

## How You can help Children with FASD Make Decisions

Good decision making is very hard for children with FASD. Every-day decisions are difficult for them to make. Because their brains work differently, children with FASD may not be able to clearly understand the outcome of their actions. They may also have trouble sorting out the facts when they make decisions.

Most parents help their children to learn how to make good decisions and wise choices. Parents and caregivers of youngsters with FASD soon discover that their children need extra help learning how to make decisions. They might need this help for a longer time than other children do. This sheet offers you some tips on how to teach your child about how to make good decisions and wise choices.

First, some 'real life' examples...

### Example #1

It's a cold winter day and your child doesn't want to put on her coat, hat or mitts.

#### How you can help

Your child may not understand that she is cold because she doesn't have enough clothes on. In the cool fall weather start teaching her to wear her mitts and hat. Let her hands get a little chilly and then have her put on her mitts and hat. Say to her, "When my hands are cold I always put mitts on. When my body and head feel cold I always wear a hat. Don't your hands and head feel warmer with your mitts and hat on?" Do this over and over again. You can help her stay safe in cold weather.

### Example #2

You're in a grocery store and your child opens a bulk candy bin full of bright coloured candy. He reaches for some candy to eat. You tell him that you'll first need to pay for the candy - it's not free. A few minutes later, he picks up an apple and takes a bite.

#### How you can help

This little boy didn't understand that you have to pay for ALL the food you take in the store. He needs a very clear and simple direction. "We don't put things in our pockets until we've paid for them. We need to pay for everything we take from every store. After we pay for our food at the check out you can eat something."

## FASD Tip #1

### Developed by:

FASD Support Network  
of Saskatchewan  
510 Cynthia Street  
Saskatoon, SK  
S7L 7K7

Phone for free:  
1-866-673-3276  
In Saskatoon call: 975-0884  
E-mail:  
fasdnetwork@sasktel.net  
Website:  
www.skfasnetwork.ca

Please feel free to photocopy  
and use these sheets.

## **Some Tips to Improve Decision-Making:**

1. A child with FASD takes longer to learn some things. Routine is important. Try to do things the same way every day. For example, your child needs to put his dirty clothes in the laundry hamper every time he gets into his pyjamas. Repeat, repeat, repeat- it will help your child develop a good life skill.
2. Try to keep your explanations short. Use the same words each time. A rhyme or rap may help your child remember the order of things to be done. For example, “Feed the cat, outside there’s snow, wear your hat, off to school you go.”
3. Use visual cues or hints whenever you can. For example, put a picture of a coat over the coat hook where your child should put her coat.
4. Offer only 2 choices at a time. For example, “Do you want to wear your blue sweater or your red sweater today?”
5. Try to cut down on things that distract the child with FASD. It’s hard for them to think straight when a lot is going on. For example, if a few children are getting ready to go outside, it will be easier for you and the child with FASD to get ready before or after the other children.
6. It is important to leave enough time for a child with FASD to move from one activity to another. It may help to set a timer for 3 minutes and let your child know that when it rings it’s time to stop playing and get ready for school.
7. Point out good decisions and good choices made by your child. For example, “That was great that you didn’t run into the street after your ball! You made a good decision. I’m proud of you.”
8. Try to stay calm and cool. If you get angry or lose it your child may become excited or confused and lose control of his or her behaviour.