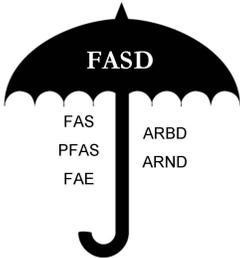




National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Helping children & families by fighting the leading known cause of mental retardation & birth defects

FASD: What the Business Community Should Know



Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) is an

umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drank

alcohol during pregnancy. These effects, which also include fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), the least common yet most severe and most recognizable effect under the FASD umbrella, can include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities with possible lifelong implications.

FASD takes an enormous financial toll on affected families and society as a whole.

- ♦ Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), the most severe and least common effect under the FASD umbrella, costs the United States \$5.4 billion annually in direct and indirect costs;
- ♦ An individual with full-blown FAS incurs an average lifetime health cost of \$860,000, although costs can be as high as \$4.2 million;

FASD is 100% preventable if women abstain from drinking during pregnancy.

- ♦ Potential savings from preventing 1 case of FAS would result in a \$300,000 reduction in medical costs alone.

FASD may affect an individual's ability to live independently throughout their lifetime.

- ♦ Nearly 80% of adults with FASD do not live independently;
- ♦ 80% of adults with FASD have problems with employment.



The business community can help individuals with FASD by:

- ♦ Providing productive work with structure and routine to help them stay focused and increase their self-esteem;
- ♦ Emphasizing life skills through pre-employment vocational skills programs;
- ♦ Providing highly structured, part-time jobs;
- ♦ Providing on-going job coaching and minor adjustments in work hours and demands.

The business community can help prevent FASD and support affected individuals and families by:

- ♦ Hiring individuals with FASD and other disabilities;
- ♦ Including FASD in their health fairs
- ♦ Providing information to employees about the risks of drinking during pregnancy;
- ♦ Contacting Employee Assistance Program programs to request training on FASD for their counselors;
- ♦ Participating in alcohol-related commemorative days/events (e.g. National Alcohol Awareness Week) and including FASD;
- ♦ Supporting FASD support groups or community coalitions through in-kind donations of meeting space or staff assistance;
- ♦ Supporting non-profit organizations dedicated to prevented FASD through workplace giving campaigns.