Our mission is to prevent fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and to support all impacted throughout Minnesota and beyond.

Our vision is a world in which alcohol is not consumed during pregnancy and people living with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders are identified, supported and valued.

*Acknowledgement*

Proof Alliance acknowledges that not every person who can become pregnant identifies as a woman. We try to use gender-neutral language as often as possible, much of the current research available currently refers only to "women" when discussing the ability to become pregnant. When citing this research, we refer to the language used in the study. In these cases, "woman" refers to someone who was assigned female at birth.
What is FASD?
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
• A group of birth defects that is the result of prenatal alcohol exposure
• Wide range of symptoms including physical, mental, behavioral, & learning disabilities
• Prenatal alcohol exposure affects each person differently & organic brain injury causes inconsistency
• Permanent disability, lasts a lifetime
• All people with FASD can be successful

FASD is Not a Diagnosis
FAS  fetal alcohol syndrome
PFAS  partial fetal alcohol syndrome
ARND  alcohol related neurodevelopmental disorder
ARBD  alcohol related birth defects
ND-PAE neurobehavioral disorder associated with prenatal alcohol exposure (mental illness diagnosis in DSM-5)
FAE  fetal alcohol effects (outdated term)

True or false?
FASD is more common than Down syndrome.
FASD is more common than autism.
FASD is the leading cause of intellectual disabilities in the U.S.
Prevalence Study

Research shows as many as 1 in 20 children in the U.S. have an FASD.

Effects of alcohol during pregnancy

Decades of research have shown:

- Even low levels of alcohol can affect the fetus
- The risk increases with more alcohol
- The healthiest and safest choice is to avoid drinking any alcohol during pregnancy.

Effects of Alcohol during Pregnancy

- Pregnant person drinks alcohol
- Alcohol enters the placenta & passes from maternal blood supply to fetal blood supply
- Fetus excretes alcohol into the amniotic fluid
- Fetus then swallows amniotic fluid
- Alcohol is perpetually reabsorbed by the fetus
Factors that impact fetal vulnerability:
• Dosage/BAC
• Resiliency of the fetus
• Mother’s health, age, etc.
• Genetics
• Other substance exposure
• Timing of the exposure

Remember:
• PAE does not always result in an FASD
• FASD is not generational
• Manifestations are unique in each individual

Factors of Severity

Alcohol vs. Other Substances

According to IOM, which of the following substances cause the most serious neurobehavioral effects on a developing fetus?
A. Opioids/Heroin
B. Crack/Cocaine
C. Methamphetamine
D. Marijuana
E. Alcohol
FASD Impacts Us All

According to the CDC, which group of women are most likely to drink alcohol during pregnancy?
A. College Educated
B. High School Graduate/GED
C. Left School Before Graduating

In the United States, 11.5% of women drank alcohol during pregnancy and 4% engaged in binge drinking.

What's one drink?
Many people are surprised to learn what a standard serving actually looks like.
• Generally, the standard is 12 ounces for beer, 5 oz for wine and 1.5 oz for distilled spirits
• Alcohol content varies from one beverage to the next
Ending the Stigma

Why do people drink alcohol during pregnancy?

FASD is a Complex Public Health Issue

- Unplanned pregnancy may lead to drinking without the knowledge they are pregnant
- Substance use disorders
- Form of self-medicating or coping mechanism due to external stressors or mental illness
- Binge drinking is generally socially-accepted
- Mixed messages from family, friends, media, etc.
- Doctors implicitly give permission by not discussing alcohol use with their patients or downplaying the risks
- Public still misunderstands risks from drinking and does not recognize the high prevalence of FASD

Where are you getting your medical advice from?

Abstaining completely from alcohol during pregnancy - from conception through birth - is recommended by all major medical groups, including:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- U.S. Surgeon General
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)
- National Institutes of Health
- World Health Organization
What role does dad play?

- There is not enough research yet to decide if the father’s alcohol use can also be unsafe.
- Even so, alcohol consumed by the males can lead to a variety of problems in the reproductive system.
- There are many health benefits linked with drinking less alcohol. Also, this is a way to be supportive of their partner choosing an alcohol-free pregnancy.

True or False?

Most people with an FASD have distinct facial impairments caused by prenatal alcohol exposure.
Common Neurobehavioral Symptoms

Impaired Executive Functioning:
- Organizing stored information
- Planning future events
- Problem solving
- Memory and attention
- Impulse control
- Cause and effect
- Generalizing concepts
- Abstract concepts

It's important to remember that FASD is a spectrum disorder. This is only a small sampling of the characteristics that are common with FASD.
- Poor social skills/lack of boundaries
- Slower information processing
- Learning difficulties (commonly but not limited to math)
- Anger or frustration often & may take longer to self regulate
- Extreme under or over-sensitivity to sensory input
- Difficulty following directions or connecting steps
- May be prone to confabulation

Developmental Skills: Case Example
- Physical maturity: 18 years old
- Comprehension: 6 years
- Emotional maturity: 6 years
- Social Skills: 7 years
- Concept of money, time: 8 years
- Reading level: 16 years
- Expressive language: 20 years
Fingledobe & Pribin

Last serny, Fingledobe & Pribin were in the nerd-link treppering gloopy caples & cleaming burly greps.

Suddenly a ditty strezzle boofed into Fingledobe’s tresk.

Pribin glaped & glaped. “Oh Fingledobe!” He Chifed, “That ditty strezzle is tunning in your grep!”

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Recognize Strengths

- **Friendly, likable**: May be outgoing & sociable & have little anxiety about strangers
- **Verbal, chatty**: May be very socially interested (but not necessarily socially skilled)
- **Helpful, hard-working**: If you ask, they will do it. They can be very good workers with the right job & training
- **Determined, resilient**: They don’t hold grudges & will come back if rejected. Every day is a new day!
- **Want to be liked**: They will do whatever they can to have friends

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What Else Can FASD Look Like?

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**Why We Recommend PAE Screening**

- Recognize the brain injury/disability
- Improved outcomes
- Approaches can be modified
- Reduced frustration and anger
- Reframe poor self-perception
- Prevention of future alcohol exposed pregnancies

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**Screening Saves Lives**

According to a recent research study, the average life expectancy for someone with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is 34 years, while the average life expectancy for someone with FASD is 82 years.

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**Look for Risk Factors**

- Biological family history of substance abuse
- Known drug exposure
- Children in foster &/or adoptive care system
- School difficulties starting at a very young age
- Maternal mental illness
- Siblings with an FASD or a related diagnosis
- Multiple diagnoses & meds don’t work
- Regions with exceptional high rates of alcohol consumption or known cases of FASD
- Involvement in criminal justice system &/or substance use at a young age
The Eight Essentials for Success

- Concrete
- Supervision
- Consistency
- Repetition
- Structure
- Routine
- Specific
- Simplicity

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**Register Here**: https://proofalliance.swoogo.com/ProofCON2021

*10th Annual FASD Conference*  
*Hosted by Proof Alliance*  
*Empowered by the Proof*

Join us online or in-person  
October 13-15, 2021  
#EmpoweredByProof

The latest information, ideas and strategies for supporting and preventing fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD).

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**Four Areas of Family Support**

- Government
- Community (such as Proof Alliance programs)
- Medical
- Education

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Caregiver Support Groups

- Alone but Together: Caregiver Support Group (virtual and in-person)
- Caregivers Connect Support Group (virtual and in-person)
- Peer on Peer During Sensory Group: Caregiver Support Group (in-person)

Circle of Hope Birth Mother Network

- Changing Course
- Families Healing Together Support Group
- Birth Mother Panels

Youth Support Groups

- Baxter's Support Group (age 15 – 21)
- SkillzGroup (age 11 - 15)
- Let's Talk About My FASD
- Youth Action Team (age 15 – 21)
- Adulting 101 (age 16 +)
Proof Alliance Resources

- Public awareness & prevention
- Community grants & partners
- Family engagement & support
- Diagnostic clinic & screening
- Youth & young adult program
- Public policy work
- Professional education
- Proof Alliance website resources

Website: www.ProofAlliance.org
Email: info@ProofAlliance.org
Phone: 651.917.2370
Address: 1876 Minnehaha Ave W
St. Paul, MN 55104