



MAY 2023 | www.neafan.ca

Mitigating the Impact of FASD





Filling the Gap: Early Diagnosis and Intervention for Preschoolers.

The evaluation of preschoolers who have prenatal alcohol exposure (PAE) is critical in identifying kids who might have behavioural and academic issues in the future. Early diagnosis provides a crucial chance to offer suitable interventions that advance their development. However, due to the complexity involved in comprehending the influence of several factors contributing to developmental delays and challenging behaviours, this assessment offers difficulties for diagnostic teams and clinicians. Multiple substance exposures, pre- and postnatal trauma histories, and complex family backgrounds involving developmental delays and generational trauma may all be among these risks. Unfortunately, little research has been done to evaluate the neurobehavioral patterns seen in preschoolers with PAE.

Understanding the Complexities:

Assessing preschoolers with PAE requires a thorough knowledge of the areas of brain development impacted by PAE, as well as the development and flexibility of brain structures. However, there isn't a clear explanation in the literature for how variations in these domains of development can be linked to PAE in preschoolers. There has, therefore, been some clinical reluctance to make a firm diagnosis for this age range based simply on clinical evaluations. Nevertheless, extensive research demonstrates the critical role of early intervention and diagnosis in mitigating the impact of FASD.

Addressing the Research Gap:

The main goal of this issue paper is to highlight the urgent need for more focused research by shedding light on the research gap around the diagnosis of FASD in preschool-aged children. We can encourage the early detection of preschoolers with PAE at risk by deepening our understanding of the diagnostic procedure and investigating efficient assessment strategies. As a result, timely interventions and support systems

that encourage optimum development and enhance long-term outcomes for impacted children will be made possible.

Infants and preschoolers prenatally exposed to alcohol and other substances benefit from specialized multidisciplinary assessments. Assessments by an experienced team supports positive development and facilitates early intervention. Diagnosis and intervention efforts are crucial for spotting behavioural and academic issues early on and providing the appropriate support for preschoolers with PAE. However, the paucity of studies focused on FASD diagnosis in this age group highlights the need for additional research. We aim to motivate researchers and clinicians to fill this information gap by highlighting the advantages of early diagnosis, thereby enhancing the lives of preschoolers who have been exposed to prenatal alcohol.



"Shedding light on the research gap around the diagnosis of FASD in preschool-aged children."



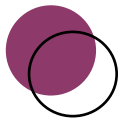
NEAFAN wishes Happy Mother's Day to all the incredible FASD Moms!

NEAFAN honors the amazing mothers raising children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). Your love, strength, and unwavering dedication are an endless source of inspiration. Your deep commitment to understanding FASD and finding the best strategies for your child's development is truly heartwarming. Thank you for your unwavering love. As we celebrate this day, we encourage you to take a moment for yourself, knowing that you deserve all the love and appreciation in the world. Happy Mother's Day.

Dual Stigma

Institutions or service providers may adopt a judgmental stance because of stigma, which frequently entails a lack of treatment choices. Due to stigma, many women may feel uncomfortable discussing their alcohol use. Women may be prevented from using critical harm reduction and support services by health and social care professionals who are judgmental, use punitive tactics, or demand full abstinence. This is especially true for women of colour, those who come from less affluent backgrounds, or those who deal with various forms of injustice.

More than other illnesses, substance abuse and addiction are severely stigmatized in the social, political, and legal domains. Because they are perceived as violating socially created notions of what a “good woman” or “good mother” is, women who use substances or who have substance use disorders endure dual stigma. In addition to adding to the internalized stigma women face, the dual stigma and negative labels attached to mothers can support the idea that women are, or will be, “bad” or “unfit” mothers.



This stigma may add to the idea that substance abuse while pregnant is a callous decision.



“Women who use substances or who have substance use disorders endure dual stigma.”

Lack of knowledge of variables that contribute to drug use, such as trauma, interpersonal violence, stress, poverty, and isolation, among health and social service providers and the public, might promote the idea that women deserve the stigma and prejudice they face. The expectations placed on mothers to follow the ideals of a “good mother” eventually shape perceptions and responses toward pregnant women who drink or who have children who have been diagnosed with FASD.



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Links & Resources

- [2023 Canada FASD Conference interest form](#)
- [Early Diagnosis and Intervention for Preschoolers Article Source](#)
- [Dual Stigma Article Source](#)
- [Contact NEAFAN](#)



The Canada FASD Conference

The first ever Canada FASD Conference is happening in November 2023! Join us in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan for three days of presentations and events to learn how we can transform evidence into action in the field of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

This conference will bring together approximately 500 researchers, caregivers, individuals with FASD, policymakers, and professionals to share what they know about FASD. Canadian and international attendees are welcome!

What's it about?

This conference will bring people from across Canada together to share how research and evidence can inform tangible solutions to address the complexities of FASD. This year's theme is Connect, Inspire, Innovate: From Evidence to Action.

What should I expect?

Attendees can expect lots of opportunities to learn and connect with other people who are passionate about FASD. This three-day event will include keynote presentations, workshops, poster sessions, and various speakers. It is being held at TCU Place in Saskatoon. The event will be limited to 500 people.

Who should come?

Anyone and everyone that is passionate about FASD and neurodevelopmental disabilities are invited. This conference is a great opportunity for:

- Development disability researchers, especially those focused on FASD
- Individuals with FASD, their family members, and those that care for them
- FASD professionals, including those working in diagnostic clinics and support programs

- Professionals working in child welfare and social services
- Policymakers and government representatives
- Educators and school staff
- Mental health, substance use and addictions professionals
- Individuals focused on FASD prevention and women's health promotion
- Doctors, nurses, midwives, and other healthcare practitioners
- Lawyers, corrections officers, police, judges, and other law and justice professionals
- And many more!

If you'd like to attend, please fill out this [interest form](#) to stay up to do on the latest conference news and updates.