

## Educational Implications

Children with FASD need more intense supervision and structure than other children. They often lack a sense of boundaries for people and objects. For instance, they don't "steal" things, they "find" them; an object "belongs" to a person only if it is in that person's hand. They are impulsive, uninhibited, and over-reactive. Social skills such as sharing, taking turns, and cooperating in general are usually not understood, and these children tend to play alongside others but not with them. In addition, sensory integration problems are common, and may lead to the tendency to be high strung, sound-sensitive, and easily over-stimulated. Although they can focus their attention on the task at hand, they have multiple obstacles to learning. Since they don't understand ideas, concepts, or abstract thought, they may have verbal ability without actual understanding. Even simple tasks require intense mental effort because of their cognitive impairment. This can result in mental exhaustion, which adds to behavior problems. In addition, since their threshold for frustration is low, they may fly into rages and temper tantrums. A common impairment is with short-term memory, and in an effort to please, students often will make up an answer when they don't remember one. This practice can apply to anything, including schoolwork or behaviors. These are not intentional "lies," they just honestly don't remember the truth and want to have an answer. Since they live in the moment and don't connect their actions with consequences, they don't learn from experience that making up answers is not appropriate.

## Resources

### **ARC Northland**

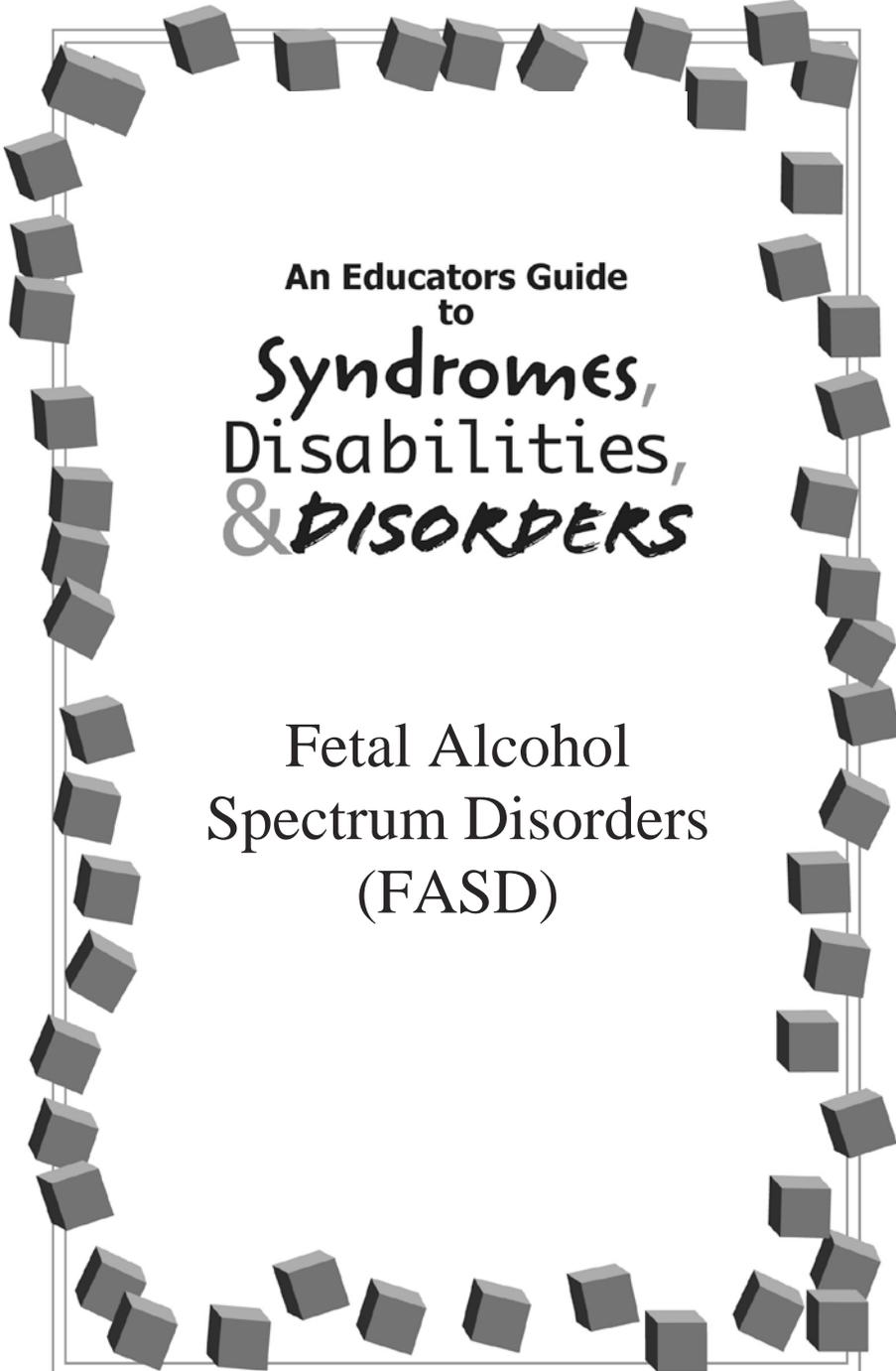
201 Ordean Building, 424 West Superior Duluth, MN 55802  
218-726-4725 • 800-317-6475 • [arcdu@aol.com](mailto:arcdu@aol.com)  
*Information, fact sheets*

### **Fetal Alcohol Diagnostic Program (FADP)**

400 Ordean Building, 424 West Superior Duluth, MN 55802  
218-726-4858 • [fadp@charterinternet.com](mailto:fadp@charterinternet.com)  
*FASD evaluations based on University of Washington's 4-digit diagnostic method; trainings on learning to diagnose FASD*

### **FAS Community Resource Center (FAS-CRC)**

7725 East 33rd Street  
Tucson, AZ 85710 • [www.come-over.to/FASCRC](http://www.come-over.to/FASCRC)  
*Lots of useful, supportive information*



An Educators Guide  
to  
**Syndromes,  
Disabilities,  
& DISORDERS**

Fetal Alcohol  
Spectrum Disorders  
(FASD)

## Symptoms or Behaviors

### **Early Childhood (1-5 yrs)**

- Speech or gross motor delays
- Extreme tactile sensitivity or insensitivity
- Erratic sleeping and/or eating habits
- Poor habituation
- Lack of stranger anxiety
- Rage
- Poor or limited abstracting ability  
(action/consequence connection, judgment & reasoning skills, sequential learning)

### **Elementary years**

- Normal, borderline, or high IQ, but immature
- Blames others for all problems
- Volatile and impulsive, impaired reasoning
- School becomes increasingly difficult
- Socially isolated and emotionally disconnected
- High need for stimulation
- Vivid fantasies and perseveration problems
- Possible fascination with knives and/or fire

### **Adolescent years (13-18 yrs)**

- No personal or property boundaries
- Naïve, suggestible, a follower, a victim, vulnerable to peers
- Poor judgment, reasoning, and memory
- Isolated, sometimes depressed and/or suicidal
- Poor social skills
- Doesn't learn from mistakes

## Instructional Strategies and Classroom Accommodations

- Be as consistent as possible. The way something is learned the first time will have the most lasting effect. *Re-learning is very difficult and therefore any change is difficult.*
- Use a lot of repetition. These students need more time and more repetition than average to learn and retain information.  
Try using mnemonics like silly rhymes and songs. Also have them repeatedly practice basic actions and social skills like walking quietly down the hall or when to say “thank you.” Be positive, supportive, and sympathetic during crises; these are children who “can’t” rather than “won’t.”

- Use multi-sensory instruction (visual, olfactory, kinesthetic, tactile, and auditory). More senses used in learning means more possible neurological connections to aid in memory retrieval.
- Be specific, yet brief. These students have difficulty “filling in the blanks.” Tell them step-by-step, but not all at once. Use short sentences, simple words, and be concrete. Avoid asking “why” questions. Instead, ask concrete who, what, where, and when questions.
- Increase supervision—it should be as constant as possible, with an emphasis on *positive reinforcement* of appropriate behavior so it becomes habit. Do not rely on the student’s ability to “recite” the rules or steps.
- Model appropriate behavior. Students with FASD often copycat behavior, so always try to be respectful, patient, and kind.
- Avoid long periods of deskwork (these children *must* move). To avoid the problem of a student becoming overloaded from mental exhaustion and/or trying to sit still, create a self-calming and respite plan.
- Post all rules and schedules. Use pictures, drawings, symbols, charts, or whatever seems to be effective at conveying the message. Repeatedly go over the rules and their meanings aloud at least once a day. *Rules should be the same for all students, but you may need to alter the consequences for a child with FASD.*
- Use immediate discipline. If discipline is delayed, the student with FASD will not understand why it’s happening. Even if the student is told immediately that a consequence will happen the next day, he or she will likely not make the connection the next day. *Never take away recess as a consequence—children with FASD need that break to move around.*
- Ensure the student’s attention. When talking directly to the student, be sure to say his or her name and make eye contact. Always have the student paraphrase any directions to check for understanding.
- Encourage use of positive self-talk. Recognize partially correct responses and offer positive incentives for finishing work. Try to set them up for success, and recognize successes every day! (or even every hour).