

# REFRAMING INDEPENDENCE

# SUPPORTING INTERDEPENDENCE

## *What is Interdependence?*

Interdependence is not about dependence or independence alone, but about balancing self-direction with support. It's a strength-based approach that helps adults with FASD thrive in daily life.

## KEY CONCEPTS TO REMEMBER:

### *Brain-Based*

FASD causes permanent brain differences that affect how information is processed and retained, involving executive and sensory differences. When struggles occur, it's due to brain-based differences: it's the brain, not effort. Success comes from high structure, high nurture, and realistic expectations.

### *External Brain*

Adults with FASD often benefit from using tools (calendars, reminders) and people (trusted friends, family) to help with planning, remembering, and organizing. This is a normal and positive way to manage challenges.

### *Shared Responsibilities*

Work together with their adult child, sharing tasks and decision-making. This builds confidence and reduces stress for everyone.

### *Practice Strategies*

Use visual schedules and charts to clarify routines and responsibilities.

Break down tasks into small, manageable steps.

Practice problem-solving together and celebrate successes.

### *Communication Tips*

Normalize asking for help and reinforce that it's a sign of strength.

Model interdependence by sharing your own experiences of needing support.

Use simple, clear language and positive reinforcement.

### *Resources & Support*

Connect with support groups and professionals for ongoing guidance.

- FASD United Family Navigator ([fasdunited.org](https://fasdunited.org))
- Center for Neurobehavioral Guidance ([centerforneurobehavioralguidance.org](https://centerforneurobehavioralguidance.org))
- FASD Collaborative ([fasdcollaborative.com](https://fasdcollaborative.com))

### *Everyone uses Support*

Everyone uses support from others, tools, or routines to get through the day, like using a calendar to remember appointments or asking a friend or colleague for help. It isn't about being less capable; it's about using all the resources around you to make life easier.

# PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING INTERDEPENDENCE

These practical strategies can help families support their adult children with FASD in everyday life, making interdependence a natural and positive part of their routine.

## *Use Visual Aids with Connection*

Create schedules and task lists together. Place them where your child naturally looks. FASD affects memory and sequencing—visuals are external brain tools, not reminders to "try harder."

## *Break Tasks into Steps - Together*

Sit alongside your adult child and work through tasks. Multi-step tasks can be difficult. Your calm presence helps regulate them. Go slower than you think necessary—their brain processes differently.

## *Set Up Reminders with Understanding*

The brain may not naturally signal when something needs to be done. Approach reminders & redirection with kindness—memory challenges are part of FASD, not a reflection of their character.

## *Practice Shared Responsibilities*

Adults with FASD often need ongoing support, not just initial teaching. Your presence provides co-regulation and acts as their external frontal lobe. Repeat tasks the same way every time.

## *Encourage Problem-Solving with Empathy & Concreteness*

Acknowledge feelings first: "Your brain works differently and this is hard." FASD affects abstract thinking—use concrete, visual problem-solving. Offer two simple choices rather than open-ended questions.

## *Celebrate Success and Effort*

Notice effort and asking for help, not just outcomes. With FASD, the gap between ability and expectations is often huge.

## *Build a Support Circle*

Identify trusted people who understand FASD. Adults with FASD are vulnerable and need people who respond with patience. Create a visual "support circle."

## *Model Asking for Help*

Normalize that FASD means their brain needs MORE support, not that they're failing. Share your own experiences needing help.

## *Use Immediate Rewards*

Rewards need to be instant and clear. Time blindness means their brain struggles to sense time, anticipate what comes next, and understand future consequences. Focus on connection: 'I loved doing this with you,' and give immediate, positive feedback.

## *Regular Check -Ins with Routine*

Use the same format every time—routine feels safe with FASD. Remember—their emotional state affects everything.