



FASD- Fact Sheet

What is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder?

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a group of **developmental disabilities** caused by prenatal alcohol exposure. Children with FASDs can have learning, behavior, and thinking difficulties that last a lifetime.

How many children are affected?

About **1 in 20 children (5%)** have an FASD in the United States. Most children with prenatal alcohol exposure do not get correctly diagnosed with an FASD.

What critical programs ensure care?

- **Medicaid** supports physical health and mental health care for about half of all children with special healthcare needs like FASD.
- **Public schools** provide critical educational supports via the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and accommodations through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- **FASD Respect Act of 2025** helps people with FASD and their families access programs and support services and provides education and awareness about prenatal alcohol exposure.

What does the evidence say?

- **There is no safe amount of alcohol to drink during pregnancy.** Exposure to alcohol before birth can damage the brain and other organs of the unborn child.
- **Only 20% of children with FASDs** are diagnosed and receive the services they need.
- **Early diagnosis and treatment can improve life outcomes for people with FASDs.** Giving children the support they need helps them reach their full potential and reduces long-term healthcare costs.

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