

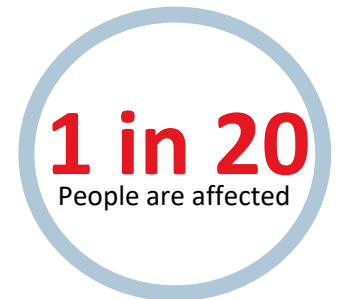
# WHAT IS FASD

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a diagnostic term used to describe impacts on the brain and body of individuals prenatally exposed to alcohol<sup>1</sup>. FASD is a lifelong disability.

## OVER 1.5 MILLION

Canadians are estimated to have FASD. FASD is the most prevalent neurodevelopmental disorder worldwide.

Strengths	Challenges
Creative, artistic, musical	Being impulsive
Friendly,, cheerful, and affectionate	not understanding consequences
Interested in some activities like gardening and painting	being easily distracted
Attentive towards animals	Difficulties keeping up with classroom learning
Enjoy trying new things	Challenges handling money and telling time
Helpful and affectionate	forgetting how to do something they've done before
And so much more	having trouble staying organized and planning ahead



Each individual with FASD is unique but may have some of these strengths and challenges.



People with FASD may not behave the way society expects, but with individualized supports suited to their needs can be successful.

<sup>1</sup> CanFASD. <https://canfasd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Toward-a-Standard-Definition-of-FASD-Final.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Rivera, H. [https://unsplash.com/photos/OX\\_en7CXMj4](https://unsplash.com/photos/OX_en7CXMj4)

# SUPPORTS

Some Challenges	Supports Needed	Caregiver's Role
<b>Age 0-2:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensory integration issues including aversion to touch, light and sound are common</li> <li>• Failure to thrive due to feeding difficulties</li> <li>• Significant difficulties in emotional regulation</li> <li>• Sleeping patterns may be disrupted</li> <li>• Major developmental milestones are missed</li> </ul>	<b>RESPIRE</b> I need access to respite services so I can restore my own emotional reserves.  <b>EARLY INTERVENTION</b> I need access to early intervention to help me maximize my child's skill development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster healthy attachment through responsive caregiving</li> <li>• Learn my child's likes and dislikes</li> <li>• Provide a controlled and stable environment for my child</li> <li>• Seek early intervention and occupational therapy programs</li> </ul>
<b>Age 2-5:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems learning and understanding language</li> <li>• Children are easily overstimulated</li> <li>• Struggles with transitions and activity changes</li> <li>• Hyperactivity</li> <li>• Oppositional behaviours</li> <li>• Difficulties in learning through consequences</li> </ul>	<b>SPECIALISTS</b> I need access to specialists that can help with developmental delays.  <b>DISABILITY FUNDING</b> I need access to additional funding to support my child's life-long needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish regular routines with extra attention to activity transitions</li> <li>• Provide extra opportunities for language learning</li> <li>• Learn the early signs of overstimulation and behaviour issues</li> <li>• Exercise patience and consistency</li> </ul>
<b>Age 5-10:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Struggles in school due to inattention, hyperactivity, language difficulties and oppositional behaviours</li> <li>• Difficulties in planning and following routines</li> <li>• Major sleep problems</li> <li>• Sensory issues and environmental sensitivities</li> </ul>	<b>EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT</b> I need a school with funding to provide my child with individualized educational supports.  <b>TRAINING</b> I need training on meeting challenges, caring for myself and helping my child succeed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a learning plan with my child's school and teacher</li> <li>• Provide a consistent, predictable routine</li> <li>• Modify my child's environment to reduce sensory stresses</li> <li>• Address challenging behaviours immediately as they develop</li> </ul>
<b>Age 10-15:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children with FASD are easily influenced by peers</li> <li>• Behaviour issues can escalate and may include theft, lying and violence</li> <li>• Struggles with abstract concepts like money and time</li> <li>• Lack of empathy and significant social difficulties</li> <li>• Underdeveloped emotion regulation skills</li> </ul>	<b>BEHAVIOURAL SUPPORT</b> I need access to specialists that can advise me on dealing with difficult behaviours.  <b>COMMUNITY PROGRAMS</b> I need community programs that give my child a chance to be social and successful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor behaviour and friends closely</li> <li>• Seek professional help for major behaviour issues</li> <li>• Create a plan with my child to address emotional episodes</li> <li>• Teach my child about social situations with many cues and reminders</li> </ul>
<b>Age 15-20:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual health, drugs and alcohol use are risk areas</li> <li>• Continued struggles with impulse control, planning and understanding abstract concepts (math etc.)</li> <li>• Oppositional behaviours and possible violence</li> <li>• Depression and other disorders may appear</li> <li>• Reach legal adulthood – developmentally immature</li> </ul>	<b>MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS</b> I need medical professionals that understand the challenges of FASD.  <b>PLANNING</b> I need information on what options exist for my child in adulthood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactively talk about major issues like sex, drugs and alcohol use</li> <li>• Get help immediately for extreme behaviours or psychological symptoms</li> <li>• Plan for my child's adulthood, trusteeship &amp; guardianship</li> <li>• Talk about my child's goals and dreams</li> </ul>
<b>Adulthood and Beyond:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults often appear more competent than they are</li> <li>• Difficulty holding employment</li> <li>• Involvement with the legal system</li> <li>• Unintended pregnancy and parenthood</li> <li>• Continued risky/impulsive behaviours</li> <li>• Addictions</li> </ul>	<b>LEGAL HELP</b> I need access to legal advice related to lifespan planning and any legal system problems.  <b>FINANCIAL RESOURCES</b> I need to know that the person I have cared for will have ongoing financial support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to provide support with daily living activities</li> <li>• Ensure a safe and supportive living environment</li> <li>• Help others understand that while the person I care for may look mature, they have a life-long disability and face many challenges</li> </ul>

**INDIVIDUALS WITH FASD EXPERIENCE DIFFERENT CHALLENGES AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF LIFE AND THEY NEED SUPPORT ACCORDING TO THE CHALLENGES THEY FACE**

<sup>3</sup> This table was modified with permission from D. Badry. [https://canfasd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Caregiver\\_ENG\\_2019-Final.pdf](https://canfasd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Caregiver_ENG_2019-Final.pdf)