

Partner with whānau, parents and caregivers

A suggestion for implementing the strategy
'Identify needs and how to provide support'
from the Guide: [FASD and learning](#)

Includes:

- Work as a team
- Successful family-school partnerships
- Act on whānau expertise
- What to ask
- Work with parents
- Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and learning](#)

Strategy: [Identify needs and how to provide support](#)

Suggestion: [Partner with whānau, parents and caregivers](#)

Date

30 March 2024

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-and-learning/partner-with-whanau-parents-and-caregivers

Work as a team

Families are experts when it comes to their own children – they live with them 24 hours a day, seven days a week.... [and] see different needs than those evident in a classroom.

Educators and parents must work together and learn from each other to develop consistent and comprehensive support for students with FASD.

Source:

[Making a difference: Working with students who have fetal alcohol spectrum disorders](#)

<https://www.fasdoutreach.ca/resources/all/m/making-a-difference-working-with-students-who-have-fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorders>

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Successful family-school partnerships

Use these four principles to build a successful partnership.

1. **Family empowerment** – Family empowerment through active decision-making must be an integral aspect of the partnership.
2. **Family-school interdependence** – Home-school communication on a regular basis is vital. It is essential to consider the influence school and family contexts have on each other.
3. **Strength-based approach** – Consider the student's strengths in both school and home settings. The emphasis on a student's strengths shows them in a positive light and provides a springboard to success.
4. **No-fault** – no blame is placed on family or school. Parents/caregivers need support and compassion, not judgment and blame. Teaching a student with FASD has many challenges, and the teacher should not be blamed or feel guilty for not always getting it right.

When teachers believe parents want to be involved, actively seek parent involvement, and are comfortable as partners with parents, parent involvement in the child's education increases.

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Act on whānau expertise

A mother of a student with FASD talks about her son's experience of school.

She describes his strengths, needs, and approaches that will help.



Video hosted on Youtube http://youtu.be/B8vaNQ_zRZo

No captions or transcript

Source:

[rffada \(Australia\)](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCP6PACvgSrtB6BoNPaeWapg>

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What to ask

Connect with parents, whānau, and caregivers to understand the strengths and needs of students.

Practical elements:

- the language(s) spoken at home
- medications and allergies
- equipment used at home
- what they do at home to support learning

Students' likes and dislikes:

- likes, interests, strengths, what they're good at, can do independently
- dislikes, what can upset them, how they express this, calming skills
- favourites (TV programmes, hobbies, books, songs, sports)

The people in the students' lives:

- parent and whānau hopes and priorities
- important people in the student's life
- best methods and times to communicate with the family
- professionals working with the family
- questions they have and support they would like from the school.

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Work with parents

Suggestions for working together with parents, caregivers, and whānau.

- ✓ Communicate and share information in a meaningful way, demonstrating understanding and support for parents' concerns.
- ✓ Value what parents and caregivers have noticed or assessments they have had done outside of school.
- ✓ Involve parents and caregivers in determining strategies to support student learning and well-being.
- ✓ Work with any programmes or materials they are using at home, to maximise consistency and support for the student.
- ✓ Develop systems for passing on information about a student's needs, progress, and next steps in ways that are meaningful.
- ✓ Share information about out-of-school programmes (for example, classes or groups for music, art, or sport).
- ✓ Actively and regularly communicate positive information and achievements to the family.
- ✓ Maintain a positive non-judgemental approach.
- ✓ Offer to meet parents/caregivers at a location of their choosing.
- ✓ Continue to invite parents to meet even if they refuse or don't respond. Suggest parents invite a family member or friend for support at meetings.
- ✓ Provide a single contact person at the school for parents.

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Useful resources



Family/whānau file

A booklet to help parents of students with additional needs to brief their child's school.

[Visit website](#)



Hey teacher

Read time: 3 min

A fact sheet with tips for teachers.

Publisher: FASD – CAN

[Download PDF](#)

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