

How to Teach a Child with FASD Using Repetition

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Short-term memory is often impaired in FASD. Your child with FASD may have challenges learning new skills, or may know how to do something one day, and forget the next. Your child likely learns best through repetition, and repetition strengthens skills in everyone, even those with memory issues.

If not done carefully, teaching through repetition, especially when forced, can be a negative experience for your child. Make it a positive, supportive way of teaching by following these tips:

- **Make it Natural**
 - Teach only when the skill is needed (e.g. teach tying your shoes only when they need to be tied)
 - Avoid making your child do the skill over and over again on the spot (here, they'll only learn to dislike being taught a new skill)
- **Make it Structured**
 - Build it into a routine (e.g. teach shoe tying every morning after breakfast, right before leaving for school)
- **Make it Consistent**
 - Build it into a regular routine that occurs on a regular basis
 - Plan ahead to give yourself enough time to make sure this teaching occurs every time this regular routine occurs
- **Make it Supported**
 - Help your child through a new skill/task many times before you, as a caregiver, do less and less over time
 - Give yourself enough time during these regular routines to provide this support in a calm, unrushed, supportive manner (plan ahead to make this happen)
 - Remember, doing the skill/task only once during the routine is enough – the repetition doesn't occur on the spot during one routine, it occurs over many, many routines over many, many days

Reference:

Healthy Child Manitoba. (2017). Everyday is an adventure: What parents and caregivers need to know about fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD).

https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/fasd/pubs/fasd_caregivers.pdf