

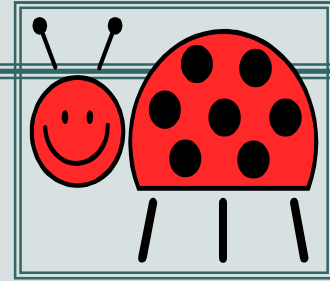
All About Me!

A Book About:



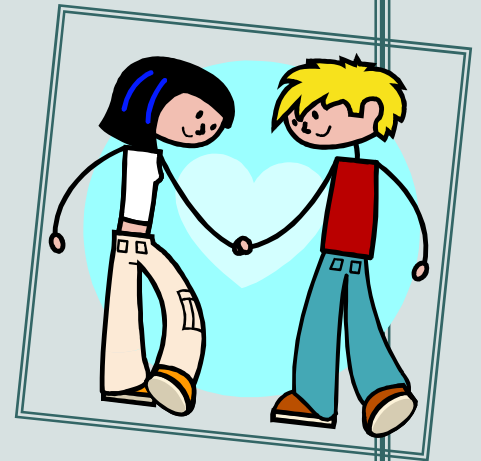
(Put ME
Here!)

Dear Supporter of Me,



This book is a way to help you get to know me a little bit better.

I have some struggles because my brain was affected by alcohol before I was born. Alcohol changed the way my brain developed, and this can show up as a *BEHAVIOR issue* instead of a *BRAIN issue*.



I want to do my best. I want to wake up in the morning feeling excited about my day, and I want to go to bed at night feeling good about myself.

Thank you so much for reading this booklet, and for learning as much as you can about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and the ways that prenatal alcohol exposure can affect learning and behavior. I am so happy and grateful to have you in my life right now.

Sincerely,





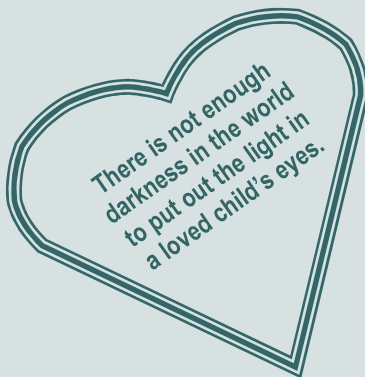
Getting to Know Me...

I have people in my life who love me very much. Here are some of the things that the people closest to me like BEST about me:

When I am feeling down about myself, it helps me to be reminded of these things. You will find things that YOU like best about me, too.

I have ____ brothers and ____ sisters.

My birthday is:



My favorite ways to spend my time are:

These interests can help motivate me to learn and explore.

I respond best to people who are:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> patient | <input type="checkbox"/> structured | <input type="checkbox"/> calm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fast-paced | <input type="checkbox"/> unstructured | <input type="checkbox"/> energetic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> positive | <input type="checkbox"/> organized | <input type="checkbox"/> consistent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> critical | <input type="checkbox"/> cluttered | <input type="checkbox"/> inconsistent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |



My Medical History...

I have been assessed and diagnosed with the following conditions, in addition to my history of prenatal alcohol exposure:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ADHD | <input type="checkbox"/> Reactive Attachment Disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ADD | <input type="checkbox"/> Oppositional Defiant Disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> Epilepsy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Depression | <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct Disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> Heart Condition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Impairments | <input type="checkbox"/> Bipolar Disorder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | |

I currently take the following medications:

Medication:

This how much I take:

This is when I take it:

My IQ:

- ☐ My IQ hasn't been evaluated.

My IQ was evaluated on this date: _____

My IQ was measured to be: _____

Comments: _____

Other Assessments:

My Adaptive Age:

- ☐ My Adaptive Age hasn't been evaluated.

My Adaptive Age was evaluated on this date: _____

My Adaptive Age was measured to be at these levels:

Expressive Language: _____

Reading Ability: _____

Comprehension: _____

Social / Emotional Skills: _____

Comments: _____



My Emotional Responses...

Sometimes I have problems expressing emotions in appropriate ways. This gets in the way of my learning, my friendships and my daily life. You can help me by recognizing my true emotions and supporting me to manage my emotions in healthy ways. I might not always be able to do this on my own.

All kids get upset. However, I can't always depend on the part of my brain that regulates emotions. My response to situations may be exaggerated or inappropriate, and I may not be able to regain control on my own. Please recognize how hard I try, even though my behavior may be challenging.



I get upset when:

- ☐ I don't understand
- ☐ Things move too fast for me
- ☐ I feel like I don't fit it
- ☐ I can't remember something
- ☐ Someone touches me
- ☐ I'm overwhelmed
- ☐ I don't know what questions to ask

I show my emotions by:

- ☐ acting defiant
- ☐ raising my voice
- ☐ pestering
- ☐ physical movement
- ☐ physical aggression
- ☐ giving up
- ☐ withdrawing
- ☐ talking too much



You can help me by:

- ☐ Noticing my cues of frustration
- ☐ Speaking slowly and calmly to me
- ☐ Gently reminding me that I'm losing control
- ☐ Guiding me to a quiet place where I can regain control with dignity
- ☐ Listening to the feelings behind my behavior

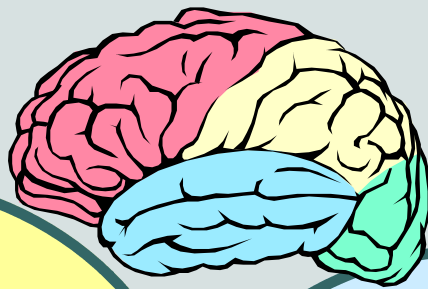


Sometimes my emotions bring me past the point of being rational. This is called a Meltdown. If I reach this point, I NEED you to calmly remove me to a quiet space so I can regain control. Trying to talk to me or reason with me when I'm in the middle of meltdown will only frustrate both of us. Wait until I've calmed down before talking about what happened.



Prenatal Alcohol Exposure and the Brain

There are some areas that are often a struggle for people with prenatal alcohol exposure. My brain and I have challenges with the following things:



Thinking abstractly.

I am a very literal, concrete thinker.



This means that I may not understand phrases that say one thing and mean another. ("Watch your mouth." "Pick up your room." "Do the right thing." etc.)

Brain pace.

I am a 30-Second Kid in a 5-Second World. This means that I think at a slower pace. It may take me longer to respond to you because my brain needs more time to process what you've said.



Learning from experience..

I have a hard time applying what I know to different situations.



Every situation is brand new to me because I don't always have the benefit of using past experiences to guide my actions.

Understanding cause and effect.

I am sometimes not able to look ahead and predict what might happen. This means that I am likely to make impulsive decisions, and then be surprised at the outcomes. Typical behavior plans might not work for me because of this.



It's so important that you remember this question: **WHAT IF the behavior is showing something about my brain? WHAT IF I really am doing the best I can? Sometimes my best doesn't look like everyone else's.**





Prenatal Alcohol Exposure and the Brain

There are some areas that are often a struggle for people with prenatal alcohol exposure. My brain and I have challenges with the following things:



Rigid thinking.

Once I've learned something, it's very hard for me to re-learn it or change it. For example, if we have to sit quietly in the gymnasium for a guest speaker, this might be hard for me because to me the gym is only for playing.



Reading body language. I am not able to understand non-verbal communication, like tone of voice, facial expression or body language. This means that I often don't understand what is really being communicated, and makes it hard for me to get along with other kids.



Memory.

My short-term memory is inconsistent, which means that sometimes I remember things and sometimes things get lost in my brain. I might be able to repeat something to you, and then forget it as soon as I walk away.



Sensory Integration. I experience my senses differently than most people. This means that a slight touch may feel like a slap, or normal lights may look like strobe lights. It makes it harder to get through the day when I struggle with things that seem normal to everyone else.



What Works.....

I CAN learn, I CAN get through my day feeling good about myself, and I CAN have successes. Here are some ideas that help create outside supports for my brain.

Use concrete language. I don't speak the language of abstractions, so I often don't understand what you mean. Pay attention to your words and try to use language that means exactly what it says.

Expect to reteach things to me. I struggle with my memory. I need to re-learn things over and over before they stick in my brain. Don't get frustrated with me for forgetting. I don't mean to forget.

Sometimes you will wonder if I am misbehaving on purpose or if I am acting from my brain differences. Here's an idea for you: Try assuming that my actions are from a brain difference, and put some supportive strategies consistently in place. If my behavior gets better, your strategies and your patience are HELPING me and my brain. Thank you!!

Provide external memory tools. It helps me not to always have to rely on my memory. Lists, reminders, cue cards—anything that can be an external memory for me will help me be more successful.

Speak slowly, and use fewer words. If you're wanting to explain something to me and I'm just not getting it, try slowing down and using fewer words. I process information at a slower pace, so it's easy for too many words to overwhelm me.

What Works.....

“Please don’t let what I **CAN’T** do interfere with what I **CAN** do!”

☐ Understand what routine means to me. Since my brain has trouble looking ahead, routine is what makes me feel secure. When my routine gets disrupted, I feel anxious because I don’t know what’s happening next. Prepare me for changes.

☐ Provide extra supervision. It helps to have people around me who understand that my brain works differently, and can help me navigate new and unfamiliar situations. Unstructured times are especially hard for me, so I might need extra help.

**Remember—
maybe it’s not
that I **WON’T**
do it. Maybe
it’s that I
CAN’T do it.**

☐ Use the same words. If you say, “Don’t run” “Walk, please” And “Slow down,” my brain may not understand that you’re wanting the same behavior each time. Use the exact same words / phrases to help my brain understand what’s expected.

☐ Be as specific as possible. I have a hard time figuring out all the steps that need to be done, and in what order to do them. Help me organize and break tasks down into small parts (and don’t expect me to rely on memory - write it down for me!)

The Environment.....

It's easy to figure out how to make the environment accessible to a person with a physical disability. Sometimes it's harder to look at my disability in the same way. There are simple changes in the environment that can make a big difference for me.

Help me eliminate clutter from my space.

A messy desk or locker can be overwhelming to me, but I have a hard time knowing what to throw away and what to keep. I also have a hard time organizing information.



Allow me to have ways to filter out distractions. Noise and visual stimulation make it hard for me to concentrate. Let me sit up front, where I will be less distracted. I might need earplugs or sunglasses to help me filter out my environment.



Keep the environment organized.

Clutter in the classroom or on the walls can be overwhelming to me. If my surroundings are tidy and organized, this will help my brain make sense of things.



Remember the question, "What has changed in the environment" if my behavior suddenly changes.

Even changes that seem very small can be dramatic in my life. Help me adapt to changes by showing me, rather than just telling me, what is expected of me.



Looking for More Information About Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders?

The Sycamore Project: Kentucky's Prevention Enhancement Site for FASD: 859-624-3622, x732 or Lmnagle@bluegrass.org

<http://come-over.to/FASCRC>

"Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Community Resource Center"

This website provides facts, resources and information including diagnostic tools, pictures, research / journal articles, strategies for intervention (in English and Spanish) and training opportunities.

Resources and links are included.

http://www.von.ca/fasd/_fasdtool_fullproof_final.pdf

"Let's Talk FASD"

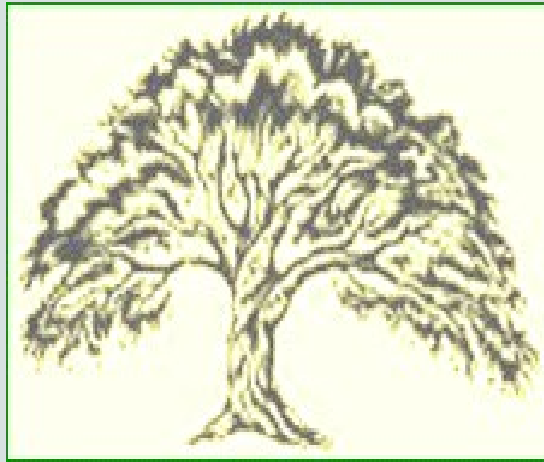
This free, downloadable guidebook provides information, stories, examples and resources for people seeking to support a person with brain differences caused by prenatal alcohol exposure. It's long, but well worth the read.

<http://www.fasalaska.com/EvensenFASDmanual.pdf>

"Making A Difference: Working with Students Who Have FASD"

This free, downloadable guidebook was written specifically for educators, but applies to anyone wanting to learn from the experience of others when working with a person living with FASD. It's long, but well worth the read.

Thank you so much for taking the time to learn more about how my brain and I work!!!



Prepared By:

Bluegrass Prevention Center
The Sycamore Project:
Kentucky's Prevention Enhancement Site
for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

401 Gibson Lane
Richmond, KY 40475
859-624-3622, x732
Lmnagle@bluegrass.org

Funded by a grant from
Kentucky's Division of Behavioral Health / Substance Abuse