

Tips to help your Child or Teen with FASD Take part in Sports and Activities

Many children love sports and want to join team sports and group activities. But, for some children with FASD the demands of teamwork, following instructions, improving skills quickly and competition leads to more stress than fun. Here are some tips that can guide you in helping a child who is really keen to take part in sports and activities.

First, some 'real life' examples...

Example # 1

A child really wants to take swimming lessons. She's like a fish in water and loves swimming. But, the swimming teacher says that she can't move to the next level because she didn't master all the skills she was supposed to. She is really upset by this.

What is happening

This child is gaining some new skills in the class. Regular lessons are quite rigid about what needs to be learned in a set amount of time. This can be frustrating for the child because she wants to do well and move up to the next level.

What to do

As a child moves up the levels in swimming, the skill level becomes more difficult. Many children need to repeat levels. If this child doesn't want to repeat a level until she gains the needed skills, many communities offer one-on-one lessons for children with special needs. The YMCA or YWCA would be able to help you find out more about lessons in your area. Some small towns will offer one class just for children with special needs.

Example #2

A 12 year-old boy wants to join a school soccer team because his best friend is on the team. You are nervous because the last time he tried a team sport the coach complained that he didn't follow directions well and he wasn't focused enough.

What to do

Should he get another chance, but what if he fails again? This boy is coping in the best way he can and he just wants to do what other kids can.

His coach needs to watch him carefully and get to know his strengths. A parent or caregiver can talk to the coach to explain how FASD limits what he can do but also talk about what strengths he has that could help a team. The parent may want to explain how important emotionally is to this boy to play on the team. The coach wouldn't know this without some background information.

FASD Tip #10

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and use these sheets.

Tips on how to have Fun with Sports and Activities:

1. Don't be shy to talk to your child's coaches or teachers about the things that are hard for your child. Coaches and teachers care about children and want your child to have a good season on the team. If you share information about your child with the coach or teacher, they will know more about how to help your child succeed.
2. Share some information about FASD with the group leader or coach. They need to understand why your child needs longer to do things or has some trouble following directions.
3. If your child has a close friend, try to have them join a group together. It will help your child to go with someone she or he knows.
4. Your child's friends and team mates can be a support to your child and can help him make good choices.
5. Help your child to choose activities that she enjoys and has fun doing. This gives her a chance to be successful.
6. Supervise, supervise, supervise. Go to your child's team practices and games.
7. Be there and help her by explaining things. Watch for inappropriate behaviour and help her if she misunderstands something.
8. Practice with your child to help him learn the new skills.
9. Ask your child to tell you all about his or her activities. Ask many questions about the coach and the other players. Listen for things that are challenging for him and also things that he is doing well.
10. Cheer her on because she's an awesome child.