

FOETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER (FASD)

Common Behaviours, Misinterpretations and Characteristics Of Children And Young People With Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

Behaviour Observed	Could Be Misinterpreted As:	Should Be Interpreted As Possibly:
Being non-compliant	Wilful misconduct Attention-seeking stubbornness	Having difficulty translating verbal directions into action Not understanding Having had limited exposure to Standard Australian English (SAE) Needing to have words/processes explicitly taught more than once Needing to become familiar with ways of operating within the school environment to understand expectations
Repeatedly making the same mistakes	Wilful misconduct Being manipulative	Being unable to link cause to effect Being unable to see similarities Having difficulty generalising Requiring medical screening for conditions such as fluctuating hearing loss (otitis media) Being multilingual (Kriol and other Indigenous languages) and requiring additional support with SAE
Not sitting still Fidgeting Being restless	Attention seeking Bothering others Wilful misconduct	Having a neurologically based need to move while learning Experiencing sensory overload Not understanding personal space, and needing barriers and visual cues to define appropriate distance Needing explicit teaching of expected behaviours Needing alternative strategies that help to calm them while they are concentrating Being hyperactive

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Behaviour Observed	Could Be Misinterpreted As:	Should Be Interpreted As Possibly:
<p>Not working independently</p> <p>Not completing required tasks</p>	<p>Wilful misconduct</p> <p>Having poor parenting</p>	<p>Having memory deficits</p> <p>Being unable to transfer what is learned in class to a homework assignment or a different context</p> <p>Being unable to link today's decisions with future opportunities</p> <p>Fearing failure, being unsure what is required, being unable to understand expectations</p> <p>Requiring a supportive environment that can accommodate requirements and/or coaching</p> <p>Having cognitive difficulties</p>
<p>Often being late</p>	<p>Being lazy, slow</p> <p>Having poor parenting</p> <p>Wilful misconduct</p>	<p>Not understanding the abstract concept of time</p> <p>Needing assistance to organise</p> <p>Having limited resources, such as clocks, phones and other time-keeping devices</p>
<p>Displaying poor social judgement</p>	<p>Having poor role models</p> <p>Wilful misconduct</p> <p>Being an abused child</p> <p>Being unable to feel or show empathy</p>	<p>Being unable to interpret social cues from peers</p> <p>Being unsure what social conventions are appropriate in different contexts</p> <p>Not understanding the implications of actions</p> <p>Not being able to read social cues</p>
<p>Being overly physical</p>	<p>Wilful misconduct</p> <p>Deviancy</p>	<p>Being hyper- or hypo-sensitive to touch</p> <p>Not understanding social cues regarding boundaries</p> <p>Mimicking violent behaviours seen on television or home environment</p> <p>Demonstrating immature egocentric thinking</p>

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Behaviour Observed	Could Be Misinterpreted As:	Should Be Interpreted As Possibly:
Lying	Deliberate dishonesty Displaying sociopathic behaviour Lacking a conscience	Having problems with memory/sequencing Being unable to accurately recall events Trying to please by telling you what they think you want to hear Experiencing *confabulation or disturbance of memory without the intention to deceive
Being egocentric	Selfishness Only caring about self	Only seeing the superficial or concrete level of social behaviour Not linking cause and effect Being unable to read social cues
Being volatile Being easily triggered	Having poor parenting Having an aggressive nature Being short-tempered	Being exhausted from the stress of trying to keep up Responding to trauma Feeling overwhelmed Being extremely over-stimulated
Performing inconsistently	Not trying hard enough	Having chronic short-term memory problems Being unable to generalise learning from one situation to another Feeling overloaded Experiencing sensory processing issues

Source: Adapted from C Blackburn, *Foetal alcohol spectrum disorders: Focus on strategies. Building Bridges With Understanding Project*, Sunfield Research Institute/Worcestershire County Council, Worcester, 2009, p. 22; and Yukon Department of Education, Canada, *Making a difference: Working with students who have fetal alcohol spectrum disorders*, Government of Yukon, 2006

(Link to research)

Recognising the SAE language learning needs of Indigenous primary school students who speak contact languages
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09500782.2021.2020811>

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*Confabulation

A type of memory error in which gaps in a person's memory are unconsciously filled with fabricated, misinterpreted, or distorted information.