

SEES NO DANGER & WANDERS AFAR



FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME Your Special Child Between 12-17 Years Old

This story portrays two young bears with FAS/FAE who meet, fall in love, and must fend for themselves after leaving home at a young age. Focus is on ages twelve to seventeen.

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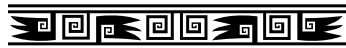
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GREETINGS!!

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 who have Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Related Conditions that have come to Earth as volunteers to teach us what we need to heal in our communities. The information in this story is to help you understand your special adolescent child from the ages of 12 to 17 years and to help you be the best possible parent.





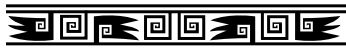
So welcome to the world of your special child and thank you for allowing us to walk with you on this journey.



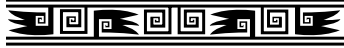


SECTION 1

A STORY ABOUT A YOUNG BEAR



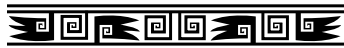




SEES NO DANGER

This is the story of Sees No Danger, a young bear just on the edge of adulthood. She was the youngest of many cubs born to her mother. Compared to her older brothers and sisters, she was small and very thin.

As a young cub, Sees No Danger had been clumsy and awkward. She had a sweet face with small black eyes and a short nose that was turned up at the end. Her front paws turned in a bit more than was usual. Her teeth were







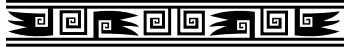
crooked and did not meet each other at the front as they should.

As her name implied, Sees No Danger was fearless. She was always poking her nose into bushes and caves, bee hives and wasp nests, and getting stuck in high trees. Her mother told her, over and over, what was safe and what was not. But Sees No Danger never seemed to learn.

The bear attended the forest school with all the other young animals. However, while they learned to read and write, Sees No Danger never seemed to make much progress. She was fidgety...frustrated and had difficulty







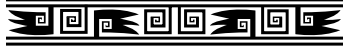
paying attention, became easily confused and often intruded into what the other animals were doing.

After much, Sees No Danger finally did learn to read and spell easy words. She could add and subtract if the numbers were small. But she never quite grasped multiplication, division or fractions despite how her teacher tried explaining them.

Deer, the head teacher, saw how Sees No Danger struggled to learn. She and Mother Bear both agreed to have Sees No Danger enter into special classes for children with learning disabilities. Despite this, Sees No Danger fell







further behind her age group. Finally, being very frustrated she began refusing to attend school.

Much to her mother's dismay, the teen bear also started staying away from home at night. On several occasions, Mother Bear had to go out and search for her daughter. Often she found Sees No Danger walking down logging roads, right out where the humans could see her.

One summer day her mother caught her near the road to town. "Where do you think you are going missy? Don't you know how risky it is for you to be out in the open like this? What are you thinking?" asked Mother Bear.







“I’m just taking a walk. Besides, what does it matter. I have no friends, everyone laughs at me. I’m no good at games, and I hate school,” replied Sees No Danger.

Mother Bear said quietly, “Sees No Danger, I know life has been hard for you at times.”

Sees No Danger interrupted by saying, “That’s what you always say Mom! But, let’s face it, I have no father, no friends and I’m lonely.”

Mother Bear replied, “Honey, you do have a father. I’ve told you often that it is the nature of bears to mate and



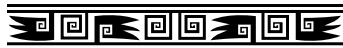


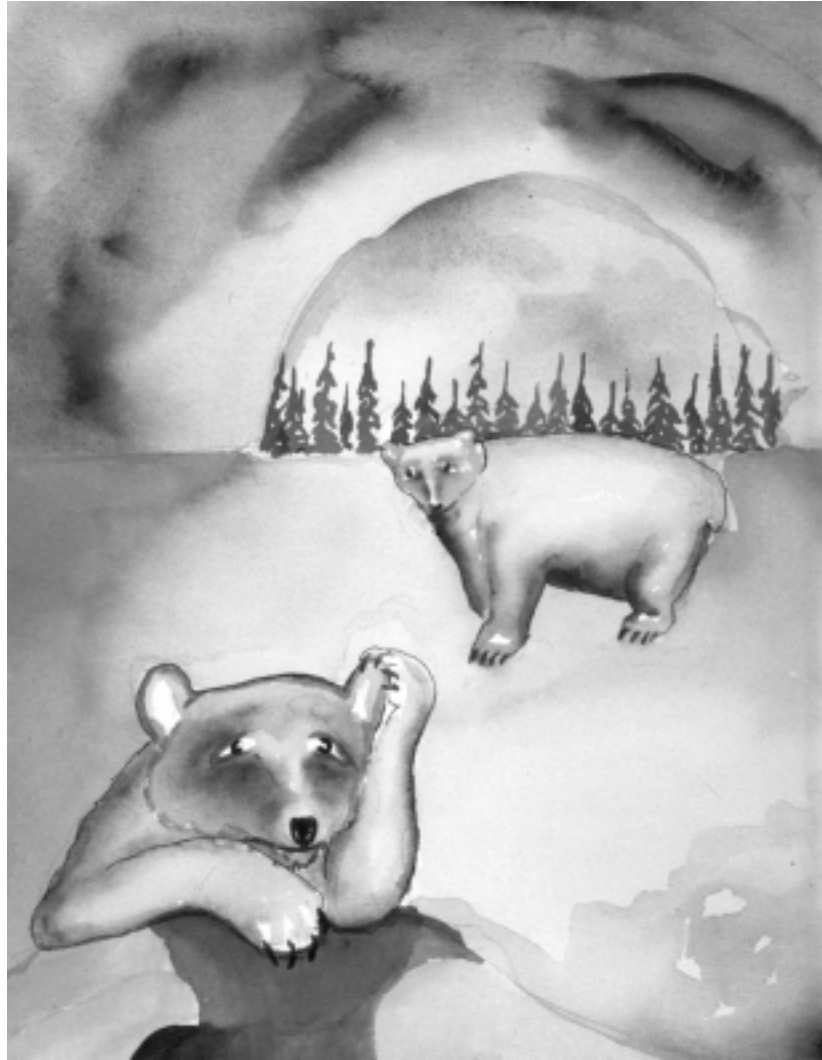


for the mothers to raise their cubs alone. Your father lives on the far side of the hill. He comes every Fall. You know him.”

“Well then, that is where I am going...to find my father.” stated Sees No Danger in an angry, fearful voice.

Mother Bear was frustrated, sad, and surprised. She tried to be a good mother, but it wasn't working with this daughter the way it had with her other cubs. Somehow this child was different. Even as a baby Sees No Danger was a fussy eater and had a hard time sleeping.





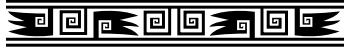


After a long silence, Mother Bear looked at her daughter's tear stained face. Never had her precious child seemed more beautiful or more fragile. "Sees No Danger," said Mother Bear, "I see that you are sad and lonely. I need to find a way to help you. Come, I am going to take you to stay with your brother for a while. If you want to see your father, your brother can take you there safely. I'll return for you when I have some answers."

Sees No Danger eagerly agreed. She loved her older brother. He knew where to find the best berries and how to get honey from hives without being stung.







“Mom”, sighed Sees No Danger, “I don’t mean to be so bad, I just get sad. Please, don’t stop loving me.”

“Never, my child.” Mother Bear said reassuringly, “You are not bad and I’ll never stop loving you.”

With those words mother hugged her daughter and together they started down a small trail towards her son’s home.







WANDERS AFAR

Meanwhile, way, way to the North, where the snow falls early and stays late, a similar scene was going on. A large, adolescent, white male polar bear named Wanders Afar was rubbing his backside on the corner of a building as his mother chided him.

Mother Polar Bear scolded, “I have told you over and over, that you simply cannot come to this place for food. It is not safe! Look over there. See that human walking







back and forth in front of the gate. Look, do you see what he is carrying? That is a rifle. It fires hot metal and can kill you.”

Mother Polar Bear grabbed her huge son by his ear and pulled him, none too gently, away from the airport.

“Now, come home and stay where you belong.” Instructed Mother Polar Bear.

Wanders Afar’s face took on a puzzled expression. Mother Polar Bar shook her head in frustration. She loved this big, handsome son of hers but, sometimes, his lack of







understanding was simply more than she could handle. The bears started the hike back to their mountain home. As they walked, Mother Polar Bear recalled the problems her son had had as a child, his stubbornness, his inability to follow directions, his impulsiveness, disobedience and stealing. She sighed softly and whispered in a low voice to herself. “I wonder what happened to make my son so careless. What did I do wrong? I raised him as I have raised all my other children. Yet, he does not seem to have enough common sense to stay safe and away from the dangerous humans.







He can be so sweet and happy. Yet, he cannot hunt or feed himself very well. I see him stealing food from others, and from the trash left by humans. I keep telling him it is not safe yet he persists in doing dangerous things.

He roams day and night, and if it were not for Seal, and Moose talking to me, I would never know where he is.”

When Mother Polar Bear stopped to look around her son was suddenly nowhere to be seen. Mother Polar Bear called for her son. “Oh NO! Where are you? Wanders Afar...Wanders Afar...Where could he have gone now?”







SEES NO DANGER

Miles away, down South, Sees No Danger and her mother traveled to her brother's den. Mother Bear knew that her son, Stands Proud, would watch over his sister. He may also have some notion as to what made her so sad and caused her so many problems.

At the sound of approaching footsteps, Stands Proud came out of his den and gave a loud roar, causing his mother and sister to jump in alarm. When he saw their reaction,

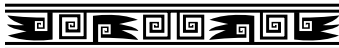




he laughed, “Come in...come in. I have lovely fresh berries to share...come in.”

The family exchanged greetings and shared a tasty snack. Mother Bear leaned back and began telling her son the story.

“Stands Proud,” said Mother Bear, “you are my oldest child. I know you have studied our forest world and listened to the fish, birds, small animals and insects who bring you teachings from the human world. You are familiar with your sister’s struggles. I have come for your help.”





“Goodness Mother, you are so serious...what can I do?”
said a serious Stands Proud.

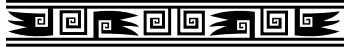
“First, tell me if you have any idea as to why your sister is
so sad and careless, and has such a hard time learning,”
asked Mother Bear, “next, I need someone for your sister
to talk to, to teach her what I have not been able to.

And, well, the last thing...” mother bear hesitated, “can
your sister stay with you while I seek out the answers I
need and the help she needs?”

On hearing her mother’s request, Sees No Danger perked
up and looked at her big brother.







“Oh yes...Please, can I stay?...It will be great fun. We can climb trees and go swimming, and...” she asked hopefully.

Stands Proud laughed and said, “Stop...stop little sister...Why, of course you can stay...But, fall and winter are coming fast. I am working hard to gather food and to make my den snug for the cold time ahead. You can help.”

Sees No Danger frowned at these words. Mother Bear sighed. She knew it was pointless to say much. Sees No Danger’s corner in her own den was often a mess. Cleaning up was the last thing she ever wanted to do.

Stands Proud spoke to his Mother, “I have some ideas







that may help. Let me get you something to read.”

Stands Proud reached behind a stone and retrieved a book. It was titled, *Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Related Conditions: A Diagnostic Manual*. Written by Dr. S. Raven and Dr. S. Lizard. Handing the book to his mother he said, “Mother, I believe that my youngest sister has this condition.”

Mother Bear looked up at her son bewildered and said, “Daughter, please go outside and take care not to wander off. I hear the nuthatches and chickadees calling. Please, go see what they have to say.”







Sees No Danger snorted and said, “Oh fine, Have your secrets, I’ll have mine.”

With this the young bear flounced out the door of the cave, making a huge racket as she went.

Mother Bear sighed and said, “See. Nothing is ever right for her. I wish I knew what to do. Now son, tell me what is this about.”

Stands Proud points to a chair saying, “Please mother, sit down. I will tell you what I know...Do you remember the year when it was so wet in the spring and so hot in







the summer? The year Sees No Danger was conceived?”
Mother Bear replied, “Why yes, of course I do. It was the year your father came over to our mountain early. Yes, I recall how we used to go to the farm and eat ourselves silly on those half rotten grapes...(giggles)... Yes, I remember. But what does that have to do with your sister and this book?”

Stands Proud replied in a low voice, “See how these pictures resemble my sister? I know that there was alcohol in those grapes that you and father loved to eat. I remember, my dear mother, that for several weeks you







and he went to the farm every day. From what I've read I believe that the alcohol in those grapes damaged my sister's brain. That is why when she was little, she had such a small thin body and little eyes, and such a hard time learning."

Mother Bear sobs, "Oh, no! What have I done? Oh my poor little girl. Oh, no."

Stands Proud replies soothingly, "Shhh, dry your tears mother; it is okay. You are not to blame. You did not know. I have heard that Dr. Raven has a healing circle and a whole team of helpers that can give you more







information. I'll ask Chipmunk, the doctors assistant, to set a time for you to go to the healing place. We will go as a family so we can all learn."

Mother Bear nodded in agreement, wiped away her tears, and said, "Let me go find your sister and take her home. Oh, how could I ever get mad at her. It's not her fault."

Stands Proud puts his paw around his mother and says, "No, Mother. Let her stay with me for a few days. You need a break. Go. Take care of yourself."

Mother and son hugged and then went outside. But Sees No Danger was nowhere to be seen.







MOTHER BEAR AND STANDS PROUD

Two weeks passed. No one in the community had seen or heard from Sees No Danger.

To the North, Mother Polar Bear faced the same fear...

It seemed as if both of these precious children had vanished from the face of the earth. All that could be done was to send word out through the animal community and wait, and pray...

On the fourteenth day, late in the afternoon, Stands Proud







came for his mother.

“Mother,” he stated, “Dr. Raven and his team of helpers are waiting for us. Please bring your photo album and come with me.”

Mother Bear grabbed her photo album and left with her son to go to the meadow where the healing circle was held. As the two bears came into the clearing, Dr. Raven rose from his stone and walked over to greet them.

The Raven greets Mother Bear. “Welcome, your son has told us of your plight. Come, sit down. Let us talk. But



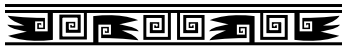


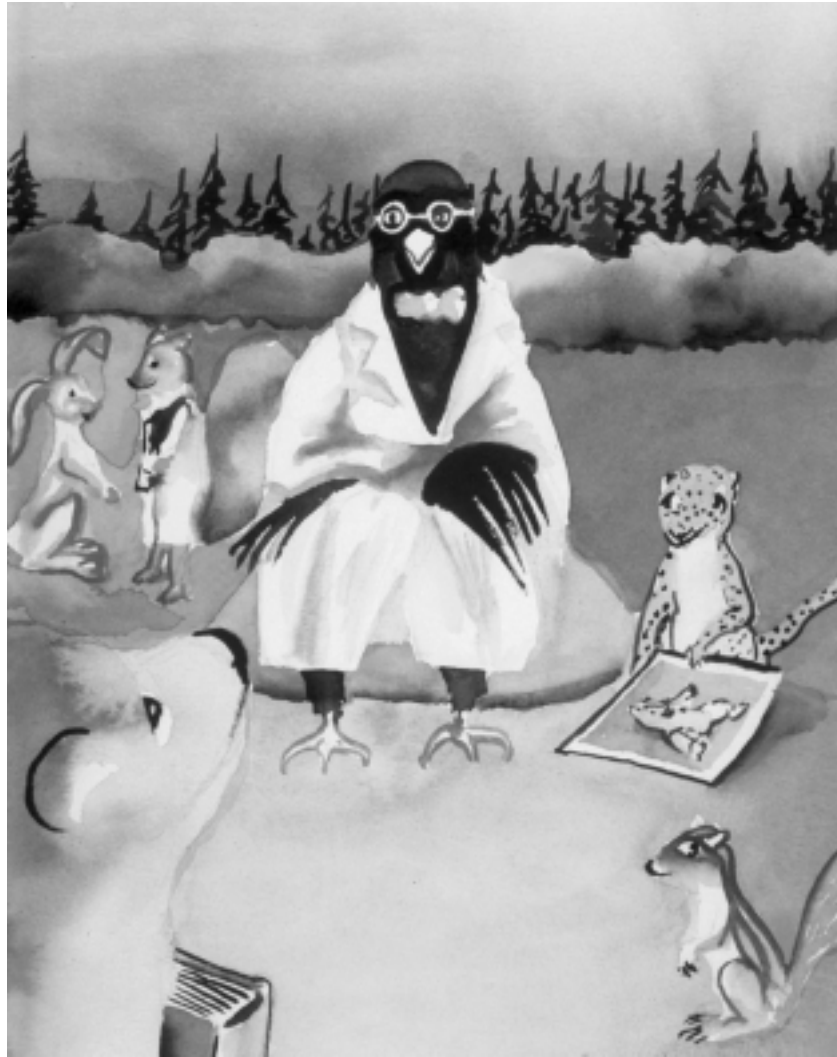


first, let me introduce the team.”

The first to enter the circle was Owl, the psychologist. Owl’s job was to help Mother Bear understand how her daughter’s brain might have been hurt by the alcohol. Owl asked many questions about the Bear’s family life, problems and successes they had had with Sees No Danger and Mother Bear’s feelings about what had happened with her daughter.

Owl’s helper, Rabbit, came next. Rabbit’s job was to test the children and adults who came to the healing circle to find out their strengths and skills, and to measure what







they had learned so far in their lives.

The third helper was Kingfisher. Kingfisher listened to speech patterns. From this he could understand how people learned, how their brains worked, and what types of help they would need to understand their everyday world.

Another helper was Deer, the head teacher from the forest school. What the animals learned at school could also be reinforced at home. This way, teachers and parents worked together to help the children.

Raven smiled and said “Chipmunk is our organizer. She



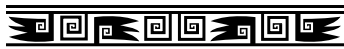




will help you fill out this questionnaire for information about your daughter.”

Once the team and the bears were seated, Dr. Raven turned to Mother Bear. “Tell us your story. We will try to help,” invited the Raven.

Mother Bear sighed as she told of her daughter’s struggles. She spoke of the learning problems, and how she endangered herself, and her lack of understanding of cause and effect. Mother Bear also told them that despite her daughter’s young age she had been sexually active, even when she was not in season.





When Mother Bear finished, Dr. Raven sat quietly for a moment. Then, he stood up and shook his feathers, and said, “Your story is so common for the adolescent animals we see in our clinic.

We have looked at the pictures you brought in of your daughter. It appears that she does have FAS. As soon as she returns we will need you to bring her in so we can examine her in person. I know that you are very concerned about your daughter having run away. We will all pray for her safe return. Please let us know if there is anything any of us in the healing circle can do.”





“Oh...I feel so ashamed of what I did to my daughter, so ashamed,” cried Mother Bear.

“Mother Bear, it is clear that you love your daughter. Keep educating yourself. Learn what you can. We will help. But remember, you did not know what could happen when you ate the grapes. We will work with you to help your daughter. We have to work together as family and as a community to stop FAS from happening and to provide support to all those impacted by these conditions,” Dr. Raven said reassuringly.

Mother Bear was extremely distraught over her daughter’s







disappearance, Every time she heard of a bear being captured or killed by the humans, she would pace the floor until it was determined that the bear involved was not her child. Finally, after months of this depression, Coyote and her son paid her a visit. With his gentle and honest manner, Stands Proud told his mother of their concern.

Stands Proud cautioned his mother, “You are not eating nor preparing for the upcoming winter, harming yourself will not bring your daughter back home. It is not your fault that she left. You know she always was impulsive







and had a difficult time understanding the consequences of her actions. It is time for you, mother dear, to come back to this world.”

Mother Bear, who had wept as her son spoke, now wiped her tears and nodded her head in agreement.

“Yes, my son. You are right,” sighed Mother Bear, “You know, while I’ve been here fretting, I have been thinking of starting a support group for parents whose children have the same conditions as your sister. I would like to tell Dr. Raven.”

Dr. Raven and his team liked Mother Bear’s idea and







arranged for the parent's support meetings be held in a nearby forest glade.

During the first meeting, Mother Bear was astounded to see Bison, Elk, Turtle, Otter, Raccoon, and Mountain Sheep there.

All of the animals took their seats on the rocks. Dr. Raven stood and said, "I will not be the only one talking here tonight. I am here to answer questions only. This is a time and space for all of you parents to share your fears, successes, and hopes."







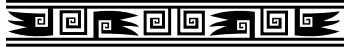
Raven sat and smiled as Coyote rose and walked over to where Mother Bear sat. He held out his paw to her.

“Mother Bear, you have just finished having time in our healing circle. Could you start?” asked Coyote.

Mother Bear stood, took a deep breath, and then began telling her story. As she finished, many of the other parents had tears in their eyes. One by one, each told their story. At the end of the evening, Coyote rose again, saying, “Grandfather, I ask your blessings on all who have come tonight. I ask for many more evenings of sharing and hope. Thank you for our little ones and not so little ones







who have been lights in our life.

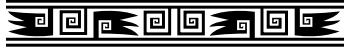
Thank you all for coming. We will meet during the next full moon Dr. Raven has some information for you. We hope it is helpful and we will see all of you soon.”

The animals stood and said their good-byes. Mother Bear waited as Coyote shook the last paw and then they turned together to leave. As they did, Coyote’s face broke into a huge smile.

“Mother Bear, I think that Grandfather has heard your prayers...Look!” exclaimed Coyote.







As Mother Bear looked up she started to cry, then broke into a run, for standing at the entrance to the glade was her daughter. Next to her was the largest bear ever seen in the woods. A handsome white bear with a big smile. Close to their side was a tiny cub, brown with odd white stripes.

Sees No Danger approached her mother and said happily “Mother...I am here to stay...and look, now I have a mate and a child all my own. Isn't it wonderful. Mother...mother...oh oh, don't faint...oh dear.”

Coyote laughed and instructed everyone to enjoy the homecoming.





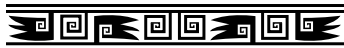


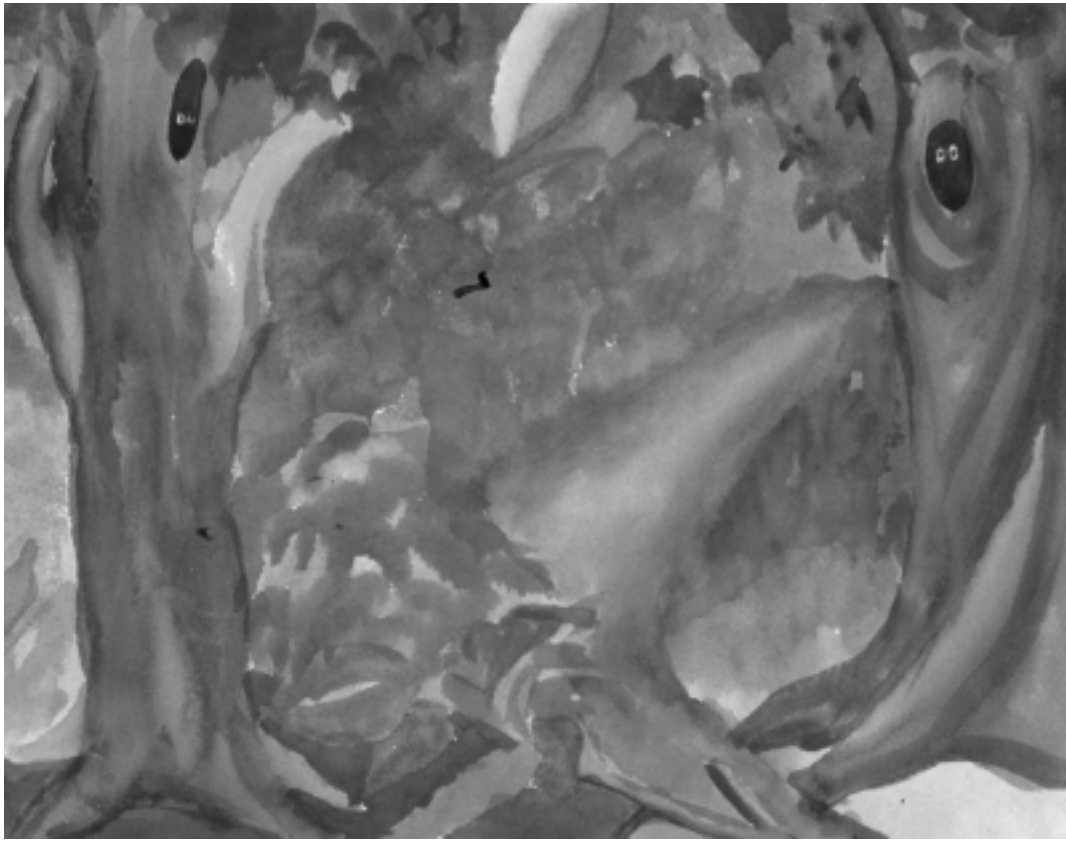
THE COUNCIL OF ANIMALS

Time had passed since Mother Bear had been reunited with her daughter. Sees No Danger and her mate Wanders Afar were still together and living with their cub. All had not gone well however....

A serious problem had evolved involving several of the forest community's youngsters.

Several of them had been going down to where the humans lived. Some of the young bears, coyotes, and







wolves joined together and invaded the yards of the humans' houses. A pack of humans with guns, dogs, and sticks chased these youngsters home.

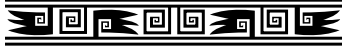
Golden One, a young cougar, had been shot and hurt as she and the other youngsters tried to escape.

A tribunal was held to discuss these concerns. All of the forest animals participated.

After investigation it was learned that some of the young ones with less ability to make good decisions, those with learning problems, and those easily influenced, were being



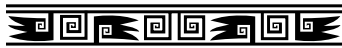




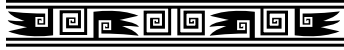
coaxed by those with greater abilities into making the dangerous trips.

These youngsters, and their parents were called to attend a meeting. A council of animals had come up with solutions to ensure the safety of our young ones. Now Bison, the magistrate, had some words in closing, “The forest elders, Dr. Raven, and his team, and all the families you see here have met and discussed the issues and needs of each of these children, along with the needs of the community.

Tonight, we are letting the forest community know of







our decision. Every full moon, the children you see up here, and their families, will meet with their probation officer and social worker to see what progress is being made. In six months time, we will all meet again to report to the community.”

As Bison finished, Eagle spread her wings, nodded, and said, “Dr. Raven examined all of the young ones here. All of them were exposed to alcohol while their mothers were pregnant. All have had learning problems and been in some trouble. Not all of them have Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Some have Fetal Alcohol Related Condition.





All of them need our help.”

“We must work together to give our youngsters constant support and supervision.

Oh, one more moment, please. We have special guests with us tonight. Mother Bear could you please come forward.” invited Coyote.

Mother Bear shook herself and lumbered forward. She looked over her shoulder and motioned to her daughter, grandson and three large white bears to come forward.

“Thank you Coyote.” Then, addressing the crowd, she



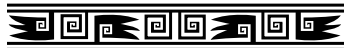


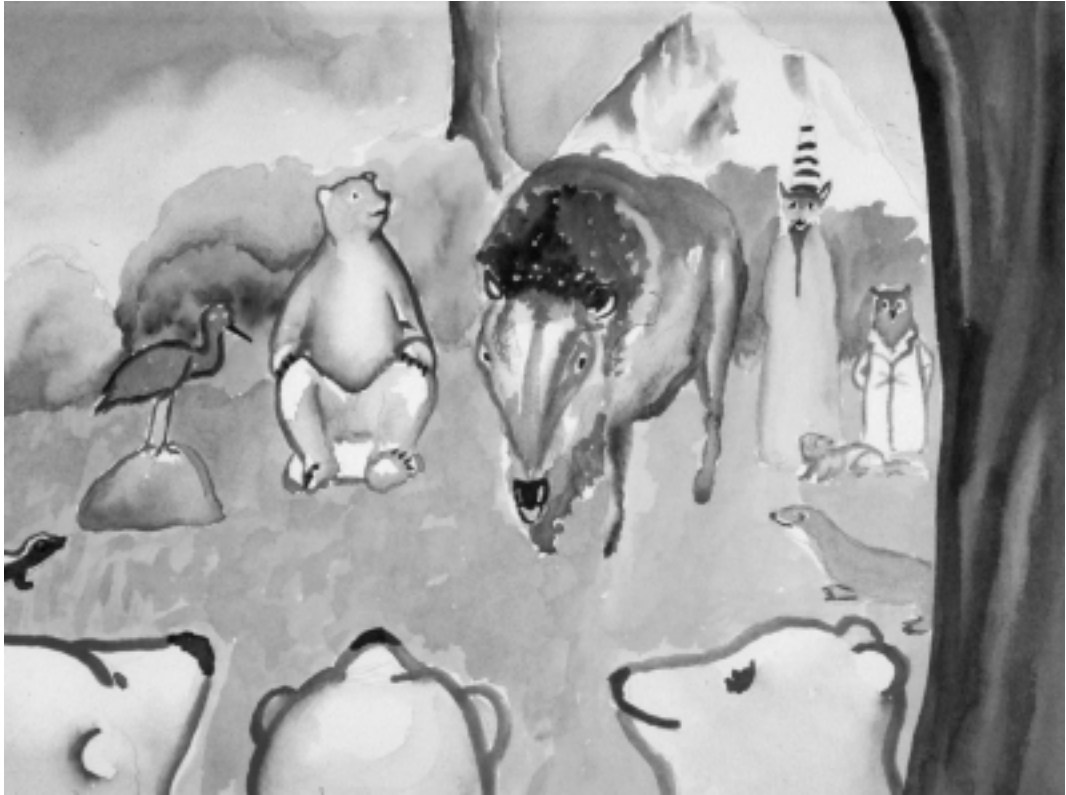
said, “This handsome young man is my son-in-law and the father of this beautiful baby bear. These are his parents. They are from the far North. The story of their journey is a long one to be shared another night. Please, I ask all of you to welcome them and make them a part of our forest family for as long as they stay.”

With these words, Mother Bear nodded to Eagle. Eagle smiled and closed the circle.

Several days after the Tribunal, Mother Bear’s den saw the arrival of visitors.

Inside the crowded den the mood was solemn.







WANDERS AFAR AND SEES NO DANGER

Sees No Danger and Wanders Afar stood side by side with their son as they listened to the speakers. Noticing their tension, Herron spoke, “Hmmm. It appears as if we could all use a smile. Let us go outside under a tree where we can all relax and talk. We are here to help Wanders Afar, not judge or scold.

“That’s right,” declared Father Polar Bear, “we travelled here from the North because we care.”







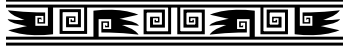
“I am thankful to you in the community who took our son in. I am so upset with myself to find out that I had not been helping him in the right way all these years.” said Mother Polar Bear tearfully.

My son looks so big and strong, I never dreamed that the pickled herring and mash that was left behind on the beach by the humans had alcohol in it, or that it would harm my unborn baby.

Thanks to Dr. Raven, we now know that ingesting alcohol even a few times when pregnant can cause the unborn baby brain damage.”



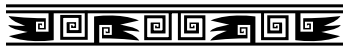




“Yes.” stated Father Polar Bear, “Before we only saw our son from the outside. Now we understand the damage can be inside the brain, not always where it is seen.”

“Well, Wanders Afar, I would like to hear the story of how you arrived here. I have to say your name fits you,” said Eagle.

Wanders Afar told the group how he had returned to the airport, the place his mother had told him not to go, and waited until night when the guard with the gun fell asleep. Hungry, he followed his nose to some food in a cave, ate, and then fell asleep.







“When I awoke, I was still hungry so I walked out of the cave. I could see a big mountain where I thought I lived. So, I started walking towards it. Then everyone started yelling.”

Coyote asked in a puzzled voice, “Everyone? What do you mean?”

“The everyone with guns.” Said Wanders Afar. “Then I looked around. The cave door was closed. Then I realized it was not a cave at all. It was the door to one of those noisy machines that goes up in the sky. I got worried. I







didn't know where I was, so I just kept going towards the mountain."

Eager to tell the story of her journey, Sees No Danger jumped into the conversation, "I was running away from home, down the mountain. That's when I saw Wanders Afar. We met and fell in love. We hung out and ate berries and sang. Then we went to the places where the humans throw away their trash. Wanders Afar told me we could get lots of good things to eat there.

But one day I got caught by the humans. Wanders Afar got away. The people who caught me put me in a cage







and brought me back to the area near Mom's den. Instead of going home though I went looking for Wanders Afar."

"Yes," said Wanders Afar, "I was lonely too, so when I saw the cougar, Golden One, the young coyotes, and the young wolves on the mountain trail. I asked if they knew the bear Sees No Danger. They said they did, and asked me if I wanted to go to the place of the humans with them. We did this a lot together and one day we got into trouble when Golden One got shot."

Father Polar Bear spoke up, "We got word through crow and his family that our son was here. We also heard about

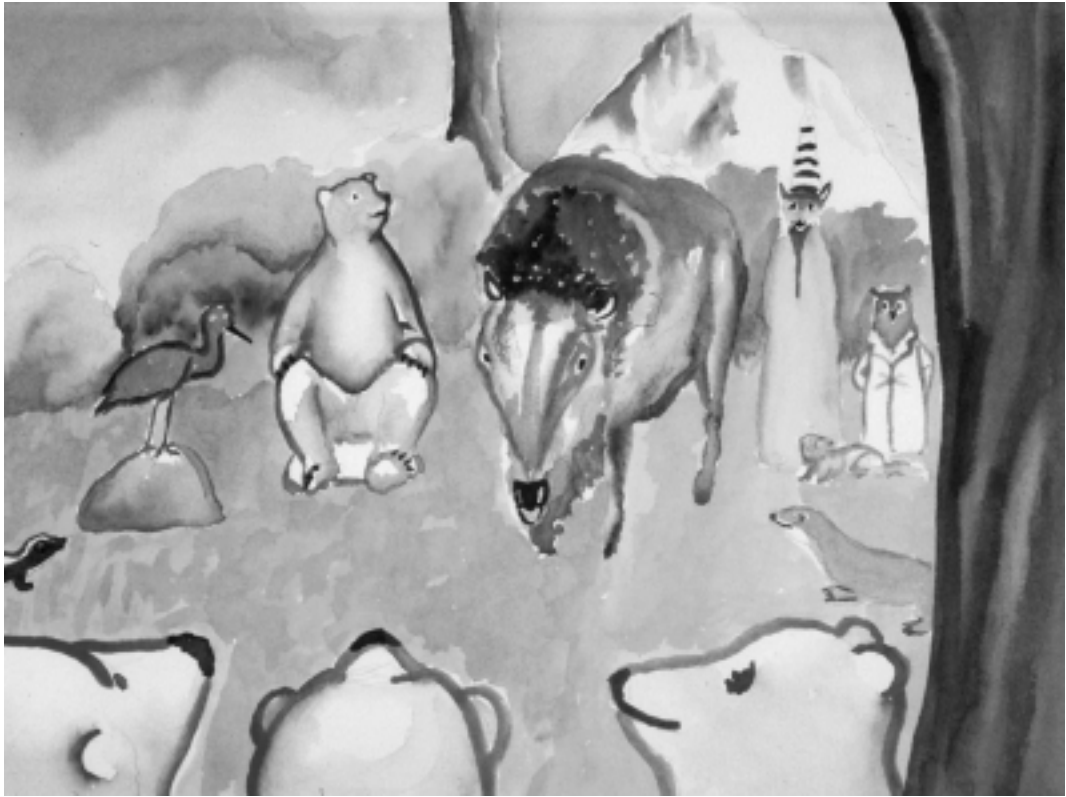






the trouble he was in. Now we are here to help and aid in deciding what to do for our son. We have a future to plan for, for him, our family and our community.”







PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Bison took a deep sigh as Father Polar Bear finished speaking and said, “Sees No Danger and Wanders Afar, your parents are right. It is time we made plans for where you are going to live, how you are going to take care of yourselves, and your son, and how to keep you out of trouble.

On the paper is the list of requirements that you two must meet. These are the items that were discussed at the





Council of Animals. Our job as your elders is to help protect you, support you, and aid you in being your best.”

Sees No Danger and Wanders Afar were silent as Coyote read the lists:

“Probation Requirements. Wanders Afar has pleaded guilty to trespassing and theft of food. Due to this, he must:

- Attend school or a vocational program;
- Acquire gainful employment;
- Maintain a stable residential placement;





- Have no contact with his fellow correspondents;
- Do not leave the confines of the forest; and
- Attend all appointments with his probation officer.”

Coyote held up a list and said, “Because there have been concerns that Sees No Danger has not been able to provide stability for her child and to ensure that the baby is safe and well-cared for, Sees No Danger must:

- Complete parenting classes;
- Maintain a residence with her mother;







- Receive services through a public health nurse; and
- Actively participate in long-term contraception”

After Coyote had finished Sees No Danger spoke up in an angry voice. “That is so unfair! Why don’t the other kids have to do these things?”

Mother Bear spoke sighing, “Daughter, remember what we talked about? It is not your concern what happens with the others. Our job is to help you and your mate do well. Now, pay attention!”

Bison solemnly stated, “Sees No Danger, this is *your*



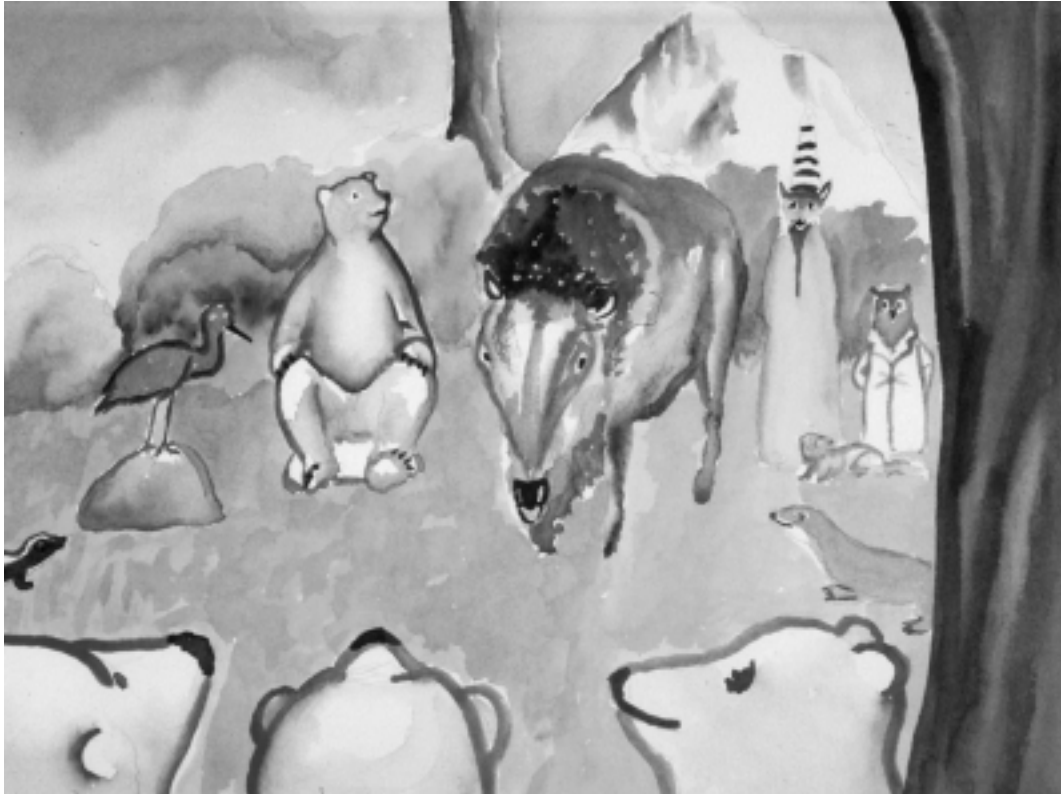




chance to have a good life. Do you remember how the humans put you into that cage and moved you back up here? If you do not follow these guidelines worse could happen. Folks, it is time that we acknowledge the needs of our special ones and work to provide them with the structure and support we have been talking about for so long.”

Throughout that afternoon, the elders and parents talked to their children. They helped set up structure and developed a schedule for their children to follow. The two bears were given community service jobs of picking







up the litter left by humans along the forest trails. Herron was assigned as a monitor and supervisor to ensure that Wanders Afar and Sees No Danger did their jobs and followed the requirements of their probation plans.

“We look forward to a positive report when we meet again in six months.” Said Bison.

“After agreements were reached as to what all was needed for the two teens, a meal was served and stories were told long into the night.

As time went on, both young bears had some success and







some failures. Without constant monitoring, structure, and prompting, they would forget to do their jobs. Sometimes, both young bears wanted to be with their friends, rather than take care of their baby. Sometimes they fought, broke up, and then got back together again.

When Wanders Afar broke his probation by stealing food from the human's timber camp, the council came up with an appropriate sentence...house arrest with an ankle bracelet to monitor his whereabouts. He was still required to attend school, go to work, and meet with his probation officer. However, he was not allowed contact with the







adolescents who tended to influence him in negative directions.

Their behavior often frustrated their parents. However, through standing by each other and calling on the support of the other parents and family members in their group, they learned to be more patient and to set more realistic expectations. Mother Bear made sure that Sees No Danger received her birth control shot every three months. This helped ensure that she did not have any more children. Heron helped arrange respite care for the Bear families.







One night, a year after their adolescent children had been back in their care, the bear parents sat on the ledge outside Stands Proud's den. They watched as their grandson, now nearly two-years-old, played with his dad. Sees No Danger stood and laughed as she watched.

Mother Bear shook her head saying, "It sure has been a long journey to this point. I wonder what is to come."

"We do too!" exclaimed Father Polar Bear. "Winter is on the horizon. The time has come for my mate and I to leave. We have other children to see in our home to the

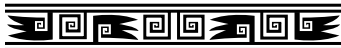




North. We hope we can return here next spring, but, no matter what, we will send word by Crow and Salmon as to our plans.”

Mother Polar Bear sniffed tearfully and said, “We are very grateful that you are going to allow our son to stay here. We appreciate the hospitality you have shown. There is no doubt in our minds that we would have lost our precious son if you and all of those who live in this forest community had not been so willing to help.”

Father Polar Bear gazed intently at his huge, handsome son and then laughed, “Do you think Wanders Afar can





find a way to get us a ride back in one of his flying caves?”

At that thought, all of the older bears chuckled. But, as they watched the happy scene below them, there was concern. Despite the difficulties of the past year, there had been many successes. None of the adults present doubted there were more struggles ahead. What was different now, though, was the knowledge and hope that had come through the healing circle, the parent’s support group, and the participation of the whole community in keeping the special ones such as Wanders Afar and Sees No Danger, safe.







As the day slipped into night, a full moon rose and shone upon the bears. In the moonlight, the shadows of all could be seen.

One could not help but believe that, through knowledge, love, wisdom, and hope, grace would come. Coyote, who had been sitting quietly nearby, smiled and said a silent prayer of thanks to Grandfather our Creator for all the creatures in the forest. He knew that it was love and hope, along with common sense and structure, that would help all of the special souls with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Related Condition, as well as their families.





As Coyote finished his prayer, he let out a loud, joyful yip, laughed, and went on his way to check up on the rest of his forest charges.

So, it is time for us to smile, be grateful, and watch over the special ones placed in our care. If this becomes too heavy a load at times, remember to ask for help from your family, your friends, others in the community, and from the Creator. No load is too heavy when it is shared with love.





SECTION 2

A HELPFUL GUIDE TO QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

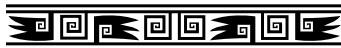
Not every child affected by alcohol looks the same or will have every problem listed in this book.





WHAT YOU CAN DO... BEFORE YOUR CHILD 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's help to grow healthy. 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.





**ALCOHOL
AND YOUR
CHILD'S
BODY...**





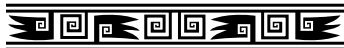
AN ADOLESCENT WITH FAS HAS A UNIQUE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:

Facial features often include:

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

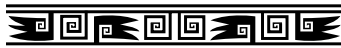
How the body is affected:

- Shorter
- Thinner
- Smaller at Birth





The appearance of these physical features often change over time. Some adolescents get taller and heavier. Sometimes the face changes so much that, when the child reaches adolescence, they do 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.





**ADOLESCENTS WITH FAS MAY HAVE
PROBLEMS WITH:**

- Eyesight
- Hearing
- Their teeth





ALCOHOL AND YOUR ADOLESCENT CHILD'S BRAIN...





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

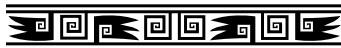
- Problems speaking
- Limited listening skills
- Sleeping problems
- Learning problems
- Problems with peer relations
- Sexual problems





CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS AND PROBLEMS YOUR ADOLESCENT MAY HAVE:

- Being easily irritated
- Socially inappropriate behavior
- Anger management problems
- 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
- Getting into legal problems
- Becoming pregnant or fathering a child





**THINGS YOU
CAN DO
TO HELP
YOUR CHILD...**





THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOURSELF AND ADULTS WITH FAS/FARC

There are many steps you can take to help your adolescent. 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 adolescent child at a reasonable level and keep a sense of humor!





HYGIENE

Many adolescents with FAS have trouble taking care of their personal hygiene needs. They may not know how to wash themselves or forget the proper order to do this in:

- Tape record each step that is needed to accomplish either a shower or bath. Have your adolescent play this every time they clean up;
- Post a schedule that tells them what days and what time they are to take their bath or shower,





- e.g., every other day, every day but Friday;
- Write out or put on tape a morning routine in the correct order, e.g., washing their face, brushing teeth, combing/brushing hair, getting dressed, underwear, socks, shirt, pants/skirt; and
 - For adolescent girls, prepare them early on for menstruation. Explain, through pictures and, if needed, anatomically correct figures, what menstruation is, how to use tampons or pads, and help normalize cramps and the entire process.

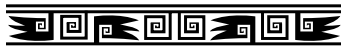




SEXUAL ISSUES

Adolescence is a time of physical changes and confusion. As your child goes through puberty, they may have emotional ups and downs that are hard for them to understand. It is a time of increased vulnerability and of your child trying to demonstrate their independence. This is a hard time for any child, but for children with FAS or FARC, they can be particularly trying.

Taking extra time, being aware of these changes,





and helping your child understand them in a simple manner can make this time less stressful. Below are some of the areas that are especially of concern along with some of the actions parents and caretakers have used to help their adolescent;

- Learning about human sexuality is often an embarrassing process for adolescent and parent alike. There are excellent books out that can explain the physical aspects of sexuality in clear, concrete terms;





- Birth control is a difficult issue. Many methods require planning, forethought, and consistent use. People with FAS are often impulsive and do not consider the consequences of their actions. This makes them particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation, sexually aggressive behavior, sexually transmitted diseases, and unplanned pregnancy. Long-term birth control methods such as Depo-Provera, IUD's, and Norplant may be helpful in preventing





- unplanned pregnancies but do not resolve the other issues; and
- The same lack of behavioral control that can lead to unplanned pregnancy, unprotected sex, is a concern with the risk of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. It is important that the adult know how to protect themselves. This may go against a family's moral values and teachings, it is critical to weigh the risk of a potentially deadly disease against ignorance; and

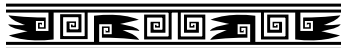




- Due to their poor judgement and impulsivity, adolescents with FAS/FARC may be at risk for becoming sexually aggressive. Close supervision and involvement in structured social activities can help provide for safe socialization and teach social skills.

SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Adolescents, in general, often begin to experiment with independence and are increasingly susceptible





to peer pressure. This can take the form of substance use or abuse, sexual issues as described above, criminal actions, or involvement with inappropriate peers, e.g., gangs in some instances. Knowing that they are different can lead many adolescents to inappropriate actions to fit in with their peer group. This can include “bragging” which is interpreted as lying, or involvement in negative and dangerous situations by being easily lead.





- If the adolescent begins to show erratic behavior, it can be due to depression, substance use, FAS/FARC, or simply adolescence. A mental health/substance abuse evaluation can be helpful to determine both the cause of the behavior and useful interventions;
- If the child becomes involved with inappropriate peers, setting up activities where they will be connected with healthy friends can lead to positive changes;



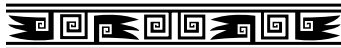


- Treatment programs for both mental health and substance abuse issues should include education about the increased risk of alcoholism, daily living skill, and long-term structure after treatment. A substance free support group will be the key factor in helping the adolescent with FAS/FARC remain clean and sober;
- AA groups, where a sponsor can fulfill the role of mentor and help provide structure may also be valuable.





- In-home therapy where the counselor can assess the strength and weaknesses of the family and home environment and help affect change in this situation is often useful; and
- Limited use of insight therapy. Adolescents with FAS/FARC can often parrot back what has been said to them without being able to put things into action. A course of therapy that includes helping the adolescent identify their feelings and connect them to more appropriate behavior is

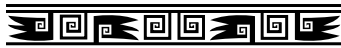




generally more helpful. Making positive changes can lead to the adolescent feeling more successful and, eventually, aid in reducing challenging behaviors.

SOCIAL SKILLS

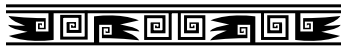
It is important to realize that the changes your adolescent is going through may be normal but the way the adolescent handles them is not. Many adolescents with FAS/FARC develop an awareness of their deficits and their inability to keep up with





their age mates. Parental, familial, and societal expectations become greater. The inability of the adolescent to fulfill these expectations can lead to frustration and low self-esteem.

Many adolescents outgrow much, or in some cases, all of the growth deficiencies of their childhood. Their appearance can “normalize” and, based on this appearance, people expect them to “act their age.” In reality, the emotional maturity and cognitive abilities of your adolescent may be years





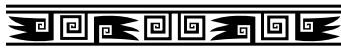
lower than their actual age. Again, the gap between expectations and abilities can lead to frustration, depression, and acting out behavior, sexual and otherwise.

- The adolescent's skills and strengths should be assessed on an on-going basis;
- Helping set realistic goals and expectations based on such an assessment can lead to success and increased sense of self-esteem and empowerment;





- Providing your adolescent with opportunities to learn and use their skills in the real world can help them to recognize their skills and limitations in a healthier fashion;
- Provide them a safe, supportive, and nonjudgemental forum to discuss their feelings. This may not be in the arena of talk therapy. It might be a support group, individual therapy that is more concrete and goal-oriented, or an activity-based interaction;





- Traditional cultural activities that allow for social interactions in a healthy, supportive environment can also be useful;
- Keeping a sense of humor and patience, using family and community resources for support, and maintaining the same level of structure can lead to more predictability and less frustration for all family members.

LEARNING NEW THINGS

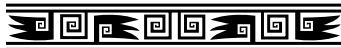
Our world is a complex and confusing place at





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
- Using the same words everytime.





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 adult maintained many skills and gained a sense of success and independence.

Many parents may feel that their adolescent should





be able to do this on their own. However, given the memory deficits and lack of information retention common with this disability, such prompts are still needed and lead to success.

- Structure safe environments with as few changes as possible, are the most useful settings for learning and success.

DISCIPLINE AND CONSEQUENCES

Children with FAS and FARC must have immediate consequences for their actions, whether





it be appropriate or inappropriate behavior. It is important to reinforce the positive behaviors your child is showing. Simply disciplining for unwanted behaviors does not teach the child what behaviors they should be doing.

- Consequences should have value for the child and appropriate for the behavior;
- You should watch for the start of the inappropriate behavior and work to redirect your child's actions;





- Time out is generally useful with children with FAS or FARC. This time is supposed to give the child time to “think about their actions and come up with a different behavior.” This is not usually the case with children with FAS/FARC. They will often spend this time getting into more trouble or feeling worse. Giving the child a special place, e.g., a power chair, where they can go on their own to “get their body under control or regain their power” is more helpful;





- Your child should be told ahead of time, in writing and pictures, if necessary, of what the rules are, what is expected of them, and what the consequences of their actions will be;
- Do not negotiate with your child and limit choices. This will help assist them in making the right choice; and
- Stay open to a wide variety of options and interventions. Parents have tried aromatherapy, movement therapy, nutritional interventions,





and other “alternative” healing interventions that have been useful.

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Educational needs shift from strictly academic to vocational and daily living skills. The educational ceiling is often reached at this age. It is important for both parents and teachers to understand this and to make the shift to “real world” teaching.

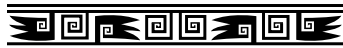
- An activity-based curriculum where the adolescent is taught basic skills in the context of





everyday living is helpful, e.g., not shoplifting, how to read package labels, how to cook, and how to clean;

- Learning to use calculators, computers, and other learning aids is often beneficial;
- On the job training, outside the classroom, is a good method of teaching not only job skills but also social and communication skills; and
- Preparation for post-high school education is suggested. This can include vocational training,





community college, or college, depending on the environment, adolescent's ability, and support system to help such training occur.

LEGAL ISSUES

One of the major concerns facing adolescents with FAS/FARC and their families is that of legal issues. These can range from adoption to custody issues to criminal charges. Although these issues can occur earlier on in life, it is in the adolescent years that this becomes more prominent. The following





is a listing of some of the legal issues that are most prevalent, along with suggestions for aiding your adolescent should such concerns arise.

- **CUSTODY:** with many adolescent girls with FAS/FARC becoming pregnant, the question comes up as to whether or not they should retain custody. Often these young women are not able to take care of their own basic needs, let alone adequately meet the demands of a new baby.

If the girl is living in a safe and structured





environment, where she is receiving appropriate care, if there are resources in place to help her parent, and if there is reduced risk of neglect or abuse, retaining custody might be feasible. Where such support is not present, the baby may be at too great a risk for the mother with FAS/FARC to retain custody. In the latter case, foster care, a permanent guardianship, or adoption, open or close, may be more appropriate. In any case, a thorough parenting





- and psychological assessment should be conducted before such a decision is made;
- **COMPETENCY:** Given that mental retardation can be present with FAS/FARC, some clients may not be competent to understand any charges pressed against them or be able to help their attorney in a reasonable manner. Adolescents with FAS/FARC often give the appearance of competency without truly understanding situations. A competency





evaluation that assesses true comprehension, not such rote learning, is needed;

- **DIMINISHED CAPACITY:** Mental health issues are very common in adolescents with FAS/FARC. Any assessment done for legal reasons should include a discussion of mental health issues and concern. A person with FAS/FARC can have a psychiatric and/or substance abuse problem as well as lower intellectual capability. Both of these factors can significantly affect their

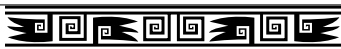




ability to participate in legal proceedings in a reasonable fashion.

- Any evaluation, whether it be for parenting, child custody, competency, diminished capacity, or other reasons, should be done by someone with training and a true understanding of the brain damage associated with FAS and FARC. The ramifications of FAS/FARC on functioning should be presented to the Court to aid in sentencing and other legal decisions.





RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENT

The same characteristics that make it easier for parents to raise younger children with FAS/FARC become the reasons often cited for making it difficult to retain adolescents in their homes. The chatty, outgoing nature of young children with FAS/FARC becomes the intrusive, rude, and inappropriate behavior in an adolescent. The clingy, touchy, tactile behavior of the younger child translates into the sexually inappropriate behavior





and lack of good boundaries in the older child. If structure, supervision, and monitoring have not been in place prior to the onset of adolescence, it is often difficult to impose these things as the child begins to struggle for more independence. Adolescents with FAS/FARC are, or more, easily lead by their peers than younger children but with potentially more serious consequences. Due to these factors and the mental health issues listed above, many parents feel unable to keep their children in the home.





Another consequence is the adolescent with FAS/FARC, due to limited understanding of cause and effect plus impulsivity and poor judgement, may be in with a dangerous crowd, run away from home, and end up living on the street or in another potentially dangerous situation. If problems reach a crisis level, some of the alternatives listed below might be put into place:

- **RESPITE CARE:** This is commonly recommended for younger children. However, parents frequently say that if they and their





children with FAS/FARC are given a break from each other on a fairly regular basis, that this can reduce tension and allow for a diffusion of tension. This can lead to better communication and more appropriate problem-solving;

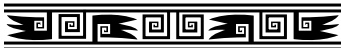
- **GROUP CARE:** For adolescents who run away, are dangerous, do not have an adequate family structure and environment, are sexually aggressive, and/or are coming out of detention facilities, group care may be the most appropriate





living environment. Such a setting must include constant structure and supervision, clear rules and consequences, family participation, and a plan for moving the adolescent on to a less restrictive environment, as appropriate. Staff in any group home should be adequately trained in FAS/FARC and its learning and behavioral implications;

- **FOSTER CARE:** It is very common for adolescents with FAS/FARC to be in foster care.





This may be due to neglect, abuse, or the parents being unable to cope with their adolescent's challenging behaviors. It is critical that the foster parents have information about the child's background, including any past physical and/or sexual abuse, fire-setting, psychiatric problem, and medical diagnoses, including FAS/FARC.

- Foster parents should be trained in the types of psychosocial needs and interventions that are most appropriate with adolescents with FAS/





FARC. In addition, special aid in helping them set up the home environment to best meet the needs of the adolescent with FAS/FARC should be provided; and

- **IN-PATIENT PSYCHIATRIC AND/OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS:** Adolescents who are unable to live in any of the above environments or in a family home may need a short or long-term residential program. This may allow for the child to be placed on





- appropriate medication, help start therapy, and give time to put in place structure that may have been lacking. As with any of the placements described, all staff should have adequate training and knowledge of the possible effects of prenatal alcohol exposure, its implications with adolescents, and appropriate interventions; and
- **INCARCERATION:** If the adolescent with FAS/FARC is incarcerated, this is best accomplished through a juvenile facility. Many





states are now trying juveniles as adults and having them serve their sentences in adult facilities. This is particularly dangerous for adolescents with FAS/FARC who have little insight, impulsivity, poor boundaries, and poor judgement.

Adolescents with FAS/FARC are easily influenced. In an adult correctional facility, the juvenile with FAS/FARC is not likely to receive the services outlined above. In addition, in any

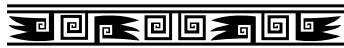




facility these adolescents are at higher risk for exploitation and abuse. However, in an adult facility, this risk is great and should be avoided if at all possible.

Plans should be implemented for community placement prior to the release of the adolescent from the correctional facility. Such planning can reduce the risk of the adolescent reoffending.

Parents of any adolescent can often feel overwhelmed. It is even more true when the





challenges of FAS/FARC are added to the mix. Understanding that this is normal can be of help. Humor can help, too. So it is time for us to smile, be grateful, and watch over the special ones placed in our care. If this becomes too heavy a load at times, remember to ask for help from your family, friends, others in the community, and to the Creator. No load is too heavy when it is shared with love!



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/>



The Bear attended the forest school with all the other young animals. However, while they learned to read and write, Sees No Danger never seemed to make much progress. She was fidgety...frustrated and had difficulty paying attention, became easily confused and often intruded into what the other animals were doing.