

**F**etal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

## Awareness

Brought to you by the  
Texas Office for Prevention of  
Developmental Disabilities

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### Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Definition

**FASD is a combination of birth defects and behavioral challenges in children whose mothers drink alcohol during pregnancy.**

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### Some Facts

- Healthcare costs >\$ 3 Billion a year
- FASD occurs in 1 of 100 births
- FASD children need professionals who understand them
- Diagnosis is slow; often in error

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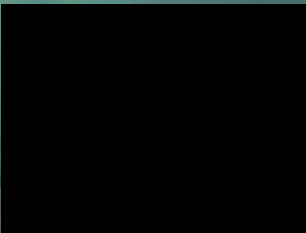
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### The Children

Video clip courtesy of Vida Health Communications, Inc.



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### Sidney's Story



**I want to help others learn.**

- Frustrated, angry
- Feels different
- Trouble with instructions
- Needs visual contact
- Difficulty hearing
- Acts impulsively
- Worries herself sick

16-Years Old

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### John's Infant Story



- Small baby
- Trouble swallowing
- Diagnosed at birth with FASD

[www.fasstar.com](http://www.fasstar.com)

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### John's Pre-school Years



- Facial characteristics
- Growth retardation
- Active, trouble sleeping
- Impulsive behavior
- Attention problems

[www.fasstar.com](http://www.fasstar.com)

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### John's School-Years



- Engaging & attractive
- Average IQ
- Strong reading
- Weak math
- Inattentive, impulsive, frustrated

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## John's Teen-Years



- Functioned as an 8-year old
- Academically below grade level
- Fights
- Teachers recommended he change schools

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## John's Young Adult Story



- Increased awareness of FASD
- Vocational training
- Parents advocate FASD
- Needs ongoing support and advice

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## Happy Times



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**What's Your Interest in FASD?**

1  
How to Identify FASD

2  
FASD Challenges

3  
What Can You Do?

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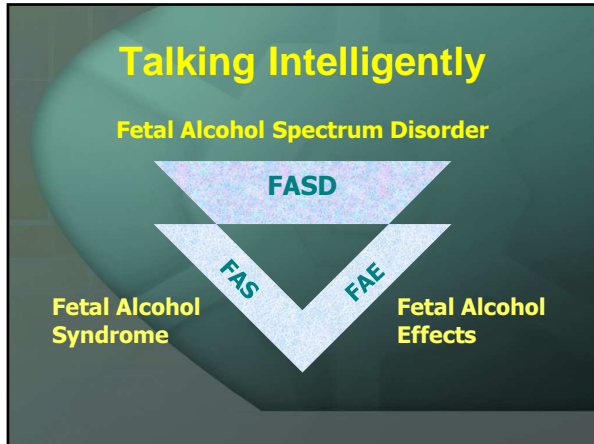
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### Alcohol Related Effects

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Infant mental, motor development</li><li>• Physical malformations</li><li>• Neonatal neuro-behavioral problems</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spontaneous abortions</li><li>• Birth size, head circumference</li><li>• IQ, attention, memory</li><li>• Learning, behavior problems</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stillbirths</li><li>• FAS</li><li>• Pre-natal mortality</li></ul>
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Totally preventable

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## Historical View of Alcohol as a Poison

Foolish, drunken, or harebrain women most often bring forth children like unto themselves.



Aristotle in *Problemata*  
384 -322 BC

**Behold, thou shalt conceive and bear a son: And now, drink no wine or strong drink.**

Judges 13:7

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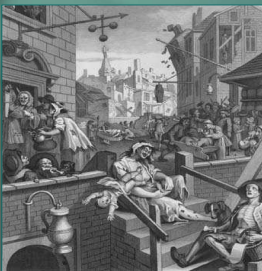
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## 18<sup>th</sup> Century Gin Lane



- Drops in birth rates
- Rise in infant mortality
- Children had imperfect looks

Wm. Hogarth 1697-1764

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## History Continues

1834 British	Poor genetic stock
1899 Dr. Sullivan	Poor home environments
1946 AMA	Poor genetic stock
1967 France, Dr. Lemoine	Common pattern of anomalies
1973 US. Jones, Smith & Assoc.	11 common features in children of alcoholic mothers
2000 US.	Problem solving research to improve brain damage

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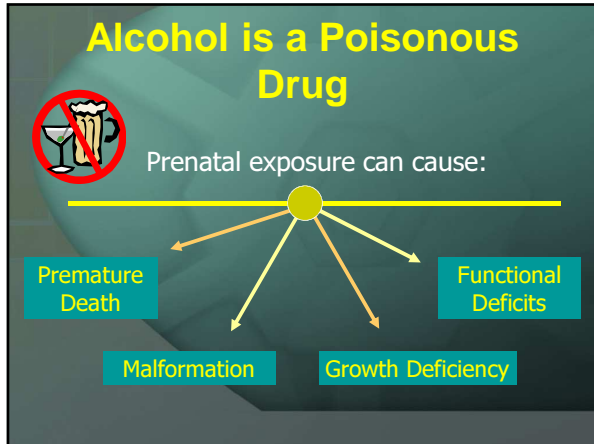
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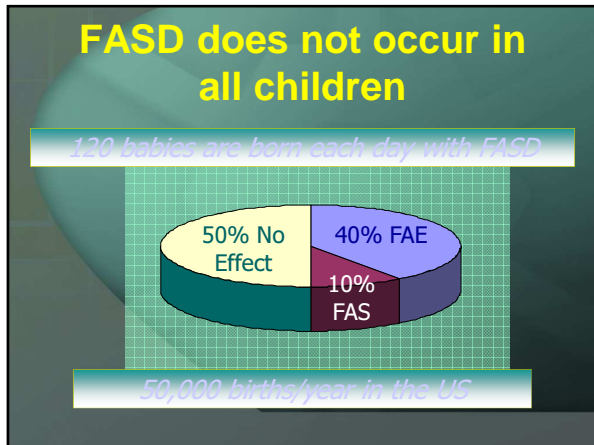
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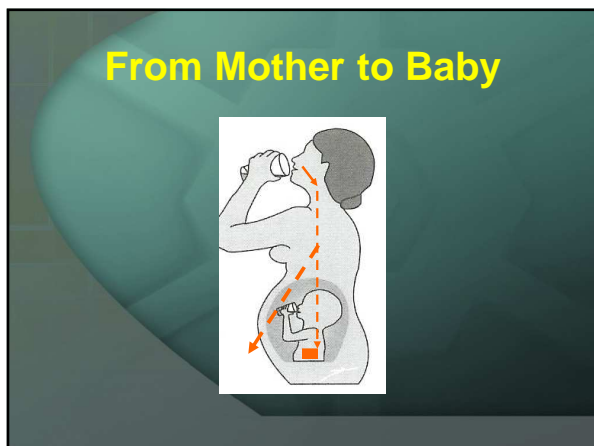
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### Defects by Trimester

Increased risk of spontaneous abortion

Decreased fetal growth

Major morphological abnormalities

1st 2nd 3rd

CNS Effects

Do not drink before conception, during pregnancy or while breastfeeding.

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### What to Look For

Birth Defects

Growth Deficiency

Clinical Implications

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### 6 Birth Defects

1. Reduced head size & brain damage (Microcephaly)
2. Different look
3. Small for age
4. Learning problems, lower IQ
5. Hyperactive, short attention span
6. Health problems

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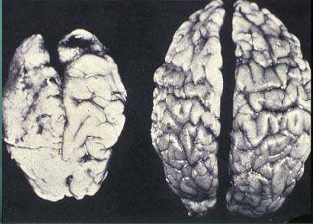
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### 1. Reduced Head Size & Brain Damage

**FAS**

Smaller  
Fewer brain connections



**Typical**

Comparison of 5-day old children's brains

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### Meet some Special Children with FASD

Video clip courtesy of Vida Health Communications, Inc.



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### 2. Different Looks

**Discriminating Features**

- Flat midface
- Short nose
- Ridges between nose/mouth
- Thin upper lip



**Associated Features**

- Inner eye skin fold
- Drooping eyelid
- Low nasal bridge
- Ear abnormalities

Only significant when they appear in concert

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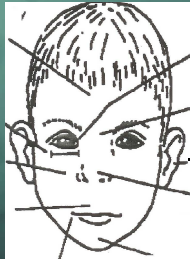
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**Flat forehead**  
Small eye slits



**Flat midface**  
Indistinct line between nose & mouth

**Thin upper lip**      **Pointed chin**

**Skin folds**  
Low nasal bridge

**Minor ear anomalies (set, pointed)**  
Short nose

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**Growing up with FAS**



1A      1B

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**Growing Up with FAS**



2A      2B

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### 3. Small for Age



- Poor eating
- Poor sucking

10-25<sup>th</sup> percentile until puberty (girls) or 20's (boys)



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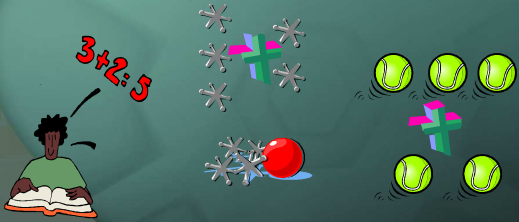
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### 4. Learning Problems



Concrete examples help

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### 4. Learning Problems



"My brain seems like Swiss cheese. Sometimes I learn and other times information goes through the holes."

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### 4. Learning Problems

"I've felt I was in a room with lots of doors. Sometimes the doors were all closed."



G A P S

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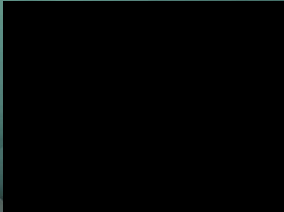
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### Rob's Advice

Video clip courtesy of Vida Health Communications, Inc.



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### 4. Learning Problems

- Able to "talk the talk", but not "walk the walk"
- **Inconsistent mastery**
- Spotty memory
- **Difficulty generalizing information**
- Difficulty perceiving similarities and differences
- **Difficulty recognizing social cues**

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### A Teacher Shares



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### 5. Hyperactive, Short Attention Span



Sometimes I felt I had too much energy for my friends.

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### 5. Hyperactive, Short Attention Span



I finally realized that Joan did her class work better when allowed to lie on the floor instead of sit in a chair.

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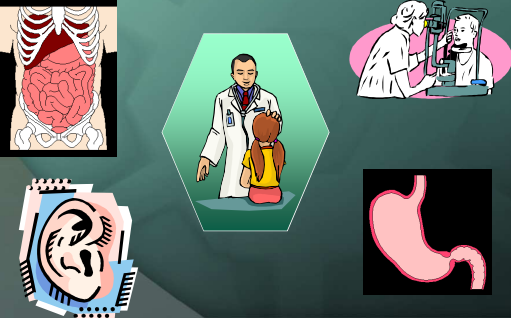
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### 6. Health Problems



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### Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Review

Specific facial features

Growth deficiency

Central nervous system dysfunction



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### So What's the Problem?

- No diagnostic lab tests
- FASD is not detected at birth
- Harder to diagnose in puberty
- Doctors becoming more aware

Needed: Medical exam & maternal history

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**What's Your Interest in FASD?**



2  
FASD Challenges

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### Drinking is Culturally Acceptable

Increasing

21-34

2/3's

\$86.2 Billion

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### The Costs

\$ 3 Billion a Year!

- Health care
- Special education
- Emotional burden
- Stress
- Lost productivity
- Physical, behavior, intellectual impairments

\$2 million a lifetime per baby!

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### What's a Little Drink?

Binge

Social

Abusive

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### Society Problems

- Mental health problems
- Joblessness
- Having children they can't care for
- Homelessness
- Trouble with the law
- Premature death

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### Other Provisions

- Special schools/classes
- Separate living conditions as adults
- Higher health costs
- Increased caregiver stress
- Increased financial obligations

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### What's Your Interest in FASD?

- 1 How to Identify FASD
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- 3 What Can You Do?

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### What's Your Interest in FASD?



3  
What Can You Do?

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### Have you Ever Heard These?



- I can control it
- If it were really harmful, the government would issue warnings
- Nobody will go out with me if I don't drink

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### Social Pressures



- Relaxation
- A little won't hurt
- I don't think I'm pregnant
- The other girls drink
- Peer pressure
- Family pressures

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### Awareness Makes a Difference



Learning about FAS and applying it to our son was quite a task. It reminded me of one of those "Choose Your Own Adventure" books. You thought you knew the journey. . . But I grew to know him better when I understood the diagnosis of FAS.

Luke's Mom

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### Solutions?



Recognize  
Inform  
Take Action

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## What Can You Do?



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## Ideas for Action

Share with everyone



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## Ideas for Action

Share with everyone

- Facilitate a brown-bag lunch
- Put up posters
- Look for warnings
- Reassure women on what's best for baby
- Hand out brochures
- Patience. Learning is a process



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### It's Your Turn

Your married sister is alone a great deal because her husband is a traveling salesman. They have one very healthy two year-old boy and you know they are planning to have more children. You have come over to your sister's house a couple of times to use her DVD player and found her drinking quite heavily. What could you do?

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### Another Opportunity

You stop over at your neighbor's who invites you in for coffee. You start to observe her 6-year-old's facial anomalies and behavior. You politely ask how Jane, the child, is doing in school. Your neighbor tells you about the difficult time Jane is having: short attention span, good in reading, poor in math, wanting to cooperate, but constantly interrupting other children. What do you say?



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### What Would You Do?

Your older sister has just found out that she is pregnant. She and her husband are very happy and want to "celebrate" with all their friends. Many of their friends have already bought a keg of beer. What could you do?

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## You Can Help

- Learn more
- Search the Web
- Read books
- Talk with doctors & teachers
- Volunteer in classrooms
- Volunteer with our agency
- Encourage others on the hope of prevention

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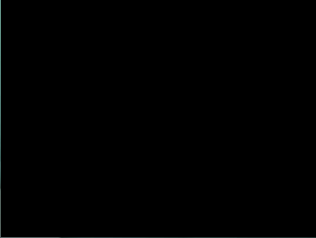
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## Advancement & Hope

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## The Good News

- New strategies are discovered
- Attitudes are improving; New words are used
- People are successful in their professional and personal lives
- Positive outcomes
- Research is promising

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### Hope from Liz

*You cannot see my disability on the outside.  
I like to make myself look pretty. . .  
I am adopted and my mom died  
So no one will ever know how much  
Or how often my mom drank.  
I just know I have to live with it.*

*The Best I Can Be, Liz & Jodee Kulp*

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## Acknowledgements

- [www.fasstar.com](http://www.fasstar.com) (John Kellerman's web site)
- *The Best I Can Be*, Liz & Jodee Kulp
- March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation
- Video clips courtesy of Vida Health Communications, Inc. [www.vida-health.com](http://www.vida-health.com)
- Prenatal Alcohol Exposure and Child Development Journal
- FAS Family Resource Institute

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