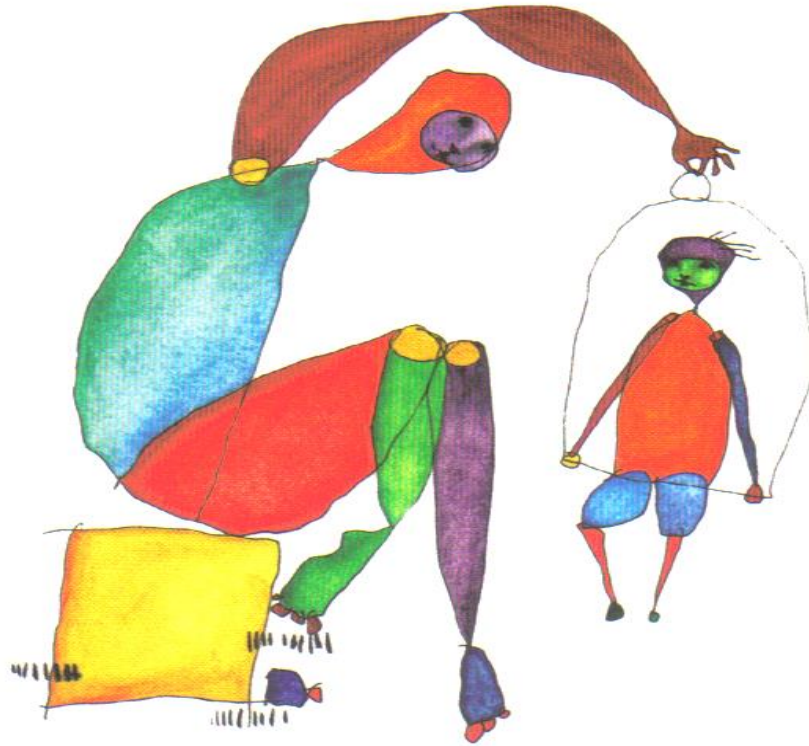


How Can I Help You? Compassionate Assessment for FASD in Young Children

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Barbara Fitzgerald M.D. FRCP(C)
Developmental Pediatrician
Clinical Associate Professor, UBC

I hope it will be said
we taught them
to stand tall & proud,
even in the face of history



& the future was made
new & whole for us all,
one child at a time.

Service: My Grandfather's Blessings, by Rachel Remen, M.D.

- A helping relationship may incur a sense of debt, but service, like healing, is mutual. Service is free from debt. The wholeness in me is as strengthened as the wholeness in you. Everyone involved is fortunate to have had the chance to participate. In helping, we may find a sense of satisfaction; in serving, we have an experience of gratitude.
- Serving is also different from fixing. One of the pioneers of the Human Potential Movement, Abraham Maslow, said, "If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." Seeing yourself as a fixer may cause you to see brokenness everywhere, to sit in judgment on life itself. When we fix others, we may not see their hidden wholeness or trust the integrity of the life in them. Fixers trust their own expertise. When we serve, we see the unborn wholeness in others; we collaborate with it and strengthen it. Others may then be able to see their wholeness for themselves for the first time.

Start Early, Go Far: Early Assessment Leads to Understanding & Inclusive Communities

What are our goals in assessing young children?

- To assess for delays
- To refer for diagnosis
- To provide developmental support
- To connect to other services
- To educate

And maybe some other goals...

- To show respect for the parent and the child
- To show the parent that you see how wonderful their child is
- To show them that there is hope
- To heal
- To let them know you think they are the most important person in their child's life
- To show compassion

How Can I Help You?

We Believe:

Children do best when they are cared for by loving parents who can nurture them, provide them with the necessities of life, and encourage them as they learn and grow.

We Know:

Even in a city as wealthy as Vancouver, and despite their mothers' best intention, children go without food, clothing, adequate housing, books, and transportation.

We Provide:

Relief from poverty through women-centered mentorship. mom2mom pairs volunteer mentors with moms who need help learning the basic mothering and life skills many of us learned from our own mothers, aunts or neighbours.



thank you for making it possible

Who Are the Mothers of Children With FASD?

- All socioeconomic groups
- All ethnic groups and races but less likely in certain cultures
- More prevalent in groups affected by stress and trauma
- Risk factors include mental health issues, **history of childhood sexual abuse** and other trauma

Why are we talking about FASD assessment at a workshop for Early Childhood Educators?

- ECE and especially IDP and SCD consultants have a unique role in the health care system
- The very nature of your work empowers parents
- You see them over time and gather observations
- You build trust
- You encourage referrals for further assessment

Why assess for FASD in early childhood?

Pros

- Early intervention services
- The child's concerns are usually milder
- The mother is more likely to be in her child bearing years
- The interventions in the early years are seen as achievable by the mother

Cons

- Developmental features are more general and definitive diagnosis may not be possible
- Presentation may be subtle and may just look like behavioural issues
- Issue of "labeling"

What Causes FASD?

- Prenatal exposure to alcohol
- But how much is too much?

Diagnosis of FASD

Canadian Standards and Guidelines use a 4 digit code:

Growth: growth (pre or postnatally)

Facial Features

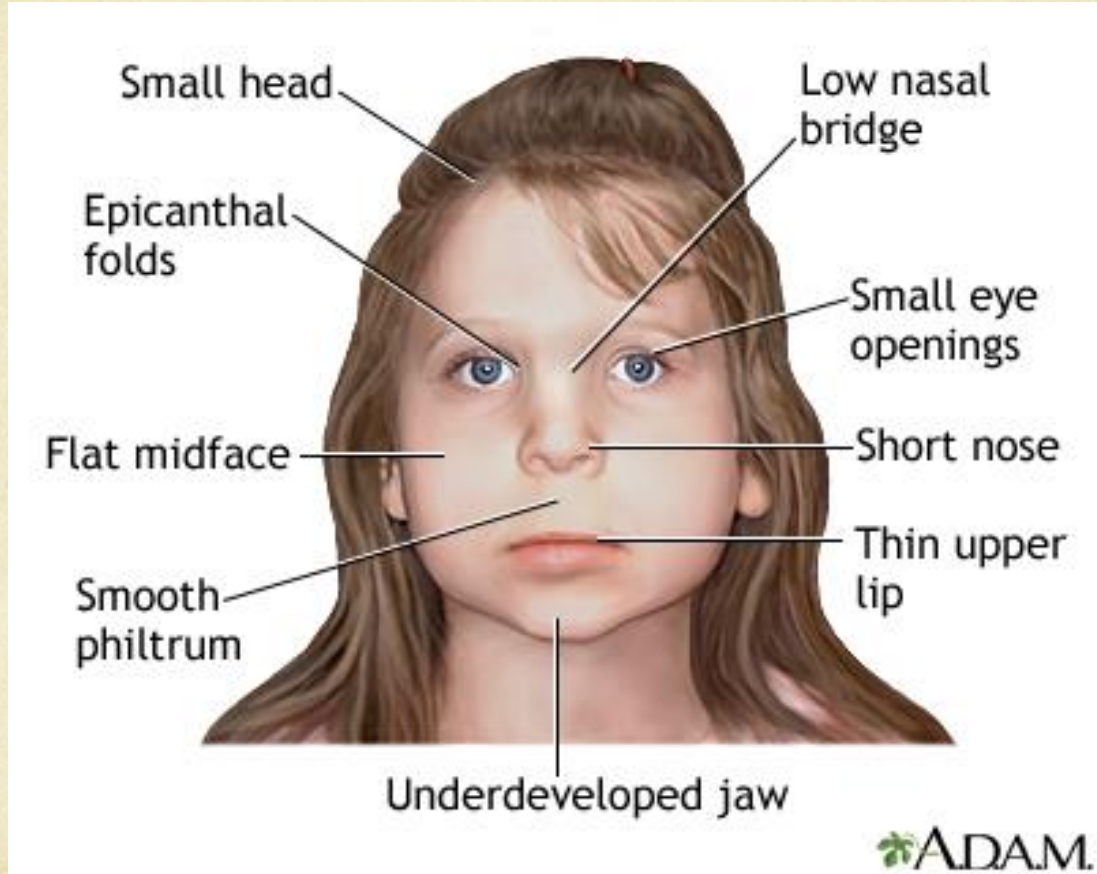
Brain effects

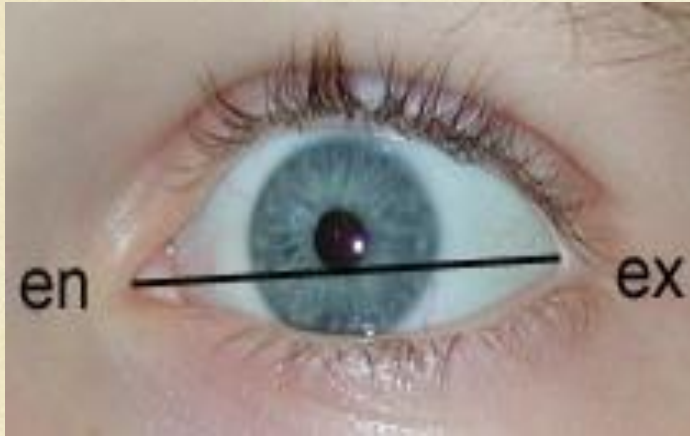
Alcohol exposure



The Face of FASD

- Thin upper lip
- Flattened philtrum
- Short palpebral fissures (eye openings)





Courtesy of Dr. Sterling Clarren

How Does FASD Present in the Early Years?

Infancy:

- infant may be colicky, or if very delayed, may be an “easy” baby
- May have feeding difficulties
- Family may be involved with social services because of concerns regarding neglect

How Does FASD Present in the Early Years?

Toddler/Preschooler:

Speech and Language: delays in both expressive and receptive language

- as they get closer to K, expressive language may catch up but sequencing and relating a story succinctly is often still behind
- Receptive language delays often persist
- think about lack of exposure to language as a contributor, especially if mother is depressed
- May refuse to listen to stories

Toddler/Preschooler

Fine motor: delays

- May present as delays in holding a pencil, doing buttons and zippers, articulation difficulties

Gross motor: variable presentation

- Low muscle tone and hyperextensible joints are frequent and can contribute to gross motor delays
- Weak balance, mild finger tremor when pointing
- Sometimes gross motor skills are a strength!

Toddler/Preschooler

- Social: seen as very social but may be overly friendly with strangers
- You may get the sense that they would leave with you
- May have poor boundaries with other children, sometimes get in other kids' space

Behaviour

- Short attention span, hyperactivity, impulsivity
- Variable ability to attend, learn and behave from day to day
- No cause and effect reasoning
- Very strict adherence to rules, especially for others
- “stealing and lying”
- Routine-bound, transitions difficult
- Autism-like features

Learning

- May learn more slowly
- Inconsistent, variable retention

Asking about alcohol use during pregnancy

- Was this pregnancy a surprise?
- When did you find out? Was it when you felt kicking?
- How were things going for you then?
- Before you were pregnant, tell me about your habits with drinking, going out, etc.
- How old were you when you started drinking?
- How much alcohol could you hold before you would pass out?
- Was your partner drinking?
- Have you ever worried about your drinking?
- If she says she quit when she found out-did she get help to quit?

Listening

There is a way of relating to others such that one deliberately listens for the hidden beauty in them. The place of their beauty is often the place of their greatest integrity. When you listen, the integrity and wholeness in others moves closer. Your attention strengthens it and makes it easier for them to hear it in themselves. In your presence, they can more easily inhabit that in them which is beyond their limitations, a place of greater freedom and sanctuary. Eventually they may be able to live there.

Excerpted from: *My Grandfather's Blessings*,
by Rachel Remen, M.D.

a chinese hanzi often requires multiple characters to create a unique word.
this word uses the characters from which it is made to greater convey its meaning

'to listen'

ears



The image shows the Chinese character '聽' (to listen) in a large, bold, black font. The character is composed of three parts: '耳' (ear) on the left, '目' (eye) on the top right, and '心' (heart) on the bottom right. The character is centered on a white background.

eyes

undivided
attention

heart

In Closing

- Appreciate the vulnerability of the families we work with
- Hold a deep respect for the value and worth of every child