

Working effectively with people with FASD

A Factsheet for Service Providers (No.3)

How can I work effectively with someone who has FASD, and/or their parent/carer?

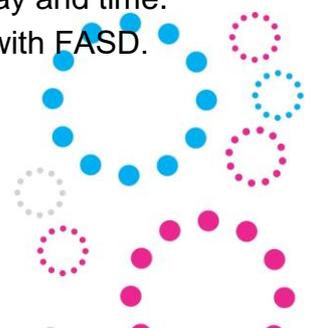
FASD is one of the most common disabilities in Australia. FASD is estimated to affect more people than Autism Spectrum Disorder, Spina Bifida, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), combined. Current estimates suggest that between 2 and 5% of Australians have FASD. Given these high estimates, it is likely that service providers will come across an individual with FASD at some stage. It is important that service providers know how to work effectively with an individual with FASD, as well as their parent/carer.

Service providers can use a 'FASD lens' approach to develop individualised strategies and supports according to each participant's presenting behaviours and strengths. Using a FASD lens approach means that service providers seek to understand an individual's strengths and areas of support from a holistic and person-centred foundation.

How do I use a 'FASD lens' approach?

Using these strategies will ensure that you are working from a 'FASD lens' approach:

- Be curious in finding out about an individual's life and how you can help them. Ensure you have a non-judgemental attitude toward the individual with FASD and their parent/carer.
- Actively listen and respond to concerns raised by the individual with FASD or their parent/carer.
- Use clear, concise language and concrete terms and be mindful of language nuances. Refrain from using words or phrases with double meanings or idioms (e.g. 'jumping on the computer' or 'it's a piece of cake').
- Be mindful of the environment that you are meeting in, as people with FASD may have sensory difficulties. Keep the environment quiet and remove any auditory, visual and physical distractions.
- Be prepared to repeat important concepts and information on several occasions.
- Use visual diagrams and pictures rather than words (if possible).
- Create structure and routine, such as keeping the same appointment day and time.
- Think 'outside the box' when thinking of ways to support the individual with FASD.



- If you are unsure of something, ask the individual with FASD or the parent/carer. Try not to make assumptions.

Where I can find out more information about FASD?

NOFASD Australia is the National Peak Body for parents, carers and individuals impacted by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Founded in 1999 and funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health, we provide the essential bridge linking those with lived experience with researchers and clinicians.

NOFASD Australia provide a helpline for people impacted by FASD and those wanting information on how to support individuals with FASD. We also maintain an up-to-date comprehensive website with curated resources and links.

If you would like additional information about FASD or to read more about FASD and the NDIS, please visit the [NOFASD Australia website](#).

