

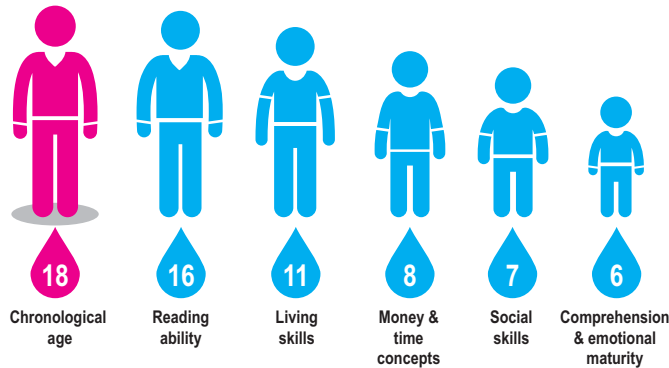
What is FASD?

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a diagnostic term used to describe the lifelong neurodevelopmental (brain) impairments and congenital anomalies that can result from prenatal alcohol exposure.^(3,4)

The effects of FASD vary considerably and it is often not diagnosed.^(4,5) High rates of co-occurring conditions mean that a diagnosis of FASD is often missed as it is hidden behind diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, PTSD, anxiety, conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder and reactive attachment disorder.⁽⁵⁾

Characteristic features within the FASD spectrum include behavioural and learning difficulties, problems with language, memory, attention and reasoning, impulsivity, and limited social, emotional and daily living skills.^(3,6) These brain-based difficulties are lifelong and have a profound impact on quality of life for individuals and their families.⁽⁷⁾

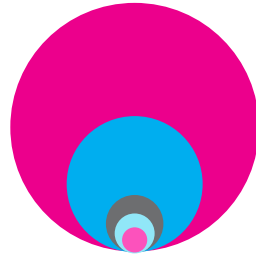
Age Dysmaturity



Many people with FASD have developmental delay, and cognitive abilities often develop at different rates.⁽⁴⁾ This can mean that, for example, an 18 year old may have the reading ability of a 16 year old, the living skills of an 11 year old, and the social skills of a 7 year old. It is essential that communication and support services are appropriate for an individual's developmental age.⁽⁸⁾

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

More children are affected by FASD than Autism Spectrum Disorder, Spina Bifida, Cerebral Palsy and Down Syndrome combined.^(1,25,26,27,28,29)



- 2.91-4.41% FASD
- 1.1-2.5% Autism Spectrum Disorder
- 0.14% Cerebral Palsy
- 0.086% Down Syndrome
- 0.051% Spina Bifida

Further Information

A full reference list for this brochure is available by scanning this QR Code:



Produced by the National Organisation for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (NOFASD) Australia.

FASD Facts

What everybody needs to know about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder



A highly prevalent disability

Estimated to affect 2.91—4.41%⁽¹⁾ of the Australian population

FASD is the leading cause of birth defects and developmental and learning disabilities worldwide⁽²⁾

FASD results from brain injury caused by prenatal alcohol exposure



Email us: enquiries@nofasd.org.au
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NOFASD Australia is funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

For more information,
visit www.nofasd.org.au
or call 1800 860 613

FASD is a largely hidden disability

Most individuals have no characteristic facial features, even when the brain is profoundly affected.⁽⁹⁾

A high percentage of people with FASD experience sensory processing difficulties.⁽¹⁰⁾

People with FASD have strengths and challenges

A strengths-based approach is important when developing effective interventions.⁽¹¹⁾

Mental health challenges are common for those with FASD

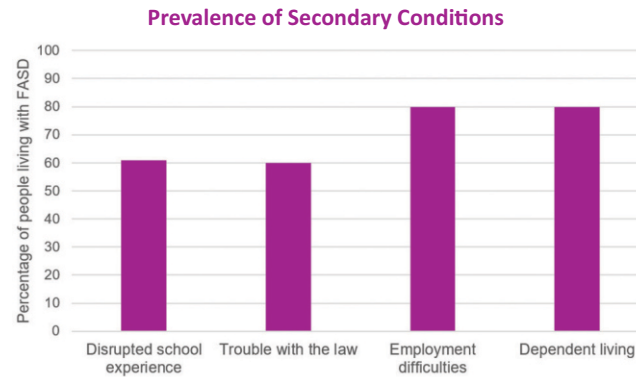
Early diagnosis and support reduces the likelihood of mental health difficulties.^(12,13)

People with FASD can have high intelligence

One study found that the IQs of those with FASD ranged from 45 - 120.⁽¹⁴⁾

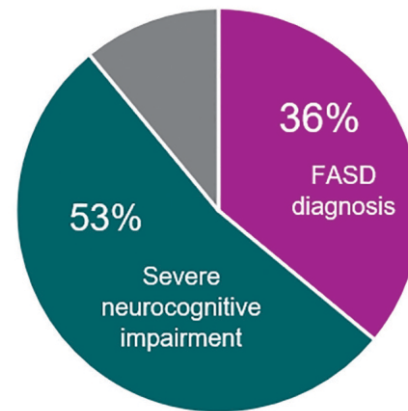
Prevalence of Secondary Conditions

A majority of people with FASD experience secondary risks, including those listed below.⁽¹⁵⁾



Youth in Detention

FASD is also highly over-represented in prison populations including youth detention centres.⁽¹⁶⁾



Secondary conditions are 2-4 times less likely to develop if FASD is diagnosed early and individualised professional support provided.⁽¹⁵⁾ Early intervention which includes supporting parents to understand their child's behaviour as a symptom of brain damage can achieve improved outcomes. It is therefore vital that service providers are FASD-informed.

No amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy

Alcohol can harm a fetus at any stage, even before the pregnancy is confirmed.⁽¹⁷⁾

50-60% of Australian pregnancies are alcohol exposed

These women often experience shame and fear of judgement or punishment.^(18,19,20)

58% of professionals lack confidence asking about alcohol use in pregnancy.⁽²¹⁾

23% of Australians are unaware of the dangers of alcohol to a developing fetus.⁽²²⁾

50% of women experience an unplanned pregnancy

Nearly 1 in 5 report binge drinking prior to pregnancy recognition.^(23,24)