

Cognition and Learning Toolkit for Complex Learning Difficulties (Including FSAD. and prematurity)

Need	Provision
<p>Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) can lead to memory problems, impulsivity, disorganisation, difficulty with abstract concepts, slow information processing, developmental delays, and an inability to understand the consequences of their actions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FASD may result in underdeveloped parts of the brain and difficulties in learning, especially in maths. • Useful strategies for supporting FASD students include keeping instructions short and simple, using visuals, playing to their strengths, teaching them how to communicate their feelings, helping them to become organised, consistently presenting tasks, working on social and life skills, and involving families. • Schools should provide support, stability, and encouragement to FASD students and work collaboratively with their families.
<p>Premature birth can lead to difficulties in various areas, such as learning, behaviour, memory, planning, and language. Supporting preterm birth learners requires appropriate resources, staff training, specialist knowledge, and guidance for families. Preterm birth can also increase the risk of cerebral palsy, behaviour, emotional and social difficulties, ADHD, delayed physical development, hyperactivity, anxiety, depression, health problems, and difficulties with daily living skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate resources should be provided to meet preterm birth learners' unique and complex needs. • Social relationships influence learning, so educational interventions should consider the child's developmental and social situation. • Staff should be trained to recognise possible learning disabilities and difficulties associated with preterm birth and provide support accordingly. • Specialised support from professionals such as educational psychologists, SENCOs, and local authority SEN advisory and support teams should be sought to develop a transdisciplinary approach to assessing and planning individual learning pathways for preterm birth learners. • Families should receive support and guidance to help them meet the needs of their complex preterm birth children.
<p>Information Processing</p>	<p>Give extra time to complete tasks and make a response. Provide written / pictorial directions and speak slowly when giving oral instructions. Practice skills that are needed regularly – repeating a task helps it become more automatic and quicker to process. The young person struggles with written work as their processing speed is weak. Accuracy may be sacrificed as young people try to keep up with their peers. Encourage and allow the young person to check their work, examining tasks and instructions. Compensatory techniques for managing the young person's weaker processing speed include assessing using multiple choice questions and getting a photocopy of another student's work to complete if it is important.</p>

<p>Response inhibition</p>	<p>Provide adult supervision, which can cue young people around behaviours they find difficult to control.</p> <p>Teach the young person a skill to replace the disinhibited response. For example, teach to raise a hand if the young person calls out in class. Avoid shame in this process; instead, name the feelings / potential reasons behind the behaviour. "I think you call out because you are looking for recognition from me or your classmates. We're working on putting your hand up before you speak". Make sure the skills being taught meets the same need.</p> <p>Make a special effort to note and praise/reward 'on-task' behaviour.</p> <p>Provide a highly organised, routine, and predictable classroom environment.</p> <p>Try to reduce visual distractions and noise.</p> <p>Establish a clear set of rules with well-understood and consistent consequences.</p>
<p>Working memory</p>	<p>Use short instructions.</p> <p>Keep information brief.</p> <p>Refrain from overloading young people with too much information at a time.</p> <p>Use visual reminders and checklists to highlight key information.</p> <p>Encourage mind mapping/notetaking to reduce the load on the memory.</p> <p>Give extra time to process information and think.</p> <p>Activities to help develop memory skills could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pairs game emphasises remembering where particular cards are placed, gradually increasing the number of cards used in the games. • Listening to stories and remembering the characters, order of events, etc. • Repeating musical rhythms/patterns. • Verbal recall games in a small group - e.g., playing games involving taking turns remembering items on a list and adding another item. • "Kim's game" – remembering which object has been removed from an array of objects, gradually increasing the number of objects presented and the number of items removed. • Game in which messages are relayed. <p>Staff should know the young person's memory and information-processing difficulties. A multi-sensory approach</p>

	<p>involving auditory, visual, tactile, and kinaesthetic stimuli will help the young person encode new information more effectively. Instructions should be short and given in the order they should be carried out, with frequent prompts and reminders. The young person will need greater opportunities to rehearse and revisit new learning to ensure their learning is consolidated.</p> <p>See the guide by Gathercole & Alloway for further details: WM-classroom-guide.pdf (cam.ac.UK)</p>
<p>Emotional control (The ability to manage emotions to achieve goals, complete tasks, control, and direct behaviour).</p>	<p>Adults anticipate difficult situations and prepare young people for them.</p> <p>Teach the young person coping strategies (e.g., relaxation techniques for anxiety).</p> <p>Give the young person scripts they can use in target situations.</p> <p>Structure the environment to enable avoidance of problem situations or early intervention.</p> <p>Break tasks into smaller steps to make them more manageable.</p> <p>Using his interests in his learning.</p> <p>Including The young person in the planning, decision-making and review of his learning, in not only areas of concern but also areas of strength, setting him targets. The targets should be specific and small enough for the young person to see some success quickly. The use of the precision teaching approach may help support these skills.</p> <p>Help the young person to plan how to manage difficult situations. Slowly reduce adult supervision and prompting to use such a plan.</p> <p>Use social stories to teach emotional language/control.</p>
<p>Cognitive flexibility</p>	<p>Reduce novelty by providing information/rehearsal before an activity.</p> <p>Present change in small doses.</p> <p>Use social stories to help reframe situations for the young person and how they will cope or find a solution.</p> <p>Specific activities aimed at developing problem-solving and thinking skills, working on inferential reasoning, problem-solving, determining causality and generalising.</p> <p>Encouraging The young person to reflect on his learning and to become aware of the processes of learning as well as the outcomes.</p>

<p>Sustained attention</p>	<p>Consider seating arrangements in the classroom (e.g., near the teacher and away from windows and doors to reduce distraction).</p> <p>Give the most difficult tasks at the time of the day the young person is most alert.</p> <p>Provide supervision – frequent feedback and reinforcement of task requirements by an adult.</p> <p>Provide a quiet area free of distractions.</p> <p>Use a timer to show the young person their period for a task.</p> <p>Take short breaks after a period of sustained thinking.</p> <p>Using a concentration-tracking sheet for short periods. This could involve self-recording, target setting and a reward system. Such as the 'Concentration cockpit'.</p> <p>Plan Talking- Self Instructional Technique – see Educational Psychology & Specialist Teaching Service (TEPATS) Torbay FIS Directory</p>
<p>Task initiation</p>	<p>Cue the young person to get started – it can be verbal and include a visual if language skills are also of concern.</p> <p>Talk through the first part of a task / how to get started.</p> <p>Note start and stop times for when tasks are started and completed.</p> <p>Thinking through the task - what is this task asking me to do? What can I do easily? Where might I need help, and where might I get this help from – can I get the help for myself, or will I need to involve someone else? (e.g., book, wall display, looking at past work, asking another pupil or adult, etc.).</p> <p>Work with him to list the things that lead to a task being well done (e.g., understanding instructions, planning work before starting, checking and proof-reading, careful handwriting and layout, etc.) and use this to evaluate pieces of work (e.g., "how well did I understand the instructions")</p> <p>Ask the young person when they will begin a task and cue them when that time arrives. Gradually fade this level of prompt and supervision.</p>
<p>Planning and prioritising</p>	<p>Break larger tasks into clearly defined subtasks.</p> <p>Teach the young person about having a plan/strategy for how to approach a task.</p> <p>Thinking through the task - what is this task asking me to do? What can I do easily? Where might I need help, and where might I get this help from – can I get the help for</p>

	<p>myself, or will I need to involve someone else? (e.g., book, wall display, looking at past work, asking another pupil or adult, etc.).</p> <p>Work with him to list the things that lead to a task being well done (e.g., understanding instructions, planning work before starting, checking and proof-reading, careful handwriting and layout, etc.) and use this to evaluate pieces of work (e.g., "how well did I understand the instructions")</p> <p>Ask questions related to planning, such as:</p> <p>What do you need to do for this task?</p> <p>What are the steps involved?</p> <p>What did you do last time? Did it work?</p> <p>What does the finished task look like?</p> <p>How can you check your work to see if it is right?</p>
<p>Organisation</p>	<p>Visual timetable.</p> <p>Equipment list/homework diary management.</p> <p>Timetabled personal organisation time.</p> <p>Adults should provide a check-in at the start and end of the day (or each learning session initially) to support materials management.</p> <p>Provide short, timed tasks using a sand timer to denote the time given.</p> <p>Organisational skills can be improved in several ways, but working with the young person will be necessary to find the most appropriate strategies for them. They should be prompted to verbalise the routines or strategies they are trying to use. Work on developing organisational skills will be supported by close home-school liaison so strategies can be developed at home and in school.</p>
<p>Time management</p>	<p>Give the young person a schedule to follow and prompt at each step.</p> <p>Impose time limits and provide reminders for how much time is left.</p> <p>Use devices to cue the young person, e.g., a sand timer, alarm, or clock.</p> <p>Use this first approach, drawing attention to time in the process.</p> <p>Practice time estimation alongside the young person for tasks given.</p>

Goal-directed persistence	<p>Goals set should be ones that the young person has some motivation to work toward.</p> <p>Give choices about what they may want to work toward if they need help establishing their goals.</p> <p>Use smaller objectives for longer-term goals.</p> <p>Make the goal and progress towards it as visible as possible. (See also the time management section).</p>
Metacognition	<p>Ask questions such as "How did you solve that problem?" "Can you think of another way of doing that?" "What can you do to help remember that information?"</p> <p>Build error monitoring into tasks – ask the young person to check their computations or that they have checked their frequent spellings list.</p>