

THE LITTLE FOX



FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME Your Special Child Between Birth & Five Years Old

This story portrays a mother and father fox and their young daughter fox who has FAS. Focus is on ages birth to five.

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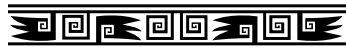




GREETINGS!!

“We have gathered here with Grandfather, our Creator, the ones who fly, the ones who crawl, the ones who swim, the ones who walk on four legs, and those beautiful spirits...those who have Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and Fetal Alcohol Related Conditions (FARC)...who have come to Earth as volunteers to teach us what we need to heal in our communities.

This story was created to help you understand the health problems and behavior challenges of your special child

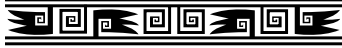




from birth to age 5 brought on by the effects of alcohol on their brain. The information in this story can help your child be their best.

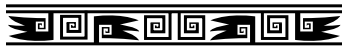
So welcome to the world of your special child and thank you for allowing us to walk with you on this journey.”





SECTION 1

A STORY ABOUT A LITTLE FOX

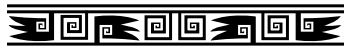






STAYS IN THE MOMENT

I am going to tell you a story about a small fox known as Stays in the Moment. Stays in the Moment was special. She did not look like other foxes...nor did she look like her brother or sister. Her eyes were tiny and spaced wide on either side of her nose and the area between her nose and upper lip was long and smooth. When she was first born, Stays in the Moment slept very little. She whimpered, fussed, and yelped all night, no matter what her mother did to soothe her.







Unlike her brother and sister who would eat whatever their parents put before them, Stays in the Moment did not seem hungry or interested in food.

Stays in the Moment was a careless fox, often placing herself in danger, forgetting to come when she was called, and wandering out of the den while her parents were out hunting.

Many times the little fox lost her way home, narrowly escaping Owl's clutches. Although her mother and father told her over and over how to stay safe, Stays in the







Moment would forget who was safe – such as lizard – and who was not safe – such as Hawk.

Stays in the Moment was usually a very friendly and happy little fox who wanted to play with all the other animals, but because she did not understand or remember the rules of play she often had problems. She could not run as fast, jump as high, or roll and tumble the way her brother and sister could. Her siblings often got upset with her, played tricks on her, or did things to get her into trouble.

When Stays in the Moment became upset or angry she







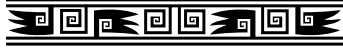
tried to tell others but her yips and yelps, whimpers and barks did not always sound like the language spoken by the other foxes, so her feelings were not understood.

Stays in the Moment's parents worried about their daughter. They knew someday she would have to live out on her own. Every night they prayed to Grandfather, the Creator, for help.

One night, while Mother and Father Fox were out on the hunt, Eagle flew low and landed in a bush over their head. At first they were startled because Eagle was not a bird of







the night, but when Eagle spoke, they soon understood why he had come.

Eagle said to Mother and Father Fox, “Dear Foxes, your prayers have been heard. Grandfather, our Creator, has sent me to help you. I know that you are worried because your daughter, Stays in the Moment, looks different and has a hard time learning and staying safe like your other children.”

“I am here to tell you the truth. When you were pregnant with Stays in the Moment and her brother and sister,







you, Mother Fox, and you, Father Fox, wandered down to the farm several times and ate grapes that had soured to the point that they contained alcohol.

“When you, Mother Fox, ate those grapes, the alcohol went into your baby’s body and hurt her brain. It is also the reason her face looks different. Her condition is called Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

“Your other kits may look or seem fine, however, pay close attention to them too and watch for any problems





they may have with learning. A problem such as this we call Fetal Alcohol Related Conditions.

“Foxes,” Eagle continued, “I can see your fear, but remember your daughter Stays in the Moment is a very special soul. We will all work together so that she can live and be as happy and healthy as her brother and sister. She is a gift to teach us patience, respect, and love.”

“No, you did not know this could happen. We know you both wanted healthy children and that you are trying to be the best parents possible, I am here to help you reach this goal.





I am going to send you to a wonderful healer who lives deep in the woods. He sits at the North of a medicine wheel, a healing circle. He has gathered together many helpers. They will assist you in understanding your daughter. They will teach you what to do to help her be her best. Trust in these helpers. I will return as often as you need. Just send your prayers to Grandfather, our Creator and I will come....”







A VISIT TO THE HEALING CIRCLE

Taking Stays in the Moment with them, Mother and Father Fox followed Eagle's directions and soon found themselves in a tiny forest clearing.

A small, fluffy-tailed brown squirrel suddenly dashed out from behind an ancient snag. She ran up and down chattering loudly until she finally stopped in front of the Foxes and flicked her tail from side to side.

Said the squirrel, "I hear you are looking for help for your daughter. I will be glad to lead you to the circle of





healers. Follow me, follow me, follow me... yes, yes, yes... follow me...”.

The Foxes eagerly followed Squirrel down the trail that led to the medicine wheel, the healing center for all the animals in the forest. When they arrived they saw a glowing fire enclosed in a circle of stones. The stones represented the knowledge of the ancient ones and the ones to come.

Seated at a large stump, inside the circle, to the North, was Raven reflecting enormous power, wisdom, and



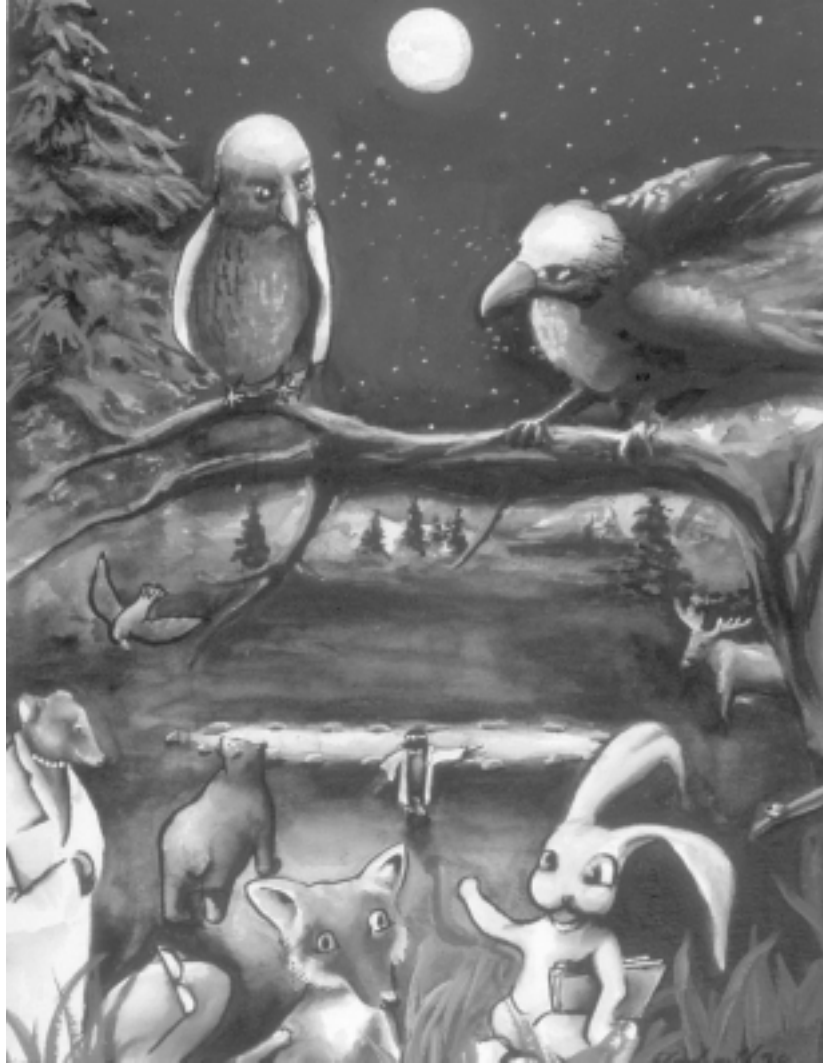


kindness. Squirrel introduced them, “There, there, there... yes, yes, yes... there, there, there is Dr. Raven.”

Dr. Raven slowly rose and greeted them by holding out his coal black wings. He smiled broadly and motioned to the Foxes to enter the healing circle.

Dr. Raven raised his wings and said, “Welcome, dear Foxes. Gathered here today are all the ones who have come to help you and your daughter. Let me introduce them and tell you why they are important in this circle of healing and in your daughter’s life. But first...make







yourselves comfortable, for we have much to talk about.”

Father Fox sat down on Dr. Raven’s right, Mother Fox sitting along side him. She held their daughter on her lap. Stays in the Moment seemed confused about what was happening and began squirming, fidgeting, and yipping as other animals came to join the healing circle.

Dr. Raven remained smiling and calm and greeted each new helper with affection and respect.

The first to enter the circle was Owl, the psychologist. Owl’s job was to help Father and Mother Fox understand





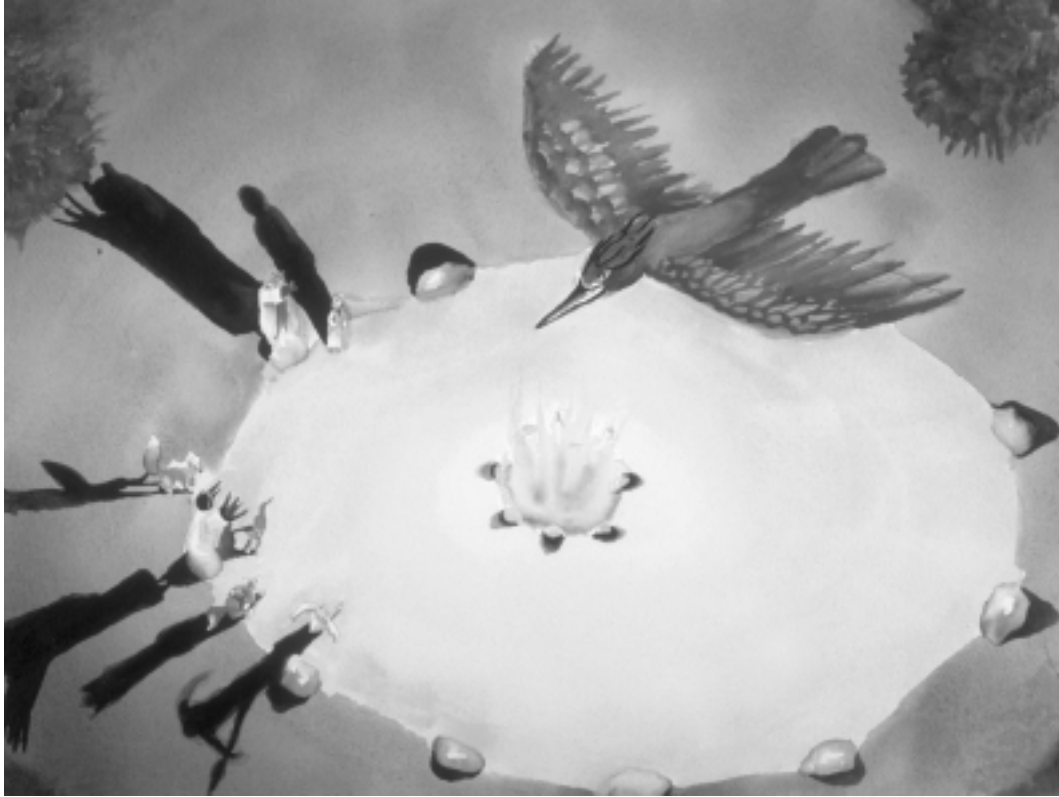


how the alcohol might have hurt their daughter's brain.

Owl asked many questions about the Fox's family, their problems, the successes they had had with their daughter, and what they felt as parents they did well. Another of Owl's concerns was Mother and Father Fox's feelings about their daughter's condition.

Next to be introduced was Rabbit, Owl's helper. Rabbit's job was to test Stays in the Moment to find out her strengths and skills and measure what the little fox had learned so far in her life.







The third helper was Kingfisher. Kingfisher listened to the way Stays in the Moment talked. From her speech patterns he could understand how Stays in the Moment's brain worked, how she learned, and what types of help she would need to understand her everyday world.

Deer, the head teacher from the forest school...where the little fox would soon go to learn with the other young forest animals...came forth. Deer's participation in the healing circle was important because teachers and parents must work together to be sure that many of the lessons learned at school were also taught at home.







Scampering to a tree branch came Lizard. Lizard's job was to take photographs of the animals that came to the healing circle. She, along with Dr. Raven, had helped design the healing circle and they ensured that those who entered received correct information.

Chipmunk, was the assistant to both Dr. Raven and Lizard. She set up all the appointments and made sure all the team members were organized and doing their jobs.

After Lizard and Chipmunk were introduced, Bear came into the light of the fire and sat to the West. Bear scratched







her back against a nearby pine tree, greeted the Fox family warmly, and patted Stays in the Moment on the head. The Fox family liked Bear immediately. Before Dr. Raven could introduce Bear, she grinned and said, “Welcome Foxes, my job is to help you understand all that is said here and to walk with you on your healing path all through the life of your daughter. I was chosen for this honor because my cub, Sees No Danger, has Fetal Alcohol Syndrome too.

My cub got her name because she has little fear and often makes choices that lead her into trouble. I, too, came to





this healing circle as a concerned parent.”

“When I first came for help, I was angry with myself for not being a better parent. I learned that all parents of our special children have these feelings. I discovered that such feelings were not necessary. Feelings of guilt and shame were simply part of my accepting what happened to my child. To my surprise, I found out I was a **good** parent but I just needed to do things differently for this cub of mine.”

“Through this medicine wheel, I learned ways to help my cub live a better life. Now I know we need everyone





in our forest community working together if we are to successfully care for our children and work to keep them safe.”

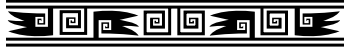
“I come here every week to help other parents learn what I have learned. If you have any questions just ask, I will try to help.”

With that, Bear leaned back and smiled. It was now Squirrel’s turn to talk.

“Well, well, well...yes, yes, yes...well, well, well.” Stuttered Squirrel, “There are many gathered here today, some of



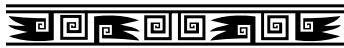




us you may have considered in other settings, a danger to you or your children. However, the ones you meet here at the circle understand how special these children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome are and are here to work together to help you and your child.”

The time in the circle was spent assessing Stays in the Moment’s needs and skills and helping Stays in the Moment’s parents understand that they did not need to blame themselves or feel guilty for the problems their daughter had.

Dr. Raven and his team knew that this was often the case





when a child was born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Related Conditions. They also knew that parents love their children and want what is best. After all, that is the reason, despite their fears, Father and Mother Fox came to the medicine wheel.

By the end of the day, Dr. Raven and the team of helpers had given Mother and Father Fox much to think about, as well as many tools to help their precious child live a happy, healthy life.

As the Fox family stood to leave, Squirrel jumped up and ran after them saying. “Wait, wait, wait,...there is one





more, one more helper for you to meet. Bear, please, ask him to join us now.”

“Yes, dear Squirrel, he is here. Coyote, my friend, please, could you come?”

Coyote, who had been silently circling the medicine wheel most of the day, trotted briskly into the light of the fire. He smiled broadly and winked at Bear, then said, “I have been here all day. My job is to ensure that the most important part of healthy living is not forgotten. Balance between our physical, emotional, and spiritual needs will keep us healthy. You have heard about the first two. I am





here to remind us that Stays in the Moment is a beautiful spirit whose job is to teach us love, patience, and respect.”

Caring for her requires that we all work together to make the best life possible for our children, families, and everyone here in our forest. On this sometimes sad and perilous journey, remember to look for the joy and humor. Your daughter, if you pay close attention, will teach you about all of these.”

With these words, the healing circle ended and the Fox family returned home, their hearts much lighter! In the





next section are some of the things the Fox family learned. Share this information with everyone in your community that all may help love, care for, and support our special children.





WHAT YOU CAN DO... BEFORE YOUR BABY IS BORN...

The most important thing you can do is to look after your own health, eating the right food, getting lots of sleep, fresh air and exercise, not smoking, not using drugs, not drinking any alcohol, and seeing your doctor or midwife often when you are expecting. A father can help, too, by not drinking and helping his baby's mother take good care of herself. A baby needs two parents and the whole community to help grow in a healthy way. Planning





a sober pregnancy is the first responsibility both parents can take together.

If a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, so does her unborn baby. Alcohol goes to the baby's brain and can harm it in ways that affect the child from birth throughout their life. Alcohol can change the way your child looks and how their body works. How alcohol affects your child's body and brain is described next along with some of the problems children with FAS and FARC may have. Examples of things parents have done to aid their child are included. They may be of help to you, too.



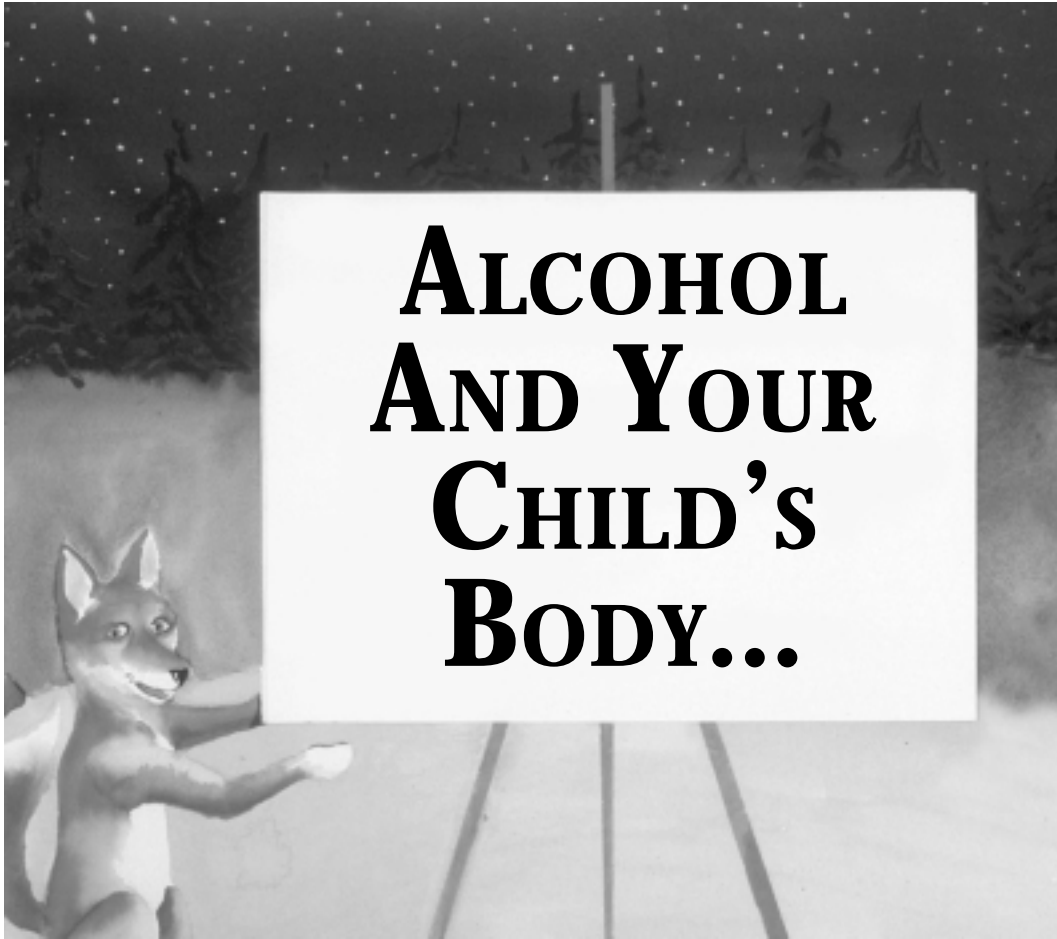


SECTION 2

A HELPFUL GUIDE TO QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

Not every child affected by alcohol looks the same or
will have every problem listed in this book.









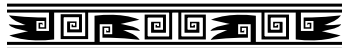
A CHILD WITH FAS HAS A UNIQUE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:

Facial features often include:

- Smaller eyes that are wide apart
- Longer, smoother area between the nose and upper lip (philtrum)
- Thin upper lip

How the body is affected:

- Shorter
- Thinner
- Smaller at Birth

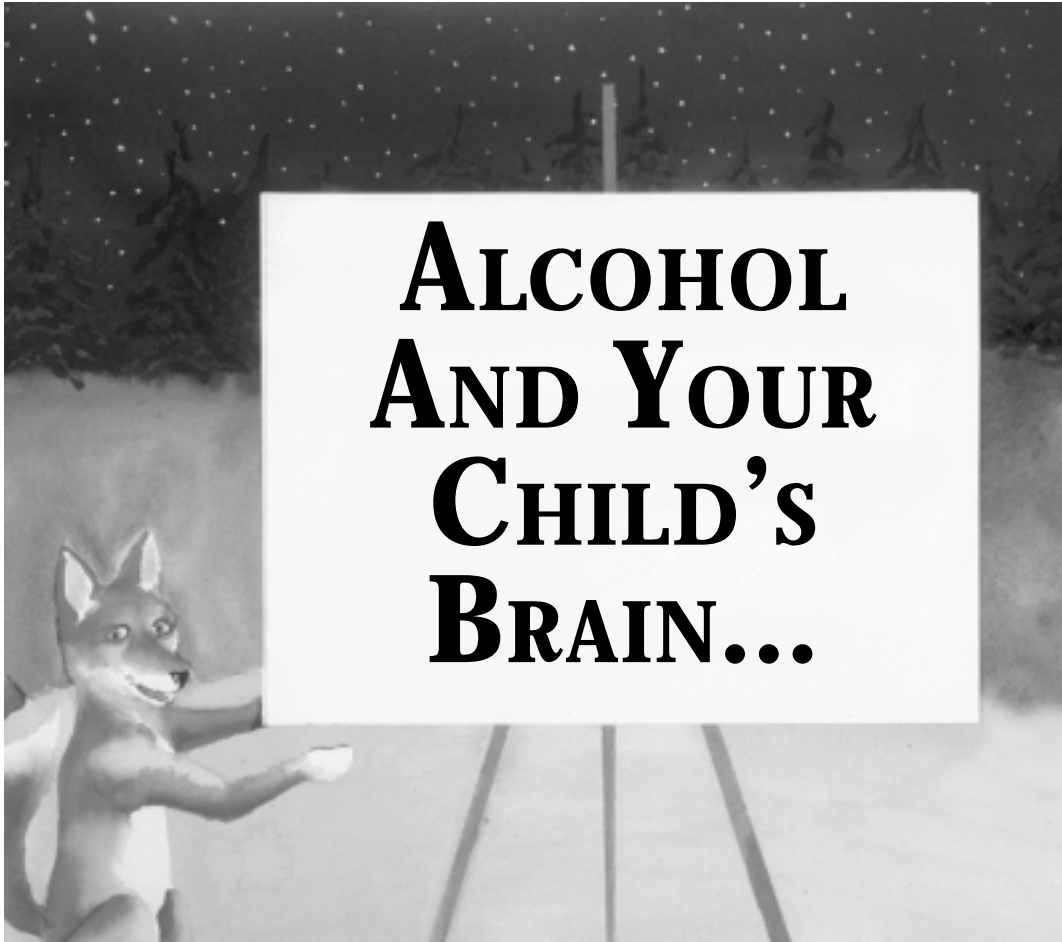






The appearance of these physical features often change over time. Some children get taller and heavier. Sometimes the face changes so much, the child does not look like they have FAS anymore. Because of this, it is very important that someone who knows about FAS looks at your child and gives you the right diagnosis.

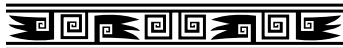






CHILDREN WITH FAS MAY HAVE PROBLEMS WITH:

- Eyesight
- Their teeth
- Kidney problems
- Lung problems
- Hearing
- Heart problems
- Liver problems





**CONCERNS THAT RESULT
FROM YOUR CHILD'S BRAIN BEING
DAMAGED BY ALCOHOL CAN INCLUDE:**

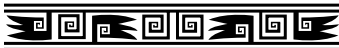
- Problems speaking
- Limited listening skills
- Sleeping problems
- Eating difficulties
- Delays in toilet training
- Delays in crawling
- Delays in walking
- Learning problems





CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS YOUR CHILD MAY SHOW:

- Being easily irritated
- Having temper tantrums
- Being easily distracted
- Making repeated mistakes
- Being confused
- Not being able to always remember what they are told





- Not being able to follow directions all the time
- Not being able to follow more than one direction at a time
- Mixing up things they are told
- Not recognizing danger and doing unsafe things
- Being easily lead by their peers





There are many steps you can take to help your child. The most important thing you can do is to remember that your child wants to please you and to do well. So, set your goals and expectations for yourself and your child at a reasonable level and keep your sense of humor!!!!







WHEN YOUR CHILD IS A BABY:

- Use a cradle board to hold the child-this will help the child feel more secure;
- Keep the environment uncluttered and simple;
- Keep the home as calm as possible; and
- Have limited rules and positive structure for all family members to follow.

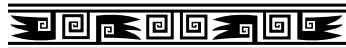




FEEDING YOUR BABY

The mother of a six month old baby boy with FAS found he would only feed when she laid him on the floor, in a dimly lit room, with no one there but her. The steps she took to help her baby feed well were:

- Wrapping the baby in a blanket, where he could not move his arms around, much like a cradle board;
- Sitting to the side where the baby looked only at the bottle;





- Not talking to the child during feeding time.
 - This way, the only thing the baby had to concentrate on was the bottle and eating. Each and every feeding had to be done the same way. If it was not done in the same manner, the baby would not eat.

The baby was able to accomplish feeding in this manner because the mother:

- Sat in the same chair;
- Wore the same clothing, e.g. her bathrobe; and





- Held the baby where he was not looking at her face while he fed.
 - Sometimes, the mother, to make sure her baby felt secure even though he was older, would wear the robe over her clothes. Her daughter found the baby would feed if she wore the same robe as her mother, sat in the same chair, and held the baby in the same position.





**IF BREAST FEEDING,
MANY OF THE SAME IDEAS APPLY:**

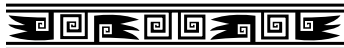
- Feeding as the baby is hungry. However, since some babies with FAS do not recognize hunger pains, feeding at regular intervals, in a similar routine every day is helpful;
- Sitting in the same place and manner every time, if possible; and
- Keeping other distractions to a minimum.





EATING PROBLEMS CAN BE DUE TO BRAIN DAMAGE, RESULTING IN:

- Your child disliking the way food looks or smells and the feel of food in his mouth;
- Your child unable to recognize hunger pains even when really hungry. Trying different foods and being patient often lead to a happier meal time.





GETTING YOUR CHILD TO SLEEP

Sleeping problems are common in children affected by prenatal alcohol exposure. You can help your child sleep by:

- Making sure their room is quiet;
- Putting your child to bed at the same time every day;
- Allowing your child to have a special toy they can take to bed. This is particularly helpful if





your child is traveling and sleeping in a strange bed;

- Putting other toys out of sight when it is time for bed.

Other family members need their sleep too. Keeping the child in their own room can help ensure the rest of the family has enough rest.





TOILET TRAINING

Toilet training can often be delayed due to the brain damage caused by alcohol. Steps that can help include:

- Watching your child until you recognize when they need to use the toilet;
- Building a routine around their pattern;
- Taking them into the bathroom at the time of day that you have seen them need to go; and





- Be patient and expect that it may take longer for your child to learn how to use the bathroom than other children.





CRAWLING AND WALKING

Your child may not crawl or walk at the same age as other children. This may be due to brain damage and the muscles not getting messages on what to do. You can help by:

- Touching and massaging your child's arms and legs and entire body on a daily basis;
- Making sure you exercise their arms and legs to help them develop muscles and stimulate





nerves that your baby needs to crawl or walk. Crawling is very important for your baby as it helps to develop parts of the brain that your child will use later in life; and

- Being consistent in providing your child with ways to move their arms, legs, and body everyday.

Ask your doctor for assistance or talk with a physical therapist to make sure you are providing this help in the best possible manner.





LEARNING NEW THINGS

Our world is a complex and confusing place at times. Each child has their own way and pace of learning.

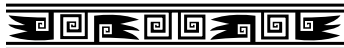
- Watch your child to see what makes it easier for them to understand their world;
- Some children learn better if you show them examples of what is wanted rather than just telling them.





- Give directions one at a time, in the simplest language possible; and
- Use the same words every time.

One mother and father took pictures of their child getting dressed, brushing their teeth, making their bed, and picking up their room. These pictures were put up on a reminder board in the order each task was to be done. Photos of the contents of dressers and cabinets were placed on the outside of each drawer and shelf. With these prompts, the





child learned many skills and gained a sense of success and independence.

As your child grows, their needs and abilities change. As you and your child continue on in the journey of their life, seek out the helpers in your family and community that can aide and support you. Together, we can help your child reach their full potential; the same gift any child deserves!



For further information on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
and other alcohol related conditions please contact:

**Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Diagnostic
and Prevention Network, Seattle, WA.**

(206) 685-9888

or e-mail at:

<http://depts.washington.edu/fasdpn/>



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Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

DSHS 22-320(X) (11/00)