

Here's what I need you to understand:

- **HOMEWORK:** When I'm in school, I use an enormous amount of my energy to keep myself safe and focused. At the end of the school day, I'm extremely tired and do not cope well with homework. I would really appreciate it if you could eliminate my homework or at least minimize it so that it's easier for me to manage when I'm home.
- **MAKING GOOD CHOICES:** FASD means that my brain isn't able to think about a lot of things at once. This makes it really hard for me to make good choices and decisions. Sometimes, that gets me in trouble! It would be helpful to have someone guide me to understand what my choices are and how they might affect me.
- **RIGIDITY:** My brain doesn't allow me to change my thinking quickly. I literally only think in "black and white" and have difficulty thinking outside the box. If you need to change things, please help me by preparing me first. It's also very important for everyone to follow the same rules and regulations.
- **MY GIFTS:** When you allow me to work with my strengths and my interests, I can show you amazing things about me. Please give me regular opportunities to work in those areas so that I can show you how good I can be 😊. I really need to experience success in my everyday life. This will help with my self-esteem.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this information. These are great ideas but if you want to know something about me, just ask!

My family knows a lot about me too so make sure to check with them as well.

If you need more information on FASD, you can always contact the NB FASD Centre of Excellence at 506-862-3783 or check out their website at www.vitalitenb.ca



Dear Teacher

I just wanted you to know that I was born with FASD.

FASD stands for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

What this means is that my brain works differently than other people's. It also means that there are some things that I am really good at and other things that are harder for me to do.

Please be patient with me while I learn. *Everyone born with FASD is very unique and has a very different brain than mine, so please don't compare me to my peers.* We all have our strengths and struggles. The best person to ask about ME is ME or my family.

I am so pleased that you have this information and I hope it will help us work better together and find ways to help me learn better 😊.

Yours truly, your student.

FASD is a lifelong and often invisible disability. FASD is a form of permanent brain damage and cannot be repaired. An individual living with FASD will need support in some way throughout each stage of their life. FASD extends across the lifespan.

Here are some great strategies that will help me do my best in school. Please remember:

If I don't always do or say the right thing, it may be because I can't rather than because I won't!

What helps me to remember?

- Visual signs that show me what to do.
- Writing reminders down on the board.
- Using a journal (that I take home) to communicate important messages to my family instead of giving me these messages verbally – I might forget!
- Using a visual time clock.
- Giving me a few warnings ahead of time before I have to change activities.
- Checking with me frequently to make sure I'm on schedule with what you ask me to do.
- Giving me one instruction at a time, in a few words (key words only).
- Praising me when I do remember!

What helps me learn?

- Simple step-by-step instructions (oral and written).
- A model or visual example.
- A quiet space where I can work by myself or with a few classmates.
- Giving me lots of opportunities to practise new ideas.
- You will need to repeat, re-teach, repeat and re-teach often. I learn best with lots of repetition.
- Giving me clear boundaries and expectations.
- I work best in an environment with structure and routines that are regular and predictable.
- Giving me more time to process questions and do things.
- I love feedback and you checking in on me regularly instead of expecting me to ask questions.

What helps me to be good?

- Explaining and showing me what you expect of me and how you want me to act.
- If I get angry or upset, giving me time to calm down before talking to me about it.
- Creating a safe space for me to go when I'm getting angry.
- Helping me identify a safe adult who will help me when I need it.
- Using visual prompts to show me how to act or what to do next (social stories and real-life scenarios).
- I have a hard time with any transitions during the day, so please let me know as soon as possible when there's a change in the schedule or routine.
- Letting my family know ahead of time what's going to happen at school so they can help me better prepare (school plays, outings, etc.).
- I don't always do well when I'm expected to manage myself. I do better when someone can support me.
- When I do things that are expected of me and I do them well, please let me know!
- Sometimes I get in trouble when people encourage me to do silly things. Please help me tell when people are not being helpful to me. I learn from what I see and hear, so if I'm not corrected, I might think that it's okay to say or act a certain way.

I cannot change the way I was born but you can help me achieve many successes during my day by adjusting the environment to my unique needs.

If I am unhappy, unfriendly or difficult, this is only because I'm feeling confused, frustrated, tired, overwhelmed or angry. Please take the time to understand me.

