

National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Educating the public, professionals, and policymakers about alcohol use during pregnancy



FASD

- What School Systems Should
- Know About Affected Students

Students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) have special learning needs and face a wide range of behavioral challenges.

Characteristic Facial Features of a Child with FASD

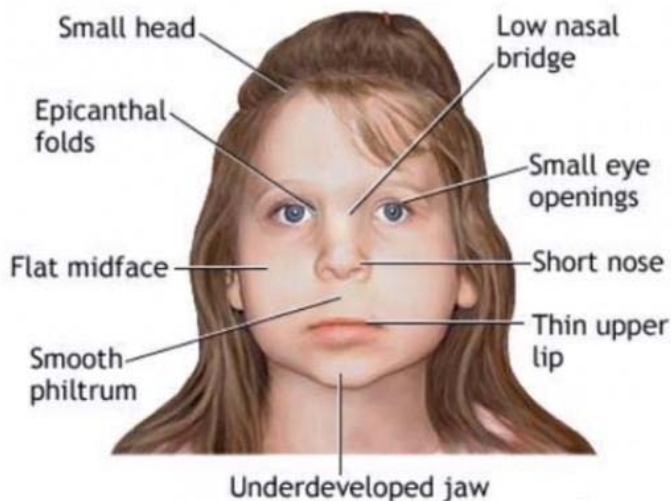


Image courtesy of the National Library of Medicine, NIH

How does FASD affect learning and behavior?

Students with FASD have problems receiving and processing information. They often cannot store what they learn or lack the mental capacity to use new information they have been given.

While students with FASD have IQ scores that range from 29 to 140, their overall level of adaptive functioning (i.e. ability to perform daily life skills) is often much lower than would be expected.

(Teresa Kellerman)

Educators can play a critical role in determining whether children with FASD reach their maximum potential.

Common challenges for educators who teach students with FASD include:

- Hyperactivity, impulsivity, attention and memory deficits
- Inability to complete tasks, disruptiveness
- Poor social skills
- Need for constant supervision
- Disregard for rules and authority.

Successful strategies for educating children with FASD include:

- Using concrete, hands-on learning methods
- Establishing structured routines
- Keeping instructions short and simple
- Providing consistent and specific directions
- Repeating tasks again and again
- Providing constant supervision

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, FASD affects 1 in 100 live births.

Recognizing FASD can be a challenging task.

Most students with FASD are unidentified or go misdiagnosed as most people with FASD do not have the characteristic features associated with fetal alcohol syndrome. The majority of students with FASD are not significantly developmentally disabled, and they can be articulate and skilled at performing specific tasks.

Students who exhibit behavior or learning problems may require psychoeducational testing to identify possible presence of central nervous system damage.

For more information on FASD, go to www.nofas.org

