

Benefits of FASD Assessment

Completing a fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) assessment, leading to an FASD diagnosis, can result in specific benefits to the individual and family, including: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14



EXPLAIN BEHAVIORS, CHALLENGES AND STRENGTHS

"We thought we were doing something wrong. After the diagnosis, we understood better."



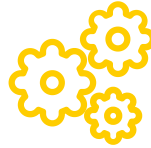
CONNECT TO APPROPRIATE SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

"Identifying the specific disabilities that are related to FASD helps families receive the necessary services."



EFFECTIVE/ APPROPRIATE MEDICINES AND THERAPIES

"A formal diagnosis can often open doors to specialized support tailored to the unique needs of individuals with an FASD."



VALIDATE PERSON AND FAMILY'S EXPERIENCES

"Diagnosis helped me understand my child."



BUILD CONNECTIONS WITH OTHERS AFFECTED

"I feel so much better talking to other parents who have children with an FASD, knowing it's not just my child."



ADJUST EXPECTATIONS OF PERON'S ABILITIES

"My child understood this wasn't their fault. They had clarity as to why they weren't like everyone else."



QUALIFY FOR SCHOOL/WORK SERVICES AND SUPPORT

"With accommodations, my child is treated as a capable learner and given the challenges needed to grow."



IMPROVE CONFIDENCE AND SELF-AWARENESS

"Diagnosis helped my children learn and understand themselves better."

Benefits of FASD Assessment



IMPROVE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS WITH FAMILY AND PEERS

"As our family began to learn about FASD, we went from barely surviving to thriving."



BETTER PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT FASD

"Official FASD assessments document the large prevalence of FASD which can help with awareness and funding for more support services."



REDUCE RISK OF FUTURE ALCOHOL-EXPOSED PREGNANCIES

"I am sober; my daughter gives me a reason to stay sober. I don't think I would have managed to stay ten years sober if it had not been for her."



REDUCE FEELINGS OF STIGMA AND SHAME

"Hearing personal testimonies from other moms who have recovery, strength and hope have helped reduce stigma and shame."

WHAT DOES SOMEONE WITH AN FASD SAY ABOUT THEIR DIAGNOSIS?



"After receiving my FASD diagnosis, we came up with strategies to help me manage my symptoms, and we still find these approaches effective today."

While there are many benefits to getting an FASD assessment, it can be an emotional and challenging process for families.¹⁵ It may be helpful to connect individuals with an FASD with peers and support groups who understand what they are going through.¹⁶ Providing community education on FASD can also be beneficial to increase awareness and reduce stigma.¹⁷

How is an FASD assessment done?

There is not a simple test (like a blood test) to tell if someone has an FASD. Instead, a trained team must do different types of testing before they can make a diagnosis. These tests include a physical assessment and a cognitive/neurobehavioral evaluation. Most often, a team of medical professionals work together to make this diagnosis, including a physician and a psychologist. Different clinics use different types of criteria, but all FASD assessments within the United States assess facial features, growth and cognition.

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What are the next steps after getting an FASD diagnosis?

Getting an FASD diagnosis is an opportunity to get the services and support needed to be successful.¹⁸ After receiving a diagnosis, individuals should be advised to:

- Share the diagnosis with the child's school to assist with the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Share this information with the child's health care provider to receive appropriate medical and mental health services.
- Contact the county's social service office about available services and supports.
- Look into the resources offered by organizations like Proof Alliance and FASD United.
- Connect with support groups or peer networks to talk with other people impacted by an FASD.

What happens if a person doesn't get an FASD diagnosis after assessment?

Even if an FASD diagnosis is not made, there can still be value in completing an assessment. Research has found that earlier assessments -- and not necessarily a diagnosis - are associated with better outcomes for children with prenatal alcohol exposure.¹⁹ The assessment will identify the person's strengths, abilities, and challenges. This can be used to adjust expectations so that they are in line with the person's current abilities. In addition, an FASD assessment looks at other areas of concern (such as learning disabilities, mood disorders, or problems with coping skills), and the evaluation can inform treatment recommendations for these issues. Finally, an FASD assessment -- even without an FASD diagnosis -- can act as a road map, directing individuals and their families to targeted interventions, treatments and supports.

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