

Raja and Neil's FASD Book Club

Identifying the Child with FASD in Educational Settings



Dr Carolyn Blackburn is an FASD expert who works at Birmingham City University.



In this session, she talked about why it's important to identify people with FASD in educational settings.

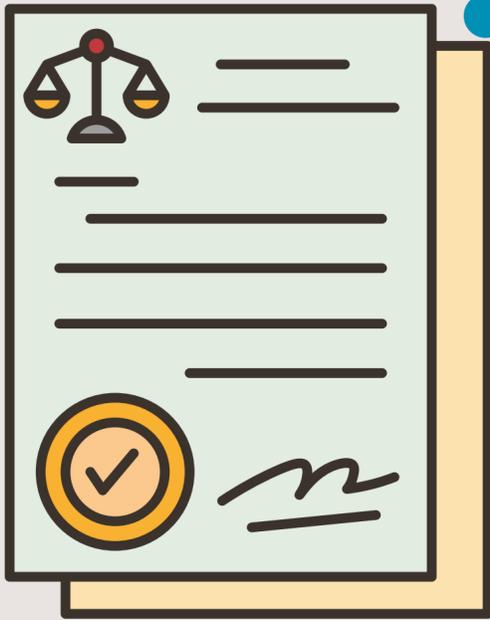


She talked about what teachers can look for to help them identify people who might have FASD.



She also talked about some things that teachers can do to help support people with FASD in education.

Identifying children with FASD in the classroom is policy



International and UK human rights policies encourage educators to monitor children's development and progress to help them reach their full potential.



The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice requires schools to appoint an SEN Coordinator, who works with other teachers to help support children with special needs.



The Children & Families Act, 2014, gives children and their parents a voice in their own education.

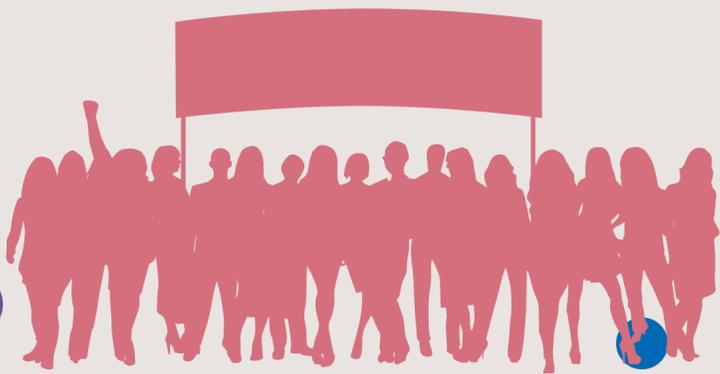
4 other reasons to identify people with FASD in the classroom



1) To help children with FASD or possible FASD get the help and support they need.



2) To raise awareness of FASD.



3) To strengthen the argument for improved services for FASD by showing how many people there really are with FASD.

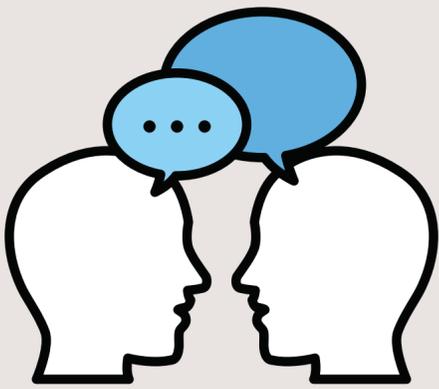


4) To protect future pregnancies and help prevent FASD - this is because families that have had one alcohol-exposed pregnancy are often likely to have more, especially if they are not made aware of what can happen.

The SEN Code of Practice - what teachers should look for



The SEN Code of Practice lists 4 areas that teachers should be aware of when deciding whether children need extra support:



1) Communication and interaction.



2) How well they understand information and how well they learn (cognition and learning).



3) Social, emotional, and mental health.



4) Whether they have any sensory and/or physical needs.

Strengths in students with FASD



- They are often social, fun-loving, and caring



- Sensitive, loyal, kind, and trusting (although sometimes this can lead to them trusting the wrong people)



- They can succeed in structured situations



- Often have strong practical skills and tend to be good at drama, art, and woodworking



- They often have a strong sense of fairness



- They can have strong visual memories



- They often have good verbal fluency

Pre-school-aged children - signs of FASD in students



- Problems with feeding and sleeping



- If they struggle with moving their body or with precise movements like using a pen or pencil



- They might have a short attention span, and struggle with focussing on one thing for a long time



- They might show more interest in people than in objects



- They may be overly friendly, and look for affection constantly



- They might struggle with expressing themselves, and what they say might be confusing



- They might have trouble understanding what other people are saying to them

Pre-school-aged children - signs of FASD in students (continued)



- Their understanding of danger may be different, and they might take a lot of risks without realising



- They might get upset easily when they can't do things



- They may be easily distracted or unable to sit still



- Changes to their routine might upset them

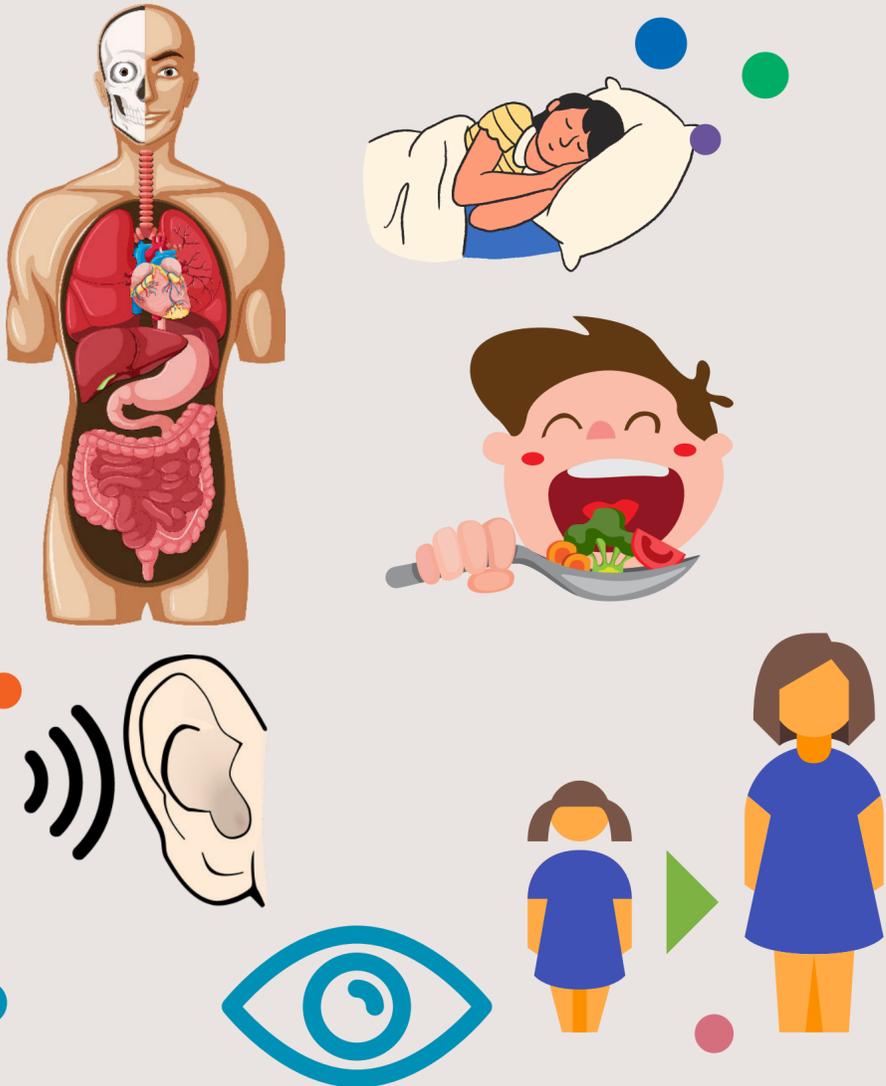


- They might find it hard to understand smells, tastes, and sounds, and might get overwhelmed by them

School-aged children - signs of FASD in students



- How soon they reach certain milestones compared to other children their age, like using the toilet and keeping themselves clean



- If they have certain medical issues like organ damage, problems sleeping, eating problems, if they're much smaller, or if they have problems with their eyes and ears

Learning difficulties - Signs of FASD in students



- If they don't understand that their actions cause reactions, or can affect others (cause and effect)



- How well they can communicate with other people and how well they understand what is said to them



- How well they can concentrate and remember information



- If they find it hard to understand maths, including money, and telling the time



- Problems keeping organised, making plans, processing and remembering information

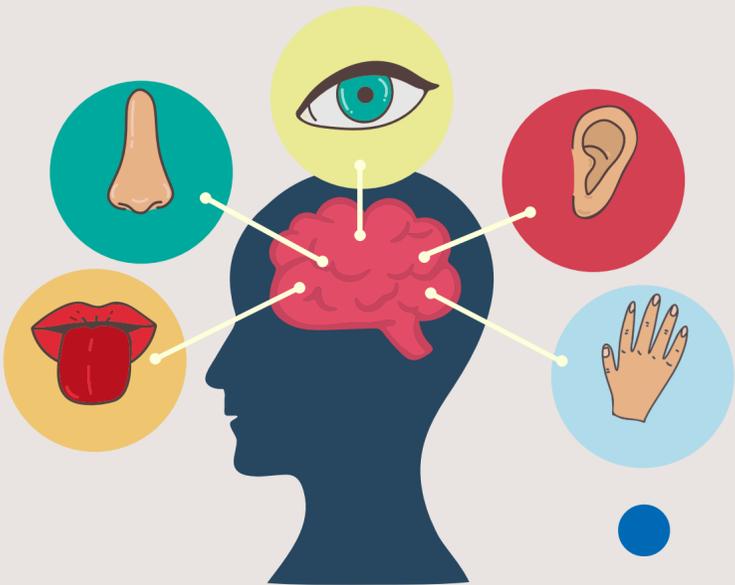


- Because of problems with things like organisation and making plans, they might struggle with everyday tasks, and need a lot of help

Behavioural difficulties - Signs of FASD in students



- Children with possible FASD show behavioural difficulties like being unable to sit still, getting angry easily, and getting obsessed with people or objects

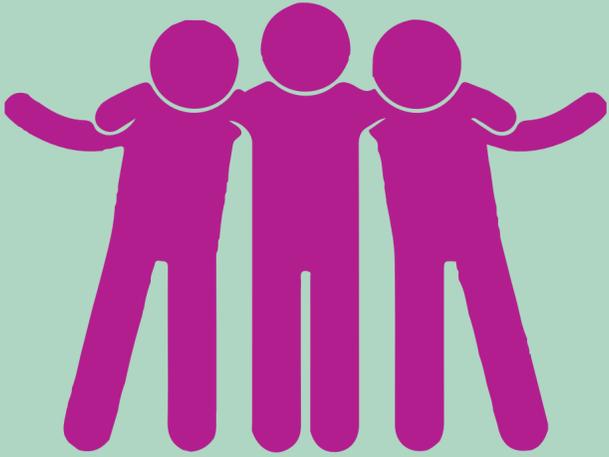


- These behaviours are not the child's fault, and can be related to other things like how they process sound and taste and other senses



- They may mean that the child needs the help of a special therapist called an occupational therapist

Social difficulties - Signs of FASD in students



- Children with possible FASD might have challenges learning how to make and keep friendships or other relationships



- They might not find it easy to understand how other people are feeling, or how their own actions affect others

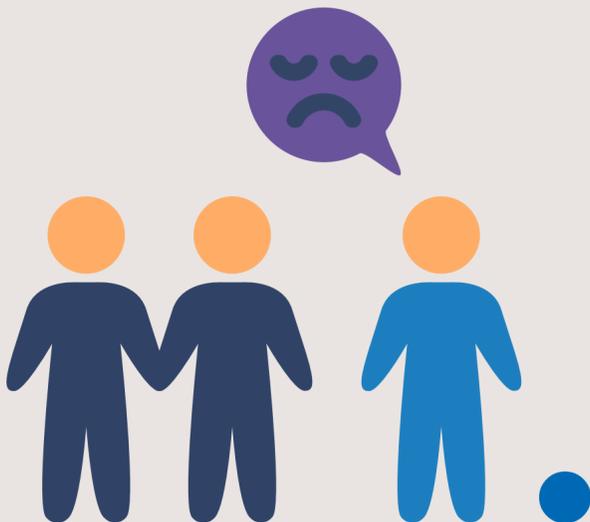


- They may be frustrated by their own actions, but unable to control them, which can cause self-esteem problems

Emotional difficulties - Signs of FASD in students



- Children with FASD often need to be encouraged by adults to do everyday tasks, which can cause low self-esteem



- They may also start to notice that other children are not the same as them, which can cause low self-esteem too



- If FASD goes unnoticed, the emotional difficulties that it causes can lead to people with FASD having trouble at school and with the police in later life

Problems with the senses - Signs of FASD in students



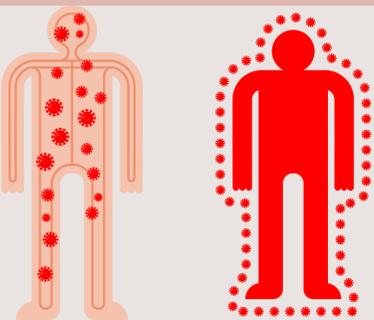
- Some children react differently to certain smells, sounds, and lights



- They might become upset if they hear, smell, or feel something they don't like



- The child might be very sensitive to smells, sounds, or feelings, or they might feel them less than other children



- People have 8 different senses: 5 external senses, and 3 internal senses



- All 8 of the senses tell us about the world around us, and because some children with FASD can't tell the difference between them as well as others, it can affect the way they experience the world



- 5 external senses include: sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell

Problems with the senses - Signs of FASD in students (continued)

The 3 internal senses include:



- Balance and how our body lets us know where we are in a space (vestibular)

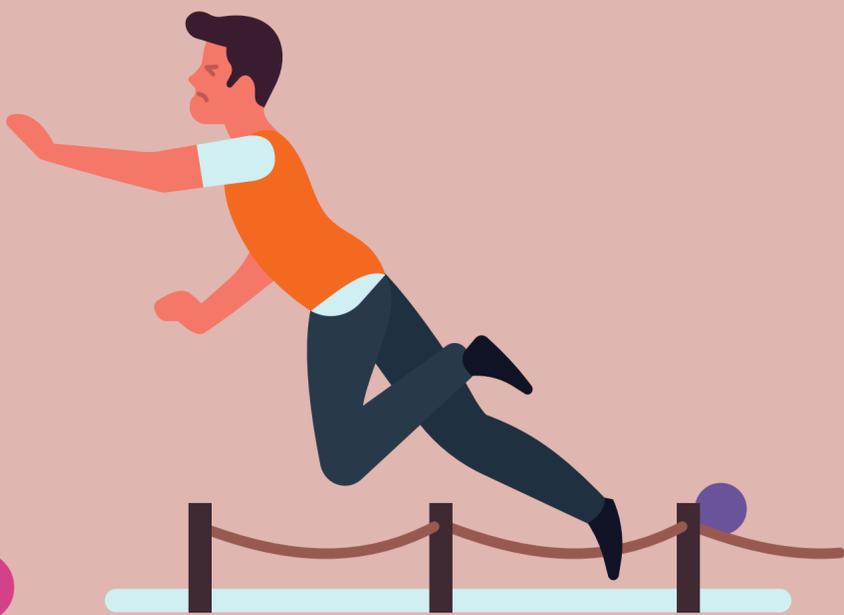


- The sense of where our arms and legs are compared to the rest of our body, and how our bodies move (proprioception)



- Our sense of hunger and thirst, as well as internal feelings like stomach aches or headaches (interoception)

Problems with the senses - Signs of FASD in students (continued)



- Some children who have sensory challenges may have trouble with their bodily movements



- This is because their senses don't give them all of the information they need to plan their movements very well



- They may sit or stand in unusual ways as a result of this

Common co-existing issues with FASD



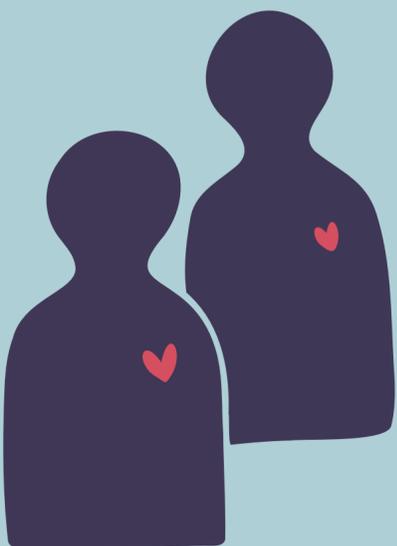
There are 3 main issues that often affect people with FASD or possible FASD:



1) Mental health concerns



2) Premature birth



3) Attachment difficulties and relationship challenges

Providing support in the classroom



- Keep teaching and instructions simple and specific



- Try to change the teaching style to suit the child's interests, what they're good at, and their stage of development



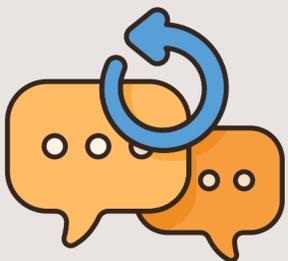
- Use words that you know they understand



- Use visual materials like pictures, videos, and diagrams alongside spoken instructions



- Help them to practice certain skills and behaviours that they need

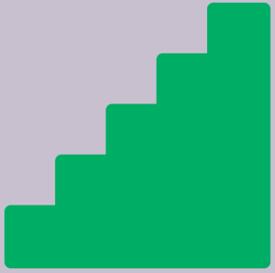


- Repeat key information as often as possible



- Notice how the child is learning and work around their way of doing things, and help them build on that

Providing support in the classroom (continued)



- Give instructions in small steps, and make any tests fit to their strengths



- Give them warning and instructions ahead of any changes



- Provide a structured learning environment



- Have predictable routines



- Explain to them how one action or event can cause other things to happen (cause and effect)

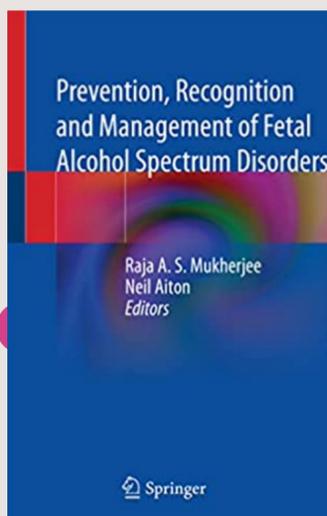


- Identify anything that you know makes the child distracted or hyperactive and try to reduce it



- Reward them for how hard they try, and give them extra time for tasks and tests

What is Raja & Neil's FASD Bookclub?



Prof Raja Mukherjee and Dr Neil Aiton wrote a book for other doctors about FASD. But they hope more people can access the information.



In this online book club people who wrote chapters give 15- minute talks about what they wrote and then they answer questions.



After each book club, the talks are shared on National FASD's YouTube channel.



You don't have to read the book. It's expensive because it's for libraries and universities. But if you want to order it, it's here:

<https://tinyurl.com/RajaAndNeilFASDBook>