

OWNERSHIP

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Are you looking for more information or support? Call us! 506-862-3783

SELF-CARE

It's time to de-clutter your house AND your brain! The new year is starting soon so it's time for some new habits!

Start thinking about a new year's resolution you'd like to stick to—that means, something achievable!

Ownership is an Abstract Concept

Children with FASD will most likely struggle with ownership. They can have issues trying to make connections and associations. When they take something, they aren't thinking that it isn't theirs. Their action is often **misinterpreted** as stealing when in fact they just don't understand the concept of ownership over time and space. For a child living with FASD, this results from an issue with their cause and effect reasoning, which means connecting one thing to another.

Children living with FASD can have issues with impulsivity—they can act without thinking.

A child living with FASD may not make the connection that a certain object belongs to someone else if that person isn't near the object. That's why taking things that don't belong to them can easily happen; they lack understanding of ownership. Transferring learning from one situation to another is a big challenge.

Forgetfulness: Because they struggle with short-term memory, they might forget that they took something or that something isn't theirs.

"EACH DAY IS NEW AND DIFFERENT TO SOMEONE LIVING WITH FASD."
(FASD Support Network of Saskatchewan INC. 2007)

With younger children, disagreements with siblings can often occur over toys and this is where issues of ownership arise. Since they often "live in the moment," when they see something they like and it's available, they want to take it.

With older children, they may often "borrow" CDs and DVDs and play with them all night. A child living with FASD has issues paying attention when they're involved in a sharing activity.

References :

*NB Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Centre of Excellence.
The Edmonton and Area Fetal Alcohol Network. FASD Strategies not Solutions (2007).*

Why Ownership Can Be Confusing for a Child Living with FASD

- If a child is placed in a room with a toy and no one is around, how do they know this toy belongs to anyone? The child thinks “I found it—it’s mine.”
- A child understands that a specific object belongs to a specific person as long as the object and the person are together. When the object is left alone, the connection to the owner disappears.
- Remember... ownership is an ABSTRACT concept. Most of the time, a child living with FASD doesn’t really understand that taking something is wrong. Teaching your child over and over about ownership is the key.

Strategies and Techniques

- Label toys with different colours or stickers to visually show ownership. Turn this into a fun activity and let the child do it with you.
- Be concrete and to the point: “This doesn’t belong to you. This belongs to ____.” Don’t make “one time exceptions” because they could be misunderstood. Be consistent.
- **Supervision and redirection** are key to prevention.
- Teaching a child how to take turns during play time with groups and helping guide them through this process is one way to start working with them to understand ownership.
- It’s easier to teach them what’s theirs than to teach them what isn’t theirs.
- Make sure to lock up things that can be dangerous—medication, alcohol, valuables. Don’t leave them within reach.
- **Repetition is key**. The more you repeat that something isn’t theirs, the greater the chance this information will make it into long-term memory.
- **Give the child what’s theirs first before you remove what isn’t.**

References:

The Edmonton and Area Fetal Alcohol Network. FASD Strategies not Solutions (2007).
FASD Southern California Network. Stealing (2017). Special FASD Issues.
Lutherwood. Caring People. Strengthening Lives (2017). Ownership.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

