

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

October 2006

Introduction and Information

While the spectrum of disorders caused when a pregnant woman consumes alcohol is the subject of worldwide attention readily accessed on the Internet. The information posted on this site comes to us by way of the courtesy of an agency, the Fetal Alcohol Training and Education Centre based in Belleville. Our Past Lieutenant Governor, Ralph Porter, is to be thanked for developing the format of delivery. Kiwanis is not responsible for the content but is simply the means of disseminating the information provided.

PREFACE

In developing this page of introduction to the information you are, the Division 5 West Lieutenant Governor has developed a précis of earlier communications, portions of written material and conversations about the subject disorder. He does not, therefore, assume credit for the choice of words used in the paragraphs that follow.

INTRODUCTION

While the spectrum of disorders caused when a pregnant woman consumes alcohol is the subject of worldwide attention readily accessed on the Internet, the easily understood, somewhat clinical information you are receiving, now, through Kiwanis comes to us by way of the courtesy of an agency, the Fetal Alcohol Training and Education Centre based in Belleville. Our Past Lieutenant Governor, Ralph Porter, is to be thanked for developing the format of delivery. Kiwanis is simply the means of disseminating the information provided.

The Masonic and Scottish Rite Lodges in that area provided much of the funding necessary to get the public awareness campaign underway. School Board support staff –again in the Belleville area- were amazed to find out that 70% of children with FASD are misdiagnosed as ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)

ABSTRACT

Children with FASD have permanent brain damage. This can lead to hard-to-manage behaviour including temper tantrums, hyperactivity, or difficulty paying attention. It's important to remember that the child cannot "grow out of" his/her brain damage. Even though he/she may learn to cope with her condition, FASD is something that he/she will live with his/her entire life. The statistics monitoring FASD are not nice and include the observation that 95% of diagnosed cases will have mental health problems throughout their lives. Damage is a diverse continuum from mild intellectual and behavioural issues to profound disabilities or premature death.

Clearly the best solution would be to initiate the education that would avoid the condition in the first place. Given that FASD is not reversible, some of the most successful

parenting techniques focus on addressing skills and habits that parents actually can change.

There are strategies that can work to help the child with an FASD compensate for some difficulties. Early diagnosis and intensive intervention and tutoring can do wonders, but the need for a supportive structure is permanent. Because misdiagnosis is always a possibility, education of cause and effect of the syndrome is all important across a society that may not have been exposed to the condition.

ROLE OF KIWANIS

With this background, perhaps you the reader, will be better enabled to understand the life challenges that will be part of the new born coming into the world and suffering from FASD. Here, in education, is where Kiwanis can play a significant role

Some of the organizations which you may consider working with include:

- The Access Centre
- All Care Health Services
- Behavioural Consulting Services
- District Children's Services
- Public Libraries
- Pregnancy Crisis Centres
- Big Sister's Association
- Bridging the Gap
- Centre for Family Preservation and Wellness
- Children's Mental Health
- Counselling Services
- Early Treatment Centre
- Family Resource and Support
- First Adventure Child Development Centre
- The Children's Aid Society
- Infant Development Services
- Mental Health Services
- Secondary School Teachers Association
- Pathways to Independence
- Destinations for Youth
- Victorian Order of Nurses
- The Health Unit

Your area may not have this selection of community services but this list will give you some idea of which organizations with whom you would like to deal.