

The Facts About FAS

(Fetal Alcohol Syndrome)

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is an organic brain disorder caused by prenatal alcohol exposure. The affected person may have:

- height, weight and growth deficiencies
- a specific pattern of facial features
- central nervous system damage, i.e., a unique cluster of behavioral symptoms

Adolescent Behavioral Symptoms

(Through the eyes of parents)

MOOD SWINGS

- Impulsive and uninhibited.
- Passive and withdrawn one minute, switching to volatile temper tantrums the next.
- Unpredictable; may need 24 hour supervision.

DEFENSIVE AND STUBBORN

- Unable (not unwilling) to accept responsibility.
- Self-centered; behave as if the world revolves around them (similar to a 3-year-old).
- Always having to have their own way and willing to do anything to have it.
- Demand and expect immediate gratification.
- Skilled at shifting blame.
- Engaging and charismatic yet creative at reframing reality (lying, stealing, etc.)

LACK OF SELF-DISCIPLINE

- Moral chameleons; excessive vulnerability to peer influence.
- Hyperactive in non-goal directed activity.
- Unable to stay focused on task, i.e. to follow rules, finish household chores, school assignments or keep commitments.
- Shortsighted; live in a four-frame cartoon world.
- Impulsive sexually (aggressive or vulnerable).

GENUINE INNOCENCE AND DETACHED ATTITUDE

- Toward the predicaments they get themselves and their families into.
- Toward authority when caught breaking the rules of society.
- Toward their behavior and consequences.

The FAS Family Resource Institute (FAS*FRI) is a family-run, educational organization devoted to training others to identify, understand and care for individuals with FAS and their families and to prevent future generations from having to live with this disability.

We advocate for children who have FAS and mental retardation. However, we are also concerned with the interrupted conscience development of those with FAS who are not mentally retarded, but have other co-occurring mental health conditions. Research shows that a normal IQ does not leave the person with FAS better off, but often misdiagnosed and misunderstood.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is an invisible avalanche crashing down and overwhelming public resources. But when we realize that an avalanche is a bunch of snowflakes that have been ignored, the task of keeping affected people and their communities safe seems more manageable.

Each child disabled by prenatal alcohol exposure is an innocent snowflake. There is nothing more fragile and beautiful than innocence; but nothing is more tragic than innocence betrayed by ignorance and fear.

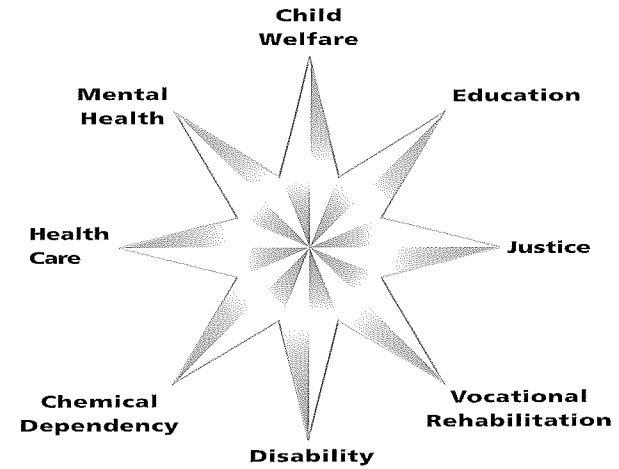


We Provide:

- someone to talk with
- assistance in finding help
- a national leadership network for family-run groups on FAS
- information packets
- a quarterly newsletter
- parent & professional training
- website

Educational Opportunities

FAS*FRI provides professional development training seminars based on the FAS Collective Family Experience.* Seminars are designed for professionals in the following systems of care, which struggle to serve children and adults with FAS. CEU's and clock hours are offered.



FAS*FRI is also the sole provider for the following educational materials and programs based on the FAS Collective Family Experience.*

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER, FAS Times

INFORMATION PACKETS AND BROCHURES

BOOKS


- Cheers! Here's to the Baby!
A Birth Mother's Discovery of FAS
- Nurture: The Essence of Intervention for Individuals with FAS
- FAS/E: A Standard of Care

MENTORING FOR INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, PROFESSIONALS

PUBLIC ADVOCACY

FAS Family Resource Institute
PO Box 2525 Lynnwood, WA 98036
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(800) 999-3429 inside Washington State
(253) 531-2878 outside Washington State

*See history and definition on back panel.



“We discovered after 16 harrowing years the origin of the trauma for our adopted son’s unusual brain damage was heavy prenatal alcohol exposure.

The most alarming factor to us was not that the diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome was a life long disability, but that most professionals to whom we went for help—teachers, school counselors, social workers, doctors, school nurses, police, attorneys, judges—**were unable to recognize clients with FAS on their caseloads and in their classrooms.**

This was the situation in 1990. Unfortunately, during testimony at the regional Town Hall Meetings on FAS in 2002 - 2004, parents across the United States confirmed that this tragic situation still exists.”

Jocie DeVries
Executive Director
FAS Family Resource Institute


The FAS Family Resource Institute (FAS*FRI) is a non-profit educational 501(C)3 organization, which began in 1990, when Program Managers for the state Adoption Support Program helped frustrated parents organize and gather the “Collective Family Experience” on behaviors observed in children and adolescents with FAS. Counselors and therapists, who were trying to help preserve families raising affected children, had read the scientific literature on FAS. But they still could not understand the core behavior traits of the disability, especially when the IQs of the affected individuals were in the normal range.

The situation in the early 1990’s was critical as adoptions failed and children were returned to foster care and/or families were being forced to relinquish custody of their children to access residential treatment. Consequently, the foundational activity of FAS*FRI was to gather information from parents of diagnosed children through personal interviews, surveys and formal retreats. This information was analyzed and used in the development of FAS*FRI’s educational materials and seminars in order to fill this experience-based void in the field.

The FAS Collective Family Experience, gathered by FAS*FRI from hundreds of families since 1990, has been recognized and printed in the following publications.

- Early Childhood Neurobehavioral Assessment for the Differential Diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder, a monograph of a meeting held in March 2000, sponsored by The Interagency Committee on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and The National Institutes of Health (NIH) including the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), article entitled, “Observations from the Collective Family Experience”
- Addiction Biology 2004, a scientific research journal, article entitled, “Fetal Alcohol Syndrome through the Eyes of Parents”
- FAS Guidelines for Referral and Diagnosis published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2004, pp. 13-20

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We
Love
children
WITH
fetal alcohol
syndrome