WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE CHILD WITH FASD
(FOR CHILDREN 12 AND UNDER)

FASD is a term used to collectively refer to a range of disabilities caused by prenatal exposure to alcohol. Because FASD is an organic brain disorder that affects the central nervous system and involves permanent chemical damage to the cells and to the connections between those cells in the brain, the effects last a lifetime. However, that doesn't mean that the child with FASD cannot be successful in many things. Here are some things you need to know about the reality of a child with FASD and how to help.

- Repetition of directions, instructions and concepts is very important because it allows information to be stored in the habit area of the brain (the right hippocampus) where it will be remembered more easily.

- Routine and consistency helps the child to make better sense of the world. Establishing a routine and sticking to it helps them to function more effectively.

- Children with FASD can be impulsive at times and this can affect relationships. Role modelling and visual cues can help enhance interactions with others.

- There is a difference between developmental age and chronological age. The child may be 10 years old, but could have the social skills and understanding of someone who's younger. You will need to adjust some of your expectations to fit the developmental age.

- Receptive and expressive language may not be the same. Often, the child can repeat something back but may not fully understand it. It is very important to follow through with the child and ensure that understanding is reached.

- The child with FASD often has sensory issues that lead to sensory overload. They may also become overwhelmed if too much stimulus or information is entering the brain at once. This may show itself through intense frustration, anger or other emotional outbursts. Involve the child in making a joint decision about a safe place to calm down when they're feeling overloaded or overwhelmed.

- There is a unique level of sensitivity to criticism. The child with FASD can become very upset with a sigh or angry glance. It helps to be aware of this sensitivity and to act accordingly.

- Learning and retention of information is accomplished in small steps or stages. Guiding the child through a task in simple steps, one step at a time can ensure success.

- The child with FASD has many strengths and things that they are good at. Take the time to find out what they can do, and emphasize the positive!

For more information please visit www.von.ca/fasd

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