



# Treaty 8 Education Commission Special Education Newsletter

Happy New Year!

January 2006  
Vol 1 No 5

## What is FASD?

### "Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder"

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) refers to a variety of physical changes, neurological, and /or psychometric patterns of brain damage to the fetus associated with alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Terms such as, Partial Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Alcohol-related Neurodevelopmental Disorder, and Alcohol-related Birth Defects refers to the continuum of challenges and deficits of FASD. This brain damage can result in a range of structural, physiological and learning disabilities. FASD refers to the spectrum of physical, cognitive and behavioral characteristics FASD individuals display. Although FASD can be avoided, there is a high incidence rate of FASD nation-wide which has a life long impact on family and community. Even though there are incidences within First Nation communities, this is not a 'First Nation' disorder as it is often stereotyped to be. Statistics prove that Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a global challenge that needs to be overcome.



### Special Education Sub-Committee

TITLE	REPRESENTATIVE	LOCATION
Education Portfolio		Representative for Chief Rose Laboucan
Elder	Elsie Fabian	ATC
Principal	Alphonse Janvier	ATC
SPED Coordinator	Amy Kucherawy	BCN
Director of Education	Saxon Govender	NPTC
SPED Coordinator	Gail Bellerose	KTC
Director of Education	Cheryl Sheldon	LSLLRC
Classroom Teacher	Shelley Hamelin	WCTC
SPED Coordinator	Gloria Cardinal	LRRCM
Director of Education SPED RMO Coordinator	Shelley Willier Eileen Lines	Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta FNRMO

## 8 Magic Keys to Help Unlock FASD Brains

Deb Evenson & Jan Luke (1997)

- 1. CONCRETE-** Students with FASD do well when parents and educators talk in concrete terms. (EX) 1 -2 command instruction. Don't use words with double meanings, idioms etc. because social emotional understanding is far below their chronological age. (EX) Double meaning: I saw a movie about a fishing spot which I like. (What did you like?)  
Idiom: I am over the moon!
- 2. CONSISTENCY-** FASD students do best in an environment with few changes. This includes language where teachers and parents can coordinate with each other to use the same words for key phases and oral directions.
- 3. REPTITION-** FASD students has a chronic short term memory where they tend to forget things as well as information that has been learned and retained for a period of time. These students need to be re-taught and re-taught.
- 4. ROUTINE-** Stable routines which don't change daily will make it easier for students with FASD to know what is expected and will decrease their anxiety and enable them to learn.
- 5. SIMPLICITY-** Keep it short and sweet (KISS method) Students with FASD are easily over stimulated leading to "shutdown" at which point no more information can be assimilated. A simple environment is the foundation for an effective school program.
- 6. SPECIFIC-** Say exactly what you mean. Remember that students with FASD have difficulty with abstractions, generalizations, and not being able to fill in the blanks when given a direction. Provide step by step directions to develop appropriate habit patterns.
- 7. STRUCTURE-** Structure is the "glue" that makes the world make sense for a student with FASD. If this glue is taken away, the walls fall down. A student with FASD achieves and is successful because their world provides the appropriate permanent structure.
- 8. SUPERVISION-** FASD students are naive to daily life situations because of cognitive challenges. These students need constant supervision which develops patterns of appropriate behavior habits.



## FASD



- ◆ Today, there are about 300,000 people living with FASD in Canada
- ◆ FASD affects about 1% of the Canadian population. More than 20% affected by FASD will suffer varying degrees, ranging from mild learning disabilities to major physical, mental and intellectual impairment.
- ◆ FASD is the #1 cause of mental retardation and is 100% preventable
- ◆ It takes very little alcohol to cause serious damage
- ◆ Research has shown that even a single exposure to high levels of alcohol can cause significant brain damage
- ◆ FASD affects people of all ages

### FASD STRATEGIES in the Classroom

- ★ Model behaviors
- ★ Observe and document behaviors
- ★ Clearly define rules and consequences
- ★ Offer direct and immediate feedback for unacceptable behavior
- ★ Allow mistakes, but help student to see what can be learned from mistake
- ★ Include student in developing solutions
- ★ Set limits and be consistent
- ★ Develop an action plan with student
- ★ Anticipate problems and plan for structure and routine
- ★ Offer activities for visual memory rather than oral activities to reinforce memory skills
- ★ Keep visual, auditory, and noisy distractions to a minimum
- ★ Develop a plan which allows some movement without disruption to other students (EX) Tape an area around desk to allow student movement is necessary
- ★ Teach social skills on topics such as: responsibility, self-esteem, problem solving, choices, behavior, peer pressure, bullying, judgement, boundaries

### FASD Resources for the Classroom:

- ➔ Teaching Students with FASD. Alberta Learning. 2004
- ➔ Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: A Guide for Families and Communities. Ann Streissguth. 1997.
- ➔ Teaching Students with Learning and Behavioral Problems. Nettie R. Bartel and Hammill. 2004.
- ➔ The Broken Cord. M. Dorris. 1989.
- ➔ Prenatally Exposed Kids in School: What To Do, How To Do It. Odom-Winn, D. & Dunagan, D. 1991.
- ➔ A Teacher's Guide to Behavior Interventions: Intervention Strategies for Behavior Problems in the Educational Environment. Wunderlich, K.K. 1988.
- ➔ Educating Children Prenatally Exposed to Alcohol and Other Drugs. Burgess, D. M. & A. Streissguth. 1992.
- ➔ The Best I Can Be: Living With Fetal Alcohol. Liz Kulp. 2000.
- ➔ Reaching Out to Children with FAS/FAE: A Handbook for Teachers, Counselors, and Parents Who Work with Children Affected by Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effects. D. Davis. 19

## Assessing FASD

Children who are assessed for FASD are likely to experience long term positive experiences, in school and community. The assessment is an important first step in getting recognition and support for Special Education.

- ▶ Assessment by a multidisciplinary approach
- ▶ Parental involvement
- ▶ FASD screening and referral
- ▶ behavioral assessment
- ▶ family history
- ▶ physical assessment
- ▶ Individual Education Plan development



### WEBSITES:

1. <http://www.do2learn.org/disabilities/FAS>
2. <http://www.fasalaska.com/toolbox/index.htm>
3. <http://www.region6FASD.ca/resources.php>
4. <http://www.fetalalcohol.com>
5. <http://www.acbn.com/fas/>
6. <http://www.FASCRC/Research.htm>
7. <http://www.come-over.to/FASCRC/articles.htm>
8. <http://www.FASCRC/behavior>
9. <http://www.betterendings.org/fun/fun.htm>
10. <http://www.betterendings.org/FASD/Parents/FASIdia.htm>
11. <http://www.betterendings.org/Homeschool/main.htm>
12. <http://www.betterendings.org/Homeschool/Fun/mnemonic.htm>



National FASD Awareness Day - September 9th



### Treaty 8 Education Commission

Chief Rose Laboucan- Education Portfolio Holder  
Casey Brown, Director of Education, ATC  
Ray Peters, Director of Education, BCN  
TBA, Director of Education, KTC  
Cheryl Sheldon, Director of Education, LSLIRC  
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Please feel free to contact Eileen Lines at [elines@treaty8.org](mailto:elines@treaty8.org) for further information. We welcome ideas, success stories, best practices and suggestions.  
"For the betterment of First Nation Special Education learners"

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