

Educational Strategies for Students With Fragile X

- To the degree possible, provide a calm and quiet classroom environment with built-in breaks and a predictable daily routine.
- Incorporate a holistic or simultaneous learning approach (e.g.: use a whole word technique rather than a phonics method, present a model of a final product for the student rather than step-by-step instructions).
- Consider distractibility and anxiety issues when arranging seating for a student (e.g., avoid the middle of a group, seat the student away from doorways).
- Explore use of calming strategies in concert with an occupational therapist trained in sensory processing and hyperarousal. Have an occupational therapist prescribe a sensory diet to be used proactively through the day
- Use visually based instruction. Provide visual schedules to prompt transitions. Using transitional objects to help guide the transition gives a purpose and shifts the attention from the change in scheduling or environment.
- Provide social skills lessons and social stories. Encourage typical peers to model appropriate behaviors.

- Teach math using visual and tactile strategies. Instruction should include the use of real object counters, size and shape manipulatives, and concrete examples. Computerized intervention programs may also be effective.
- Incorporate indirect instruction whenever possible. Use a triad to teach the student with FXS through another peer.
- Incorporate high interest materials into all areas of the curriculum.
- Utilize a family-centered approach. Use “Cloze” or “fill-ins” for assessments to help facilitate executive function skills. This is where certain words from the text are removed and the participant is asked to replace the missing words.
- Utilize evidence-based academic interventions within an RTI or MTSS framework. These interventions should be based on the phenotypic profile of children with FXS as well as the individual profile of the child. These interventions should be visually based with limited language.
- Use small group or direct one-on-one instruction when introducing new material.
- Avoid forcing eye contact or giving “look at me” prompts. Many students with FXS increase and initiate eye contact when they are comfortable with staff, so instead reinforce eye contact by pairing yourself with positive interactions.