



# Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders

*"I didn't know why I did a lot of things I used to do. But with this [diagnosis], I do know why I am doing it." -Taylor Allen*

## What is a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder?

FASD is an umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual who was exposed to alcohol before birth. FASDs can impact physical, mental, behavioral, or cognitive development as well as cause growth deficiencies, central nervous system disabilities, and, in only about 10% of people diagnosed, specific facial characteristics. Studies show that up to 1 in 20 U.S. school children may be on the FASD spectrum.

(From [kidshealth.org/en/parents/fas.html](https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/fas.html), accessed 7/29/24)

- Caring
- Articulate
- Friendly
- Musical
- Artistic, Creative
- Practical, Athletic,
- Skilled with animals, nature

### Common Strengths



- Attention, concentration, memory
- Speech, language
- Emotional regulation
- Inconsistent performance
- Abstract reasoning, cause & effect logic

### Common Areas of Difference



## **To be a friend:**

- Encourage and model appropriate behaviors.
- Structure activities.
- Eliminate distractions from a conversation, gain eye contact before speaking.
- Redirect instead of saying “don’t.”
- Be patient and generous with praise, affirming positive behaviors and actions.

## **References**

- FASD Resources, Ohio Department of Health & Addiction Health Services, [mha.ohio.gov/get-help/treatment-services/fasd-sitearea/resources/resources](http://mha.ohio.gov/get-help/treatment-services/fasd-sitearea/resources/resources)
- “Information Sheets,” FASDnetwork.org, [fasdnetwork.org/uploads/9/5/1/1/9511748/worcestershire\\_information\\_sheets.pdf](http://fasdnetwork.org/uploads/9/5/1/1/9511748/worcestershire_information_sheets.pdf)
- Real Stories: Living with FASDs, Center for Disease Control, [cdc.gov/fasd/stories/](http://cdc.gov/fasd/stories/)
- Social Skills tips, Speaking Tips, With Ministries: [withministries.org/adapting-the-sessions-to-the-needs-of-your-group/](http://withministries.org/adapting-the-sessions-to-the-needs-of-your-group/)