

FASD News and Views



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



Established in 2003

Questions We Are Asked

Question: *My husband and I are going to a wedding in another state in May. My parents will be watching our children for five days while we're gone. Our oldest son is 10 and not on the fetal alcohol spectrum but our 9-year-old daughter and 8-year-old son are on the spectrum and often have trouble with new experiences. How do we prepare my parents and our kids for the trip?*

Answer: You are wise to plan for your absence. Planning will help to prepare your parents for caring for your children full-time and will prepare your children to be with your parents. First, consider writing down your typical daily schedule. Think about every activity from waking in the morning to going to bed at night and all the rituals involved with those tasks (medications, chores, meals, schoolwork, free time activities, etc.). Think about the environment you set up in your home each day (i.e., soft music playing in the morning, electronics only after lunch for a short period of time, warm bath and essential oils before bed, etc.). Be sure to note the activities your children enjoy, which activities may cause challenges and how your kids communicate that they're anxious, tired or overwhelmed. Note how you handle each of these behaviors and how you help your children to calm and redirect. Once you've done all your writing, invite your parents over to walk through a typical day. Decide whether or not your children should be with you during

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this walkthrough. If your parents haven't cared for your children on their own before, consider doing a trial run for a couple hours or a day. Since caring for 3 young children can be overwhelming for anyone who is not used to doing it every day, devise a back-up plan. Find someone your parents can call if they need a break or if they'd like to have the kids visit friends or other relatives.

Decide when to tell your children that your parents will be caring for them while you're away. Some children may not understand the concept of time and may be anxious about the impending separation. Others will be fine with your absence and may want to help plan for the time you're away. Decide if it is best for your children to be cared for in your home or at your parents' home. Each child is different and you know your children best. Consider involving your children (at a time that you decide is right to tell them of your absence) in planning for your absence. They may want to help make a plan for meals or activities. They may want to choose to do special activities with their grandparents.

Mark the dates of your absence on your calendar so that the children have a visual

reminder of when you will leave and when you will return. During your absence, if you're able, plan to contact them either by telephone or video calls. Assure them of your date of return and keep the contacts very positive.

Enjoy the wedding. Try to relax. All your preparations will help your children have a great time in your absence. You'll have great information for future occasions when you go out of town or for others who are working with your children (teachers, day care providers, coaches, etc.). From this information, you can prepare a document that you might use to help others learn how to prepare an environment to help your children succeed.

If you have any FASD-related questions, please send them to Charisse at charisse@mcfares.org

Michigan FASD Task Force

2016 Information and Resources Goal

The Michigan Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Task Force met on November 19, 2015 at the Downtown Lansing Capital Area District Library for a strategic planning session to cover the years 2016 through 2018. Of the three goals identified, one of these directly relates to our resource and information collection mission:

Make MCFARES, as the NOFAS affiliate, the clearinghouse for FASD information in Michigan and accumulate information regarding services and resources available for parents and professionals.

As our work continues on this goal, we'd love your help. Tell us about your favorite books, websites or other resources related to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. We'd like to add your suggestions to our newly improved website. Please send your suggestions to Charisse at charisse@mcfares.org.

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.



Local Family Featured on Channel 7 News

Doug Holman shared his family's story with a Channel 7 news reporter. The story aired on March 1st and received a lot of attention from viewers prompting a second interview which aired on April 5th. You can view the stories here:

<http://www.wxyz.com/news/family-pleads-with-state-to-help-mentally-ill-7-year-old>

<http://www.wxyz.com/news/family-receives-mental-health-services-after-action-news-report>

If you're interested in sharing your story, feel free to contact Charisse at charisse@mcfares.org.

Author Dawn Todd on Government Spending

I just wrote a book called "How Our Government Spending is Effecting Our Mentally Ill and Our Future". This is the first book and I am working on a book about FASD now, which will hopefully be out in a few months. I made a Facebook page called "Gaps in Mental Health Treatment."

I would appreciate it if anyone in this group would go to this page to like and share it. If I get enough likes and shares I might be able to get a free interview for USA Today. The link to the Facebook page is: <https://www.facebook.com/Gaps-in-Mental-Health-Treatment-229057187485068/?fref=ts>

Thank you, Dawn

Things Our Kids Say

Joy, age 14, was overheard in her room getting on to our 6 month old kittens. They were curled up together on her bed sleeping. She has been working on respecting personal space at school. She was telling the kittens that they needed to move away from each other and respect the personal space! Her dad tried to explain to her that kittens don't know about personal space and she said, "I know that is why I am teaching them!"

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.



FASD-centered Problem-Solving

Scenario: Kenneth, 7 years old, 2nd grade, FAS, ADHD, SID

Kenneth's teacher has asked his parents to remind him that he must not push other children while he is standing in line after recess.

FASD-Informed Parent Ideas: After a time of being very active and running around, it is hard for Kenneth to slow down and change gears. We structure our environment at home to meet Kenneth's needs. When we're very active at home, we have some quiet time to help Kenneth calm down. Sometimes we listen to quiet music or do some stretching or breathing exercises.



FASD-Informed Social Worker Ideas: I would like to know what psychological testing says about his executive functioning and developmental age in various areas such as social emotional. Until known, It may be safe to wonder about Kenneth from the perspective of him being half his age. That would help focus adults on realistic expectations for that of a 3 or 4 year old. From this perspective, it is not unreasonable for Kenneth to have regulatory challenges or to not yet have mastered personal space. In addition to incorporating the calming suggestions already suggested, the teacher may want to use tools to help provide the external brain to guide & teach personal space..i.e. A rope with rings or other space markers. These can provide concrete guidelines and safe space from other children that may unknowingly trigger Kenneth who is already over stimulated. *Amy Park-Goeddeke, LMSW, IMH-E®, CTC*

FASD-Informed Teacher Ideas: Kenneth is overstimulated after recess and needs assistance calming down because he is unable to do it independently. We can help him regain control by giving him a "job" as recess ends, such as being the line leader or collecting balls that were used at recess. Allowing Kenneth to come back inside from recess a minute early is another option, as giving him access to a quiet classroom will help him to calm down. *Sarah Ivan, ASD Teacher*

FASD-Informed OT Ideas: Fine motor tasks using the fingers tend to be calming. Kenneth may benefit from the teacher handing him a small manipulative toy after recess. This may include colorful paper clips to put together, Wikki Stixs, a few Lego pieces, etc. He could keep it in his hand as he transitions back to the classroom and leave it on the desk as he walks in. The teacher may want to observe if he does better at the back of the line or the front. If he seems bothered by the light touches of others, it may be better if no one is behind him as being touched when you can't see who is touching you is more arousing. Heavy work is calming. Having all the children stomp their feet, playing a heavy marching game with a poem or song as they get into

line may be helpful. Body rotation improves planning and transitions. The children stand in line with the feet planted, hold a ball and rotate their trunk, passing the ball to the child behind them in line. Then have them pass the ball to the front again until they are all calmer. *Sandy Glovak, OTRL*

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 2nd Saturday of each month. If you're able to join us, please contact Charisse at 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
Large Parrot Screams Color,
Frederik Meijer Gardens,
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Gabby and Duncan S. are Easter Seals Ambassadors

Just before Christmas 2015, we received a phone call, asking if we would let our kids be co-ambassadors for Easter Seals of Michigan. How can you say no to that?!

It isn't a hard job, in fact, it's rather fun. There is also an adult ambassador. His name is Steve. He's very nice & his family is too. We met when they did a professional photo shoot of both our families.

Our job is to promote Easter Seals, pick raffle winners, give a few talks & go to a few parties. Gabby & Duncan also get to lead the Walk With Me zoo walk in August to benefit Easter Seals. Every few months Easter Seals has a raffle for a new car. Gabby picked the winner in March. She said it was exciting to know the person who she chose would get a new car soon! She chose a person who lives in Washington state! Yes, he flew to Detroit to get his car and drive back to the west coast!

We were asked to be ambassadors because people who heard our story about our LUNA experience were compelled to learn more about LUNA. They also thought we looked like a nice, "normal" family and never would have guessed there might be some sort of issues from the kids being adopted.

LUNA stands for Look, Uncover, Nurture & Act. It deals with childhood trauma. The online assessment is free. <http://www.easterseals.com/michigan/our-programs/the-luna-model.html>

Gabby & Duncan like the fun of having their pictures taken and know they are helping others learn about Easter Seals. As parents, Steve & I like how Easter Seals has helped us have a very thorough assessment of each child & the variety of programs they offer to help us help Gabby & Duncan grow up to be the best people they can be.

By Laurel Smith--wife to Steve, stay at home mom to 2 awesome kids and dust bunny herder for the 3 cats & 1 dog sharing our home, and very thankful the 10 fish don't shed.

Here are some articles and a PBS special that features the Smith family:

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/living-with-stress-for-too-long-may-be-giving-kids-asthma/>

<http://www.candgnews.com/news/warren-family-named-easter-seals-ambassadors-90472>

<http://www.macombdaily.com/article/MD/20151001/NEWS/151009957>

Braggs

Cindy C. ...

... age 18, is attending Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) and is considering specializing in culinary arts.



Megan and Andy P. ...

... both had teams that made it to the State Finals for Special Olympic Basketball held at Calvin College. Besides the competition, volunteers hosted a Western Theme Victory Dance. Earlier in the season, Romeo High School Lady Bulldogs hosted them and helped raise funds for their teams. Next competition will be Summer Games at CMU where Megan will be bowling with her team, MiPEEPS, then on to Softball for the summer. Special Olympics keeps us busy all year!



Marcin P. ...

... is the Teen Member of the Year 2016 at the Royal Oak Boys & Girls Club. He is very active there on weekends and during the summer. He volunteers to help coach the baseball teams and he volunteers on Saturday mornings for Youth Abilities (a social and physical recreational program for children with disabilities).





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).

Alpena County

FASD Family Support Group, Meets 2nd Thursday of each month; 1:30 – 2:30 p.m., Partners in Prevention office in the First Presbyterian Church at the corner of US23 and Long Rapids Road, Alpena. Contact Mary Schalk at mary@nemcpi.org or 989-359-2880 for more information.

Eaton County

Eaton County Foster Adopt Support Group, Meets 1st 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.

Kent County

West Michigan FASD Support Group, Meets 3rd 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 for more information.

Self-Advocates with and FASD in Action (SAFA), generally meets on the 3rd 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.

Adoptive Families Support Group, Meets 3rd Tuesday of each month, 6 – 8 p.m., Holy Family Catholic Church, 9669 Kraft Avenue SE, Caledonia, MI 49316-9723. Contact Shelley Garcia, 1855-MICH-P2P, x705 or sgarcia@afsn.com for more information.

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 or 586-329-6722.

Brunch Bunch, Monthly, 2nd Tuesday, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m., In Clinton Township, Contact Charisse at 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 or 231-286-7892 (cell phone).

Washtenaw County

Ann Arbor Support Group, Meets 4th Wednesday of each month except November (meets 3rd Wednesday) and December (no meeting), 7 -9 p.m. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Education Center, Classroom #5, 5305 East Huron Drive. Contact Vern Soden for more information, vsoden@umich.edu.

Statewide List

Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Support Groups by County <http://afsn.org/services/foster-adoptiveand-kinship-support-groups-by-county/> (not all groups are FASD-specific)

On-line Support

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

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MCFARES is the Michigan NOFAS Affiliate

MCFARES Member Agencies

Arc Services of Macomb
(fiduciary)

Family members of affected
individuals

Macomb County Office of
Substance Abuse

Michigan FASD Task Force

Kids Belong/ACMH Board
Member

Oakland University School of
Nursing



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

MCFARES

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Address Line 2
Address Line 3
Address Line 4
