

An important part of building a rapport with school staff is acknowledging that classroom teachers face many daily challenges as they strive to meet the diverse learning needs of the students in their classrooms. When working collaboratively to support students with FASD, look for win-win solutions. Focus on the needs of the students and use a solution-focused approach.

## SAMPLE STRATEGIES

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### ■ *Set a positive tone when meeting with school staff.*

- Ensure the meeting has a clear purpose or goal.
- Schedule meetings at a time and place that is convenient for everyone.
- If it is a formal meeting, provide or post a written agenda.
- Give each person an opportunity to introduce themselves to one another and explain their role as members of the student's support team.
- Meeting time is often limited at school, so keep meeting brief (generally less than an hour) and make sure you finish on time.
- Keep a written record of questions and issues to be addressed at a later date.
- Share personal information about the student and his or her family thoughtfully and respectfully, and within the bounds of confidentiality.
- Listen to understand.
- Work to find common threads and common solutions.
- Focus on solid information rather than emotions.
- Ensure meetings end on a positive note; thank everyone for their time and contributions.

### ■ *If there is a particular issue that needs to be resolved, suggest using a solution-focused approach.<sup>4</sup>*

If you are confident you have the skills, offer to facilitate a solution-focused meeting, using the following steps.

1. One member of the learning team agrees to act as the facilitator for the meeting. This individual needs to be positive, attentive, task-oriented, and be able to clarify issues and summarize. It is also important that the facilitator help each team member stay on topic and work toward appropriate, practical solutions.

2. The facilitator begins the meeting by inviting the learning team member who initiated the meeting to state clearly and concisely what the concern is. It is important to find out specifically what the team member wants to happen as a result of this meeting.
3. The team members ask questions to clear up any uncertainties they may have as to exactly what the issue is or what the related circumstances are. The facilitator may need to encourage team members to look for factors that appear to trigger or contribute to the problem, and to identify and analyze conditions that seem to alleviate the problem. As part of this analysis, team members may also identify available resources and the strengths of the student.
4. The team then discusses “What would the situation look like if this problem were solved?” This focuses the discussion on positive outcomes such as “John would come to school every day,” or “Mary would have friends.”
5. Once the problem or issue is clearly defined and positive outcomes identified, the team brainstorms ideas for how the problem may be solved. All ideas are recorded on chart paper. It is important at this stage of the process to let ideas flow freely and not to comment directly on any one idea.
6. The facilitator and the referring teacher review the strategies together and then rate each suggestion by assigning a number value to it.

For example:

- 1 = an idea or strategy that the teacher and/or parent wants to try
- 2 = an idea or strategy that has merit, but is not a priority
- 3 = an idea or strategy that has already been tried and didn't seem to resolve the issue
- 4 = an idea or strategy not immediately practical at this time.

7. The learning team develops an action plan for each strategy selected, including materials and resources required, persons responsible, and dates for follow-up and review.
8. The facilitator closes the meeting by thanking everyone and asking for feedback on the process. The team generally agrees to meet for a progress review in four to six weeks.



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See **Tool M** for a reproducible one-page tip sheet: **Solution-focused Meetings Tip Sheet** and **Tool N** for a **Planner for a Solution-focused Meeting** template.