

Professionals Working with FASD

When you work with FASD, it can help to understand some of the hurdles people with FASD face. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder barriers can be split into two categories:

Primary Challenges

means things that result from Prenatal Alcohol Exposure (PAE), like:

- Learning or memory issues
- Trouble managing emotions
- Physical conditions
- Impulsiveness
- Trouble understanding rules or instructions
- Feeling overwhelmed

Secondary Challenges

means things that result from going through life without supports, strategies and resources for FASD, like:

- Not getting the most out of school
- Having a hard time feeling understood in relationships
- Challenges meeting expectations in work
- Trouble keeping stable housing
- Legal concerns



Having a strategy to work with FASD has been shown to increase program effectiveness¹. When you work with people who have FASD, who may or may not be diagnosed, it helps to remember the word **A.L.A.R.M.E.R.S.**² for creating a strategy.

- A** **Attention:** A person may have trouble with focus or may have a diagnosis of ADHD.
Strategy – use visual aids or frequent reminders
- L** **Language:** The person may have a hard time if you use complicated or abstract words.
Strategy – Use concrete language with clear meanings
- A** **Adaptive Behaviors:** A person may have challenges with managing money, time, shopping, cleaning, and life skills. *Strategy* – model the tasks with repetition and use tools like phone apps to create a plan.
- R** **Reasoning:** The person may have a hard time understanding cause and effect or predicting consequences to actions. *Strategy* – use a support network of people who can be trusted for good advice.
- M** **Memory:** Individual may be forgetful or have trouble remembering things.
Strategy – be consistent and use tools to help remind them. Be patient. This may take a lot of repeating.
- E** **Executive Functioning:** This means they may have challenges in planning, flexible thinking, applying ideas they learn to problem solving, switching tasks³. *Strategy* – Simplify instructions. Stay focused on one item at a time.
- R** **Regulation:** A person may show challenges in managing body functions like temperature, sleep, and appetite.
Strategy – daily prompts can be good reminders to take care of themselves.
- S** **Sensory Issues:** A person may have reactions to sensory things like touch, taste, hear and smell.
Strategy – build a routine of activities that include using the 5 senses interactively.

Although FASD is a learning disability, every person is unique in their neurodiversity; some areas of life may be going well, but that does not always mean all areas are. This can change as often as daily or weekly.⁴

Learning can also be affected by feeling tired, poor eating, distractions, and having a support system.⁵ "It is important to remember the individual and their needs, challenges, and strengths, when providing support and services"⁶.

Resources in your area:

AVENTA CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR WOMEN WITH ADDICTIONS

FASD Addiction Treatment Project - Provides FASD-informed addiction treatment to women diagnosed with or suspected of having FASD.

CALGARY ALTERNATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

Calgary Alternative Poss-Abilities - Provides case management assistance to enable individuals with FASD and other diagnoses with complex support requirements to live and participate in the community and develop vital service and interpersonal connections.

CALGARY JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY

The Extended FASD Support Project - Support project for adults diagnosed, or suspected of living with FASD, at risk of involvement, or already involved with the criminal justice system, through advocacy, referrals, and intervention and prevention strategies based on individual strengths.

The FASD Action Hall (FAH) - Peer support group for individuals with FASD & their support person. A wide variety of topics are covered throughout the year, including FASD awareness/strategies, life skills, emotional regulation, addictions and healthy relationships.

ENVIROS

FASD Support Program - Provides foster, adoptive, kinship and biological parents with the information and tools they need to effectively parent a child or youth with FASD.

FASD Evolution Program - Supports adults living with a diagnosis of FASD through access to income support, housing, employment and medical care.

FOOTHILLS FETAL ALCOHOL SOCIETY

FASD Family Response Program - Supports caregivers living with someone with FASD through in-home visitation, advocacy, access of diagnosis and assessment services, and transition supports in the rural surrounding areas of Calgary. Hosts a variety of parent support groups.

FASD MAPS

FASD MAPS is a partnership program with Renfrew Educational Services, Hull Services, McMan Calgary and Woods Homes. The partnership offers a continuum of services for families with children and youth affected by FASD.

Renfrew Education Services works with children, newborn to 10 years who may be affected by FASD, and their families (403) 291-5038 ext.1691

Hull Services works with children and youth, 8 to 15 who may be impacted by FASD (403) 923-8276



Talk to us at ConnectFASD for more information about referral processes.
connectfasd.ca • 1 866 601 3273 (FASD) • info@connectfasd.ca

FOR FURTHER READING:

1. Brown, N., Gudjonsson, G., & Connor, P. (2011). Suggestibility and fetal alcohol spectrum disorders: I'll tell you anything you want to hear. *Journal of Psychiatry & Law*, 39)
2. *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD and Justice)*. (2021). *Effects of FASD*. *Effects of FASD - FASDJustice CA*.
3. *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD and Justice)*. (2021). *Recognizing FASD*. *Recognizing FASD - FASDJustice CA*:
4. Pei, J. and Leung, S. (2016). Experiences in the Canadian criminal justice system for individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders: Double jeopardy? *CJCCJ/RCCJP*
5. Stewart, M and Glowatski, K. (2014). Front-line police perceptions of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder in a Canadian province. *Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles*, 87, 17-28 (<https://fasdjustice.ca/investigation/charter-of-rights-and-freedoms-s-10b.html>)
6. Thanh NX, Jonsson E. Costs of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in the Canadian Criminal Justice System. *J Popul Ther Clin Pharmacol*. 2015;22(1):e125-31. Epub