

## How You can help Teens with FASD Manage Money

Managing money can be very confusing for people with FASD. Money and the value of money are hard to understand. \$20.00 for a chocolate bar and \$20.00 for a pair of new shoes may both seem like good prices to the teen or adult with FASD. Money is an abstract concept. That means while you can touch money and hold it in your hand, what money can buy or what money can do are ideas.

How much is something really worth? What happens if you don't pay your phone bill and your phone gets cut off? Why should we try to save money? How do you get out of debt?

This sheet offers some tips on how you can guide and teach your teen or adult about managing money.

But first some 'real-life' examples...

### Example #1

A 14-year old lends money to a friend. She is surprised and confused when she doesn't get the money back. This is not the first time she has lost money this way.

#### How you can help

It is okay to let this girl make mistakes by 'lending' small amounts of money. If she is broke because she never gets back the money she lends, maybe she will learn that lending money is not a good idea. If she is not learning from her mistakes, make it a rule that she needs to ask a parent or trusted friend before she lends money to anyone.

### Example # 2

A teen sells his new \$100 running shoes to a friend for \$5.00. He doesn't understand what he did wrong.

#### What you can do

Go with the teen and ask that his shoes be returned for \$5.00. Explain that we don't sell our things to other people without asking a parent or trusted adult.

## FASD Tip #3

### Developed by:

FASD Support Network  
of Saskatchewan  
510 Cynthia Street  
Saskatoon, SK  
S7L 7K7

Phone for free:  
1-866-673-3276  
In Saskatoon call: 975-0884  
E-mail:  
fasdnetwork@sasktel.net  
Website:  
www.skfasnetwork.ca

Please feel free to photocopy  
and use these sheets.

## **Some Tips to help with Money Management:**

Teens with FASD usually 'live in the moment'. Living in the moment means that when they want something they do not think about past mistakes or understand that what they do affects the future. You'll need to be patient and explain over and over again how to spend money wisely. You can help your teen or adult with FASD get into the habit of thinking before he spends his money.

If your teen lives at home:

1. You can help your teen understand the value of money. Go shopping together. Give her a small list of items your family needs and tell her she only has \$20.00 to spend. Have her write down the prices of the items she puts in her cart and add the prices up on a calculator. This will help her understand that the food she puts in the cart all cost money. You can then guide her to choose healthy food that fits in her budget.
2. Teach your teen with FASD to write in a notebook which bills need to be paid and when they need to be paid. This will become his budget book. Have the teen write down when he spends money on his bills, food, clothes, medicine or fun. Staple an envelope to the back of the notebook to keep all receipts in. Try to get him into the habit of writing totals in this notebook. It is important to keep the notebook in the same place all the time. Teach him to have a trusted family member or friend help him with his money.
3. Do not to give her large amounts of money to spend all on her own. If she get gifts of money at Christmas or birthdays, help her spend it wisely. If the teen insists on an expensive item like a stereo, have her save it in the bank for one month. This will allow her time to think things over before she spends a lot of money. Praise her when she makes good decisions.
4. Have your teen spend some of the money she earns or receives from allowance (her money) on the things she wants or needs. This will help her understand that shampoo, clothes and treats all cost money.
5. Have your teen pay for a magazine subscription or his own phone or internet. When the bill comes in the teen's name, help him to read the bill and find out what amount of money must be paid and on what date it must be paid.
6. Teach your teen important money skills like how to use a pay phone, coin operated laundry, or pay for a bus or a cab ride. Teach her to look up a phone number in a phone book so she is not spending money to call directory assistance. Teach your teen to take back video and game rentals on time. Show him how quickly the charges add up every day they are not returned.
7. Teach your teen that it is cheaper to spend \$80.00 on food for 2 weeks than to spend \$5.00 a meal each day eating out.
8. When your teen is about to leave home set up a system to support her. She will need to know who she can call anytime she needs help. Make sure she takes her budget book and keep checking to see if she is paying her bills.
9. Give your teen the freedom to make small mistakes but try not to bail him out. We all learn from mistakes. Teens and adults with FASD need to make more mistakes before they really understand and remember.