

Education Techniques for Preschool Children 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 to teachers at a particular grade level.

Valborg Kvigne
Judy Struck
Ellen Engelhart
Tracy West

I. Environment

A. Calm and quiet.

1. Soft music may be calming.
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.
3. Use headphones for quiet time. (Students with FAS/FAE are not always able to block out other noises).

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. Tell the children what they will be doing: "we'll finish painting then we'll eat a snack."
2. Give the child an object to help make the transition. The child could carry a book to story time, a puppet to the puppet story, or a toothbrush after snack time.

II. Language Development

A. Children who are not talking.

1. Begin with simple story books.
2. The teacher can touch an object and name the object for the child. The teacher touches a table and says to the child "table".
3. Use real objects like "trees, car, dog" and name the objects.

B. Children who are talking using single words.

1. If the child says "drink," say to the child, "more drink" to stimulate more words in the child's vocabulary.
2. Expand the child's vocabulary slowly. When the child starts using two words at a time, start using three words "want more drink."
3. Talk with the child at the child's level. Use short sentences.

C. Poor articulation.

1. A speech therapist would be a good resource for the child and teacher.
2. The teacher needs to model proper pronunciation.
3. Go around the classroom, touch objects, and name the object. Have the child do the same thing.

4. Meal time. Have the child say what he/she wants rather than just giving the child what one thinks the child wants.
5. Music activities can help children learn vocabulary.
 - a. Good morning song.
 - b. Song before the children eat.
 - c. Name songs.
 - d. Circle game songs – sit down, stand up, name games.

D. Sign language may be helpful in teaching children with FAS 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. Memorized counting from one to ten does not mean the child understands the numbers.
- B. Teach the child what the number “one” means before any more numbers are taught to the child: “Give me one crayon.” “Put one napkin on the table.”
- C. Cut numbers out of paper. Glue oatmeal, rice, glitter, etc. to the number so the child can see, feel, and hear the number.
- D. Touch and count objects.

IV. Alphabet

- A. Make letters with paper and glue objects to the letter.
- B. Match letters and words to pictures.
- C. Use the sounds of the letters repeatedly: I, “juice,” “jump,” “jacket,” etc.
- D. Cut out a letter out of sandpaper and have the child follow the sandpaper letter with his/her finger.
- E. Write a letter on the blackboard and have the child trace the letter on the blackboard.
- F. Make dots on a paper in the shape of a letter and have the child connect the dots to make the letter, gradually decreasing the number of dots to connect to make the letter.
- G. Make letters with jiggler jello.
- H. When a child is learning to write his/her name, the child may find it easier to use all capital letters at the beginning.

V. Sense Stimulation to Teach Each Concept

- A. Teach a concept through different sensory methods: Teaching the color “orange.”
 1. Wear orange clothes.

2. Paint with orange paint.
 3. Use orange construction paper for projects.
 4. Serve oranges for a snack.
 5. Sit on an orange rug.
- B. Use objects as much as possible to teach concepts such as teaching about “circles.”
1. Laminate polka dot fabric.
 2. Use a cookie cutter to cut circle sandwiches.
 3. Cut circles from construction paper and glue cheerios on the paper.
- C. Use “concrete” teaching activities.
1. **EXAMPLE:** Child is told to stay in the yard but continuously wanders into the street. Parents obtaining four large orange cones and had the child stay inside the four cones. Parents gradually expand the cones.
 2. **EXAMPLE:** “What do you want?” This question is very abstract. Give the child choices he/she can see, feel, touch, and hear.

VI. Managing Hyperactivity

- A. Keep the environment structured.
- B. Make a picture calendar.
 1. Make a board with hooks.
 2. Laminate pictures of activities for the whole day. **EXAMPLES:** Have a picture of a child taking jacket off and hanging up the jacket. Have a picture of a child putting puzzle together.
 3. As the child completes each activity during the day, the child takes the picture off the hook, turns it over, and hangs the picture back on the hook. The child knows that he/she has completed the activity.
- C. Give the child choices from two or three toys and plenty of time to make a choice.
- D. Place each activity in two baskets.
 1. Have two baskets for a puzzle, two baskets for a pegboard, two baskets for scissors and paper activity, etc.
 2. Take the activity out of the “start” basket. When the child has finished the activity, the child puts the activity in the “finish” basket.
- E. Keep the designated activities in the same place.
- F. Hyperactive children should sit on a chair rather than on the floor. The chair helps keep the child in a specific space. Show the child how to sit in the chair, if necessary, (feet flat on the floor, hands on the side, sitting up straight).

- G.** Have the activity at the table ready. The child probably will not sit at the table very long waiting for the teacher to bring an activity.
- H.** Structure the day alternating quiet time and active time.
- I.** Help the child control tantrums.
 - 1.** Take the child to a different room. Lullaby music in this room may help calm the child.
 - 2.** Hold the child.
 - 3.** Teacher's body language should not get the child excited. Talk in a calm voice and walk slowly. If the teacher is relaxed, this will help the child relax.
 - 4.** Determine what happened before the tantrum occurred. Look for antecedents, what caused the child to lose his/her temper.
 - 5.** Look at different ways to eliminate the chances of the child throwing a tantrum. If the child has an extremely difficult time with loud noises and lots of activity, the child should be taught in a relatively quiet and calm area.
 - 6.** Reduce the likelihood of the child having a tantrum by teaching the child new ways of dealing with his/her stress.
Teach the child to say, "I'm mad."
- J.** Determine whether the child's diet could be a contributing factor for the behavior.
- K.** Observe the child for any contributing health problems. For example, with an ear infection, child may pull at his/her ears. Ask the child to "Show me where you hurt."
- L.** Ignore negative behavior whenever possible and avoid over-reaction.
- M.** Build in positive reinforcement, like hugs. When the child finishes an activity or does a good job, let the child know he/she will get a hug. Often children with FAS/FAE like to be hugged.
- N.** If the child does not need sleep at a nap time, the child may benefit from having activities such as riding a tricycle in the hall.

VII. Short Attention Span

- A.** Determine how long the child is working on an activity.
- B.** Ask the child to do "one more." Example: If the child is drawing circles on a paper and the child decides to quit, have the child draw one more circle.
- C.** The teacher should never make the child do the activity more than once if the teacher said "draw one more circle."

VIII. Social Behavior

- A. Show the child how to share toys. You may need to use a timer to share the most popular toys.
- B. Teach the child how to be a friend, demonstrating, with puppets or dolls.
- C. Teach the child how to sit with a friend at the table.
- D. Pair children for a week so the child with development disabilities can learn from the other child.

IX. Eye-Hand Coordination Activities

- A. Use puzzles with knobs on the pieces, lace cards (may need masking tape on the end), clothes pins to squeeze, pegs to pound in pegboard.
- B. The teacher may need to guide the child through the activity and then encourage the child to do the activity on his/her own. The teacher could pick up the puzzle piece for the child and put it in the right place in the puzzle or lace the first two holes of the lacing board.

X. Other Considerations

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