

# FASD News and Views



A Michigan Coalition for Fetal Alcohol  
Resources, Education and Support  
(MCFARES) Newsletter



Established in 2003

## Questions We Are Asked

**Question:** *A friend and her husband just adopted 3 kids. Two of them have fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. I don't know anything about FASD. My friend explained that her kids have some learning challenges and may sometimes act out. Where can I go to learn more about FASD and how can I support my friend?*

**Answer:** Thank you for being there to support your friend and for wanting to learn more about FASD. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders describes the set of diagnoses that occur when a child is exposed to alcohol before birth. It is not a diagnostic term itself. The diagnostic terms include: fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disorder (ARND), alcohol-related birth defects (ARBD) and partial fetal alcohol syndrome (pFAS). Each diagnosis has a set of criteria but one diagnosis isn't necessarily worse than another.

One of the most important things to remember is that in most ways, these kids are "normal" (which really means that every kid, with or without any type of diagnosis, is different and each has a unique set of interests, desires and needs). As with any child, a child who was prenatally exposed to alcohol will enjoy certain activities, abhor others, be excited about some things and be anxious about others. With our experience and intuition to guide us, we are in

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a position to discover what children find motivating and what shuts them down.

You can support your friend and her family by learning more about what FASD is and how her children are affected. For instance, if one of the children has sensory issues, you can learn how to order the environment so that it doesn't become overwhelming for the child. Some children have special dietary needs. You can learn more about these needs and help support that diet when the children are with you. Learn the values and goals of the family

and don't judge their choices. If they choose to maintain an electronic-free home (tv, movies, video games), support that choice in your own home when the children are around. If the family limits certain kinds of foods or promotes certain kinds of foods, support that in your own home when the children are with you. If the family uses picture schedules in their home, use the same schedules in your home. Start with where the children are and not where you'd expect them to be given their age. Many children who are on the fetal alcohol spectrum have needs that are younger than would be expected given their chronological age.

It is often difficult for parents to find caring, knowledgeable respite help. Offer to watch the children so that their parents can have an evening out. Before watching the kids, learn from their parents some tips about how to care for the children. Learn how to support and guide the children for a successful time together. Respite is not respite for parents if

the children's behavior is more complicated after time away from the children. Learn the family's schedule and how they help the kids transition from one event to the next. Learn the words and actions they use.

Look for trainings and webinars to attend with the family. Check out some websites that give information about FASD:

National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: <http://www.nofas.org/>

FAS Community Resource Center: <http://www.come-over.to/FASCRC/>

FASD Center for Excellence: <http://www.nofas.org/>

Again, thank you for taking the time to learn more about FASD and how to help your friends. They will be very thankful for your support.

*If you have any FASD-related questions, please send them to Charisse at [charisse@mcfares.org](mailto:charisse@mcfares.org)*

## FASDay – Saturday, September 12

International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day (FASDay) activities will be held on Saturday, September 12, 2015 from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. at Fellowship Chapel located at 12875 14 Mile Road, Sterling Heights, MI 48312. We'll hold an open Project S.A.F.E. (Supportive Activities for Everyone) meeting where we'll share a meal, the children will have time to play while the adults talk. We'll enjoy a trivia game and strategize about how to prevent fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and how to help those who are affected.

If you would like to join us for this event, please email Charisse at [charisse@mcfares.org](mailto:charisse@mcfares.org) to indicate how many people will be attending.

## Healthy Kids Despite Disabilities

Hello everyone. I hope the day finds you and your loved ones well. Some days are so busy just dealing with the behaviors that is hard to remember, to just love our kids. Wouldn't it be easier to show them love, if the behaviors were better, if they were calmer, if we had less stress in the house, less picky or angry attitudes. The answer is, Yes! for me anyway. I love my kiddos with my heart and soul, some days are so much easier than others. The one thing I have found that helps the most is, diet. No, I don't mean a weight loss, weight gain diet. I mean a cleansing of the body diet, a rotational diet.

A bit of background on me first, I am an adoptive mother of 4 very different, very energetic, loving, extremely intelligent boys, that face a daily struggle. My oldest is 17, he has ADHD, PTSD and depression. Next, is my 15 year old, he has ADHD, FAS, Autism, Depression, PTSD and Developmental Delays. My 13 year old is ADHD, ARND, Autism, PTSD and Developmentally Delayed. Last, but not least, is my 5 year old ADHD, FAS, with Developmental Delays. Medications did not work successfully. School and interventions did not work. I was at my wits end. We finally got the FAS and ARND diagnosis and began the search for better, healthier ways to treat our kids. We want to love them and nurture them not be angry and frustrated. We wanted what everyone else has, with our kids, to go to a park or a store and not deal with a meltdown, a tantrum or a "freak out" episode.

My middle two boys were heavily medicated, when they came into my life, every new med change seemed just as bad and most of the time, worse than before. We were so lost, we felt useless and helpless, to help them. School was so overwhelming for them, home was exhausting, life felt like a battle ground. We were always on high alert for the next thing to happen. Our 15, then 13 yr old was all but expelled from Junior High for behaviors and outbursts. We began chiropractic care at Thunder Bay Chiropractic Center, in Alpena, MI. Dr. Lorie Vorraro and Dr. Richard Chura have helped my boys brains heal with good, gentle neck and spine readjustments and



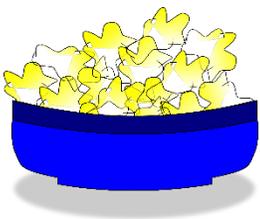
manipulation, to get the healing cerebral and spinal fluid to the brain. Dr. Lorie calls them attitude adjustments because the boys calm down instantly after a visit and it lasts about 2 weeks. If we miss a week or two, it really shows in their energy levels and attitudes. They began our boys on high quality multivitamins, Vitamin D (so much information on [vitamindcouncil.org](http://vitamindcouncil.org)). It is required to hardwire the brain and immune system health. Emulsified cod liver oil (we call it brain lube), and acidophilus to help heal their intestinal tracts and gut flora. We are now starting Pau D'Arco Tea, to help heal the intestinal tract, also.

With our 4 boys, we have found that they do better without the junk. Dyes (especially Red #40, Yellow #5 and Blue 1, we eliminated them all) increase ADHD symptoms and have been linked to cancer, artificial flavorings also linked to ADHD and brain fog, artificial sweeteners have been linked to migraines, diabetes and break down nerve endings causing an oversensitivity,

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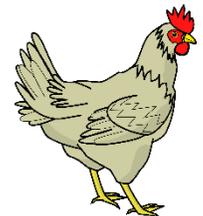
preservatives, gluten, dairy and soy (adds the hormone estrogen to the diet) and the list seems to grow regularly. These food additives seem to have a profound affect on our kids. This was through an effort to clean up our diet that I began to see the change. I began to remove the stuff/junk one thing at a time. I was so overwhelmed in the beginning, seemed like it would never work. Seriously, I was exhausted just reading the stuff about removing the junk. The withdrawal symptoms are sometimes so extreme that I thought it wasn't worth the work. For me, the changes were a project to sink myself into, something I knew would help my family. I am now very grateful to have been given the opportunity to help my children be successful and get to know them on a new level.

And so it began.



We started simple, remove the sugared cereal, pop-tarts, gummy snacks, candy, cookies, chips, etc. This meant rearranging the grocery list and the kitchen cabinets. First, we just eliminated the snacks and went to just eating at meal time. Then the only snacks offered, were carrot sticks with soy free Peanut Butter, apples with cinnamon sprinkled on them and bananas. I bought a popcorn popper. Instead of chips, I would pop corn for lunches, movie night and game nights. Then we switched to coconut oil instead of butter, rice cakes and corn tortillas instead of bread, oatmeal, corn meal and grits instead of cold cereal. Rice milk instead of cows milk. (this one started when my youngest was 8 months, then we began the rest of them on it) Slowly, they got use to things. The behaviors began to diminish, the meltdowns subsided, cooperation and smiles began to grow on their faces. I had not seen smiles on my kids. They began to lose weight but gain color and good energy. We eliminated constant TV and video games, they began to read, color and do school work. For a while, I was afraid my kids were getting to skinny, doing more reading, I knew this too, would pass. As their bodies began getting the nutrition from the food they ate, instead of an opiate type high, they began to get muscle mass and fill back in again. This was not an overnight, low stress, easy task as a parent. If your kids are anything like ours, Peace and Prayers are with you. The long haul is worth the endeavor.

After 2 years of hard work, we now raise our own chickens for eggs and meat, grow organic veggies in our yard, make most things from scratch. We eat nothing from a box or bag unless a label is read and cleared through Dad or me. Our boys are now at the point where if one eats something they don't tolerate well, everyone else notices the behavior. It takes a week of issues, and attitude and tons of water to clear the system of the negative effects of a bad meal or snack. Be vigilant, you are your child's best source of security, safety and knowledge. The earlier you start this lifestyle change the easier they accept it as a fact in their life.



This does not mean they get “nothing good”. Our boys eat, they love to eat. We splurge on coconut milk ice cream and Spartan brand grape popsicles. We make popsicles out of juice, cake out of oatmeal flour, no-bake cookies and even chocolate. (Lindt 85% is the best) Do they miss out on take out nights? Yes. Do they know they are better getting the homemade pizza instead? Yes. Are my kids better behaved, have better health and happier? YES!

Every child is different, every system is different, what works for us may or may not work for you. If you are where we were a few short years ago, it is worth an effort to make the change. Giving our kids an opportunity to be “normal” instead of disabled, giving them an opportunity to have the better relationships. Our kids have grown and matured so much with the lifestyle changes. Our youngest didn’t speak more than 20 unclear words before we began these changes, now he never stops unless he gets into something he shouldn’t have. Through it all, be sure to celebrate the achievements, one afternoon meltdown free, a whole day, eventually they will be just kids, not my kid with a disability. Cherish these moments, keep a food journal/behavior journal, keep your doctors and team of helpers on board. Everyone has to be on the same page for your child or children to be successful.

If anyone has any questions, feel free to contact me on Facebook at Healthy Kids Despite Disabilities. On my Blog, <http://healthykidsdespitedisabilities.com/> or [healthykidsdespitedisabilities@yahoo.com](mailto:healthykidsdespitedisabilities@yahoo.com)

God Bless all of you on your journey to a healthy, loving life.

Jamie

## Free Book

*Addressing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders* is available for free from SAMHSA, and may be downloaded. See <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/TIP-58-Addressing-Fetal-Alcohol-Spectrum-Disorders-FASD-/SMA13-4803>

## GoodSearch

Please consider helping MCFARES to raise funds to support individuals and families who are affected by pre-natal exposure to alcohol. Each time you conduct a search at <http://www.goodsearch.com/>, a donation is made to MCFARES. Please designate MCFARES as your charity of choice. You can also use GoodShop for your on-line shopping needs. A percentage of your on-line purchases will be donated to MCFARES.

## Super Kids / Smart Choices



This year’s Super Kids/Smart Choices summer socialization program was held at Richard’s Middle School in Fraser. 12 students from around the tri-county area enjoyed learned and practicing new skills.

This program has run annually since 2008 and is a partnership between MCFARES and the Macomb Intermediate School District. For more information about Super Kids/Smart Choices or to be placed on the list for next year’s program, please contact Charisse Cossu-Kowalski at

[charisse@mcfares.org](mailto:charisse@mcfares.org).

## Things Our Kids Say

**Receptionist at Physician’s Office:** He’s 21 now, right? He’ll have to sign the HIPAA release.

**J:** I don’t need to sign a HIPAA form. I’m young. I don’t need new hips.

## Braggs

<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cindy</b></p> <p>Cindy C., age 18, graduated from high school. She is considering attending MCTI in the fall.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Meg</b></p> <p>Meg P., age 18, finished high school and will be attend Lutz School in the fall.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Gabby</b></p> <p>Gabby S. attended the Princess Party held at the Grosse Pointe War Memorial on June 28<sup>th</sup>.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>
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## 2015 NOFAS Summit



Each year the state affiliates from across the United States and Canada gather in Washington D.C. to meet with NOFAS (National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome). The 2015 Annual Affiliate Summit Conference was extremely successful. There were more than 25 affiliates in attendance. This year was the fourth year that I was able to represent MCFARES. The Affiliate Summit gives NOFAS and the FASD affiliates the chance to discuss key topics in the field.

This year in addition to presentations from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention on the new Practice and Implementation Centers, we had presentations about Prevention and Advocacy by Jerome Romero (NM), the Juvenile Court Bench Guide by Eileen Bisgard (CO), FASD and Educational Strategy by Susan Carlson and Sara Messelt (MOFAS), Social Media by Andy Kachor (NOFAS). We were also provided National Updates from Jeanne Mahoney and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, The Arc National (Phuong Nguyen), the FASD Center for Excellence (Jill Hensley), and the Organization of teratology Information Specialists/MotherToBaby (Amy Hendricks – NC).

During the last day of the Summit, the affiliates had a facilitated discussion on what our focus will be during the next calendar year and 7 committees were developed as work groups. They include:

- The first one is a Position Statement for Birth Moms. This group will focus on creating a document that will campaign to address the stigma associated with birth mothers.
- The second group is called Affiliate Development. This workgroup will be developing a Toolbox where expert affiliate advocates can share unique strengths with new groups which would in turn lend the wealth of expertise to those groups that are challenged in this area.
- The third group is IDEA: White paper. This group will focus on legislation that would promote FASD becoming a category of educational eligibility for special education services.
- The fourth group was formed to deal with FASD diagnosis and intervention options for those already identified.
- The fifth work group that was developed was to aid in creating a Juvenile Bench Guide.
- The sixth group will draw up the Strategic Plan for the Affiliate Network and
- The seventh group will prepare for the 2016 Summit Conference

The NOFAS Annual Affiliate Summit Conference is an opportunity for MCFARES to be united with other organizations addressing FASD. The sharing of information and resources will help us to build the capacity of our coalition through collaboration at an international level. The knowledge, information and resources obtained during this event will support us in our mission to raise awareness of the risk of alcohol use during pregnancy, prevent FASD, and support others affected either directly or indirectly by FASD.

*Sue Lind, MA*

*Quality Assurance Coordinator, The Arc of Macomb County*

*Vice President, MCFARES*

[suelind@arcservices.org](mailto:suelind@arcservices.org)



**2015 NOFAS Summit Attendees**

## Kroger Community Rewards

Please consider registering MCFARES as the beneficiary of rewards using your Kroger Plus card. The MCFARES organization number is 91150. We thank you for your support. Funds raised will assist MCFARES in providing support to individuals and families affected by pre-natal exposure to alcohol.

## Project S.A.F.E.

### (Supportive Activities for Everyone)

Project S.A.F.E. is a monthly pot-luck activity for families who are living with FASD. Our families come together for a meal, play time for the children and time for support for adults. Project S.A.F.E. is held at Fellowship Chapel at 12875 14 Mile Road, Sterling Heights, MI 48312. We usually meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month. If you're able to join us, please contact Charisse at [charisse@mcfares.org](mailto:charisse@mcfares.org) to RSVP and confirm that the activity will be held as scheduled. Note: Unless other arrangements are made, these meetings are reserved for family members only.



### Donate Time – Work with Us!

Do you have a few hours to spare? We have several different opportunities to help you put your spare time to good use. Do you like kids? Maybe you can enjoy Project S.A.F.E. with us and supervise the children after dinner so that parents have some time to talk. Do you have website-building skills? We'd love your help re-designing and updating the MCFARES website. Do you have newsletter-designing skills? We could use your help putting the quarterly MCFARES FASD News and Views newsletter together (we'll develop the content and you can organize it into the newsletter).



#### ***Pure Michigan***

*This is one of the sculptures in the Art Trail Tecumseh exhibit.*

See:

<http://www.michigan.org/hot-spots/tecumseh/>

Save The Date

# **"Into Action!"**

Featuring: Adrienne Bashista

Director of Families Affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Supporting Individuals with  
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)  
Through a Strength & Brain Based Approach

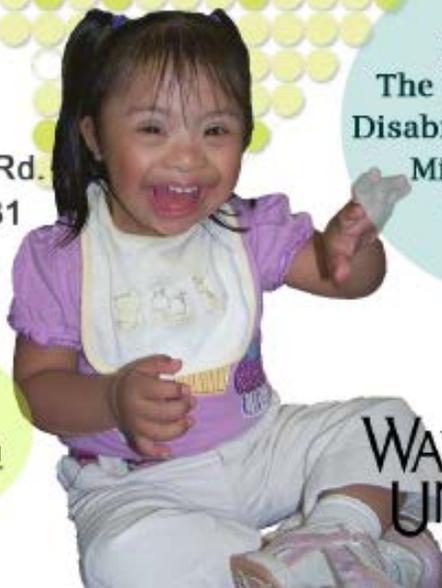
**October 15 -16, 2015**  
**Thursday & Friday**

Wayne State University  
Oakland Center  
33737 West Twelve Mile Rd.  
Farmington Hills, MI 48331

Hosted By:  
The Developmental  
Disabilities Institute &  
Michigan FASD  
Task Force

**Questions?**

Contact, Ann Carrellas  
[ann.carrellas@wayne.edu](mailto:ann.carrellas@wayne.edu)  
or 313-577-8562.



**WAYNE STATE  
UNIVERSITY**



## Support Groups for FASD in Michigan

### (not all groups are specifically for FASD support)

(Please phone or email contact person prior to attending to ensure that group is still meeting. If information has changed, please email Charisse at [Charisse@mcfares.org](mailto:Charisse@mcfares.org)).

#### Alpena County

FASD Family Support Group, Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month; 6:30 – 8 p.m., Thunder Bay Transportation Authority, 3022 US23 S, Alpena. Contact Mary Schalk at [maryschalk@frontier.com](mailto:maryschalk@frontier.com) 989-734-2877 for more information.

#### Eaton County

Eaton County Foster Adopt Support Group, Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday monthly, 6 – 8:30 p.m. Pot-luck dinner at 6:00 p.m. Group/training at 6:30 p.m. Childcare available. Eaton Intermediate School District, 1790 Packard Highway, Charlotte, MI 48813. Located right next door to Walmart. Contact Michelle for more information at [besa\\_93@yahoo.com](mailto:besa_93@yahoo.com).

#### Kent County

West Michigan FASD Support Group, Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month, 7 – 8:30 p.m., Westminster Presbyterian Church, 47 Jefferson Avenue, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Contact Sandy Kezenius, 616-874-9522; Corry Tait, 616-550-4273; or Barbara Wybrecht, 616-241-9126 or [bmwybrecht@gmail.com](mailto:bmwybrecht@gmail.com) for more information.

Self-Advocates with and FASD in Action (SAFA), generally meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month. The meeting is for adults age 18 and up who have an official FASD diagnosis. Contact Rob Wybrecht for more information, [rob1195@yahoo.com](mailto:rob1195@yahoo.com).

Adoptive Families Support Group, Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month, 6 – 8 p.m., Holy Family Catholic Church, 9669 Kraft Avenue SE, Caledonia, MI 49316-9723. Contact Shelley Garcia, 1-855-MICH-P2P, x705 or [sgarcia@afsn.com](mailto:sgarcia@afsn.com) for more information.

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### Macomb County

Project SAFE (Supportive Activities for Everyone), Generally on a Friday or Saturday evening from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. at various locations in Macomb County. Families meet for pot-luck dinner followed by supervised play for the children and support group time for adults. Contact Charisse at [Charisse@mcfares.org](mailto:Charisse@mcfares.org) or 586-329-6722.

Brunch Bunch, Monthly, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m., In Clinton Township, Contact Charisse at [Charisse@mcfares.org](mailto:Charisse@mcfares.org) or 586-329-6722 for location details.

### Muskegon County

Support group for foster/adoptive/kinship families. Very active group meets weekly for various activities. Contact Janice Hilleary at [Bjhilleary@comcast.net](mailto:Bjhilleary@comcast.net) or 231-286-7892 (cell phone).

### Washtenaw County

Ann Arbor Support Group, Meets 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month except November (meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday) and December (no meeting), 7 -9 p.m. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Education Center, Classroom #5, 5305 East Huron Drive. Contact Betsy for more information, [betsysoden@juno.com](mailto:betsysoden@juno.com).

### On-line Support

Families and Supports Affected by FASD: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FaSAFASD>

*Note: No liability is assumed with respect to use of or inability to use the information contained in this newsletter. Although every precaution has been taken, the authors assume no liability for errors or omissions. No liability is assumed for damages resulting from the use of the information contained therein.*



MCFARES is the Michigan NOFAS Affiliate

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## MCFARES Member Agencies

Arc Services of Macomb  
(fiduciary)

Macomb County Office of  
Substance Abuse

Family members of affected  
individuals

Oakland University School of  
Nursing

Macomb Intermediate School  
District, Early On

Macomb County Community  
Mental Health

Fraser Public Schools

Macomb Family Services

Macomb County Health  
Department

Madonna University



***MCFARES needs you.  
Call us at 586-329-6722  
to find out how you can  
help.***

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## MCFARES

44050 N. Gratiot  
Clinton Township, MI 48036

### RECIPIENT

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

Address Line 3

Address Line 4

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