

Support skill and concept development

A suggestion for implementing the strategy

'Key areas to support' from the Guide: [FASD and learning](#)

Includes:

Keep communication simple and specific

Base new learning on current strengths

Take a multimodal approach

Reinforce and repeat

Make abstract concepts concrete

Extend opportunities to build understanding

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From

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

Strategy: [Key areas to support](#)

Suggestion: [Support skill and concept development](#)

Date

11 June 2026

Link

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Keep communication simple and specific

Effective communication for students with FASD means keeping things simple, specific, and slow.

- ✓ Use clear language and repeat instructions with less detail.
- ✓ Say what you want, not what you don't want.
- ✓ Give directions one at a time and sequence them in order.
- ✓ Be consistent and repeat key messages.
- ✓ Use visuals and models to support understanding.
- ✓ Allow more time.
- ✓ Check understanding.
- ✓ Use repetition to consolidate learning.
- ✓ Don't assume that previous knowledge or learning will be retained at a new time or day.

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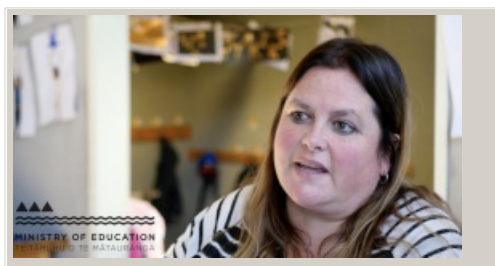
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Base new learning on current strengths

Staff talk about getting to know students and where the student is at to determine their next learning steps. For students with FASD, this means developing curriculum pathways that start with current strengths and interests.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/368156633>

Closed Captions

Source:

[Ministry of Education Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga](https://vimeo.com/368156633)
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Take a multimodal approach

Ask the student what will help and offer multiple ways to build understanding.

- ✓ Offer real experiences.
- ✓ Use images, audio and video to support text and spoken information.
- ✓ Use physical or online manipulatives and tools to support tasks. For example number lines, base ten blocks, counters and scales.
- ✓ Use closed captions on videos.
- ✓ Use online simulations when possible, for example, online experiments.
- ✓ Offer digital text alongside printed versions so students can personalise it by enlarging it, listening to it, or changing the font, colours and filters.
- ✓ Make instructions, demonstrations, or key content rewindable and accessible 24/7 using screencasts, recordings, images and videos.
- ✓ Put content in a variety of formats in one place, for example, a video, a graphic and text document, by using online tools and digital platforms.

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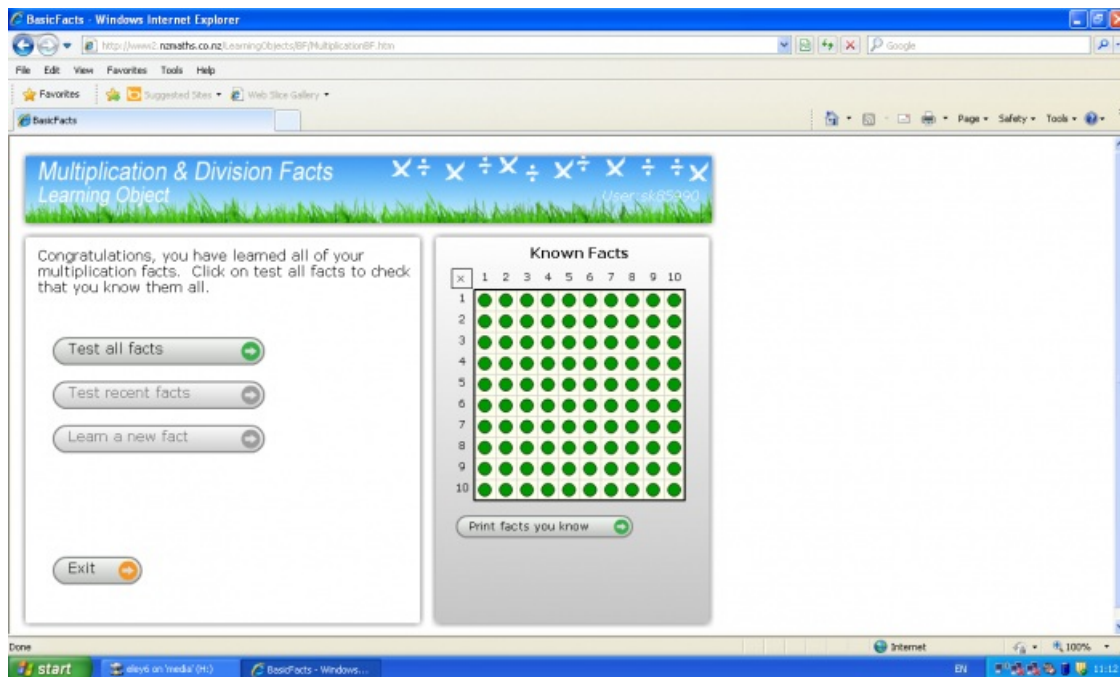
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Reinforce and repeat



Source:

[nist6dh](#)

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/53801255@N07/7022977199/>

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Make abstract concepts concrete

Use concrete materials, virtual manipulatives and visuals to support learning of abstract concepts. Use practical life skills examples to highlight the purpose of learning. Focus on priorities and aspirations that are agreed with whānau.

- ✓ Demonstrate a concept, show rather than tell, and be prepared to repeat the demonstration or instruction.
- ✓ Offer videos and visuals so students can repeat and revisit ideas as many times as they need to.
- ✓ Take photos, videos or voice recordings of the student doing the task and revisit that at the start of the next session.
- ✓ Provide concrete examples of abstract concepts, for example use an abacus for demonstrating place value, and real objects for counting in sequence.
- ✓ Use digital technologies to provide visual representations of abstract concepts.
- ✓ Use online learning games with visuals and feedback to reinforce and practise skills to compliment hands-on learning experiences.
- ✓ Offer tools to support students such as number lines and concrete manipulatives.
- ✓ Offer opportunities for students to create models, diagrams and visuals to consolidate understanding.

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Extend opportunities to build understanding

- ✓ Give students time to learn at their own pace.
- ✓ Provide multiple opportunities for students to engage with new ideas and concepts.
- ✓ Offer opportunities to talk through concepts, processes and problems.
- ✓ Provide access to video and online examples of processes that allow students to revisit the steps involved as often as necessary.
- ✓ Support students to decode word problems by focussing on one aspect at a time.
- ✓ Use consistent naming conventions so that there is less decoding.
- ✓ Provide visuals to support understanding.
- ✓ Offer extra time and access to adult or peer support when required.
- ✓ Provide extended time on tests and assignments. Monitor student wellbeing as timed tests may cause stress and alarm.

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