



# Communication and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

## DEFINITION

**Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)** result from exposure to alcohol during prenatal development. FASD can include significant defects in the brain, cardiovascular, and skeletal systems. The life-long consequences for the individual can include cognitive deficits and a variety of behavioral and social challenges.

Source: FASDG.org



### HOW IT MAY IMPACT COMMUNICATION

- May have better verbal expressive communication than verbal receptive communication
- May have trouble recalling what others have said
- Generalizing may be a challenge (generalization is the transfer of what is learned in one setting or situation and applying it to another setting)
- May perseverate on recent or previous topics
- May have difficulty transitioning to a new subject
- May be sensitive to bright lights, crowds, and certain textures



### STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT COMMUNICATION

- Use sensory support (visual, auditory, tactile)
- Use repetition; it is important due to the brain's working memory being affected
- Provide one direction at a time or break down tasks into steps
- Avoid irony, sarcasm, joking, and figures of speech
- Reduce stimuli in the environment; avoid fluorescent lights and use softer colors and sounds
- Ensure messages are communicated consistently across all settings
- Be supportive and avoid rejection
- Be patient; remember that the person has an underlying neurodevelopmental disorder and don't take it personally



**THE KEY** to achieving effective communication with a person who has FASD is for the listener to intentionally engage in the process and accept the responsibility for it. How an individual is impacted by FASD will vary and communication access depends on individual needs, looking different for each person.

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<https://www.fasdfamilies.com>

<https://fasdsoutherncalifornia.org/special-issues/language-communication/>



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The ASERT Collaborative is funded by the Office of Developmental Programs, PA Department of Human Services.