child you support. Holidays do not need daily activities or lots of spending; simple, predictable, low-demand moments can help everyone reset and recover.

FASD Kaleidoscope



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