

FASD News and Views



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



Established in 2003

Questions We Are Asked











Question: School will be starting soon and we are still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. My children (son who is going into 4th grade and daughter who is going into 7th grade) want to return to school. As parents, though, we are concerned about the safety, changes and requirements involved in sending them back. How do we know what we should do?

Answer: Yours is a tough question to address because there is no single plan for the fall that is going to work for everyone. In fact, the appropriate plan might be different for each of your children.

In working toward an answer that is appropriate for your family, gather all the information that you can about your options. The school your children attended last year may have more than one option available to your family. There may also be other schooling options available as well. If your children have IEPs or 504s, contact your special education team to learn more about their plans for services and supports for the school year.

Without creating anxiety or stress, try to assess your children's preferences for the school year. Try to assess how your children

have reached the decisions they have made and whether the information they have received is accurate. It is possible that your children are basing their choices on

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inaccurate information. If you assess that they are making solid choices, consider trying to accommodate their desires. For example, if one of your children is adamant about not returning to the classroom and that decision was made based on accurate information, it might be appropriate to look into non-classroom educational opportunities. To do otherwise might cause undue stress and anxiety.

To further assist you in developing a plan, review up-to-date information from various

sources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Since information is changing so quickly, you may have to reassess your options on an ongoing basis. Focus on the physical and emotional well-being of your children and base your choices on an assessment of recent and reliable information.

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

Pure Michigan



Port Huron, Michigan
Photo taken by Darlene I.

MCFARES MDHHS Grant Update

MCFARES is in the process of reassessing the goals it set forth in the MDHHS grant during this unprecedented time. We are working to develop the most efficient methods to deliver resources, education and support to the community.

If you would like to be added to the MCFARES email list and be notified of upcoming webinars or conferences, please send a request to charisse@mcfares.org.





MCFARES Friends of FASD Virtual 5K

Saturday, September 26th, 2020

This year we are holding a virtual 5K to bring awareness for FASD throughout the entire state!

What is a virtual 5K?!

Register for the virtual 5K and you'll get a T-shirt mailed to you prior to the event date. On Saturday, September 26th, put on your MCFARES T-shirt and run or walk a 5K anywhere you like - at a park, on a treadmill or your favorite trail. To help bring us all together virtually, participants can upload photos of themselves wearing their T-shirts and a screenshot of their time/distance to our social media.

Register now! You can register for the MCFARES Friends of FASD Virtual 5K using this link:

<https://www.customink.com/fundraising/mcfares-friends-of-fasd-virtual-5k>

Registration prices are:

Adult short sleeve tee - \$25

Youth short sleeve tee - \$20

Youth / Adult long sleeve tee - \$33

Toddler baseball tee - \$20

Youth / Adult hoodie - \$35

*Prices do not include tax & shipping. There is also a free local pick-up option in West Bloomfield, MI!

Purchase your favorite style of shirt and show your support for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders!

Goal

The goal of the MCFARES Friends of FASD 5K is to raise community awareness and understanding for FASD. FASD is a spectrum of disorders and disabilities. Alcohol in utero causes irreversible brain damage on an unborn child and these effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and learning differences. There is no reversal or cure for FASD, only therapies, strategies, love and patience to support those with FASD.

Small Grants

100% of all proceeds from the 5K will fund small grants for supporting children and adult self-advocates with an FASD in Michigan. The small grants can fund any item helpful or supportive to an individual with FASD and this year we are expanding our small grants to cover basic necessities such as groceries. Grant applications will be open end of October 2020.

Sponsorships

Sponsorships are available and start at just \$50! Sponsors will have the opportunity to have their company logo printed on the back of the event T-shirts! For more information on sponsorships or questions about the 5K, please contact Kari Jo Wagner at KariJo@mcfares.org

We cannot wait to virtually come together with you on September 26th to raise awareness for FASD!

This is Our Life

My two kids are black. I am white. And yes,my kids are adopted. I'm a single parent. I came into my adoption experience in a rather unplanned way. I was completing my Infant Mental Health Certification at Wayne State, when I was invited to participate in a grant to take in drug affected infants. It would be short term, and I was excited to be able to experience something of what I had been learning about in my infant mental health classes. The first infant that came to me three days old. I picked him up at the hospital. He was a beautiful, healthy looking, African-American baby. The long and short of it...the attachment and bonding went so well in the first year that when his birth mom's rights were terminated (three years later,) his birth mom asked me if I would adopt him. She knew how much I loved him and she wanted to see him cared for. And that's how I became an adoptive parent. A few years later, when the opportunity again presented itself, I decided that I may as well adopt another infant, this one eight days old at the hospital, and she also was African-American.



Currently, both of my kids are young adults, 21 and 25. I have only fairly recently come to grips with the fact that many of my white friends do not really think racism exists. They would further believe that if it does exist, certainly they do not participate in it. They have a little use for my thoughts on racism, and question the validity of my experience.

Racism can be both overt and covert. I am writing here about the covert racism. This covert racism exists "under the radar" of those who practice it. When my son was about four, I took him to a children's museum in Grand Rapids. The museum was fairly empty that morning. There was a play area with a small slide. He was happily playing by himself when I took the opportunity to go into the lady's room adjacent to the play area to wash my hands. No one noticed when I stepped back out of the rest room. I observed the play area. I watched with dismay as two attractive well-dressed white young moms spoke harshly to my gregarious son, telling him to "get away." They had their daughters with them. The girls appeared to be the same age as my son. The ladies managed to keep my son from having a turn on the slide, encouraging their daughters to take turns with each other. I watched a little longer to see how long this would continue and it really went on. Finally, my son saw me and yelled out "Mom!" The ladies looked up, saw that I was his mom and immediately changed their tune. Momentarily, they changed position and invited him to play. Not wanting to engage in conversation with me, they rather quickly removed themselves to another area of the museum.

This event stands out in my mind because it was the first time that I had seen people treat my son differently when he was not with me.

I tried to explain it away in my own mind. I tried to rationalize their behavior. Rationalizing becomes harder to do as the experiences build. One instance of apparent covert discrimination would never have convinced me that it was the color of his skin that made a difference. I saw it again and again. Not with people who knew me. But with people who did not know my son and did not see who he was with. They would change their expression/attitude when they saw that he was with me. Beneath his conscious level, my son learned to make sure that people knew he was with me.

I never taught my kids about black/white racism in the USA, as many African-Americans do. They begin to educate them at an early age. I didn't want to "prejudice" my kids into negative thoughts about how they might be treated. I didn't want to put this expectation into their minds. Discrimination, based on race, is easily learned from parents. Even so, time and time again, I bumped into the same discrimination reality.

When my son was in the upper elementary grades, I was waiting to meet with a gentleman in the school office. He had met with my son first, and was looking to meet with me. He had a name tag, so I recognized who he was. I was the only one in the office. He looked at me and left. His demeanor was sour and abrupt. I followed him out into the hall and introduce myself. His stern face brightened, "So YOU are his mom?" I knew exactly why I was getting that change of expression. By then, I'd seen it many times before. A frown turned into a smile. An angry look turns to happy. Anxiety turns to relaxation.

I was a teacher in my daughter's private k-8 school. I was there daily, people new and respected me. My daughter was one of very few African-American students. All of the African-Americans in that school were adopted. Covert racism is not something tangible. It's not something that you can put your finger on. It's not something that you can quantify or "prove." If people don't feel comfortable, they just don't feel comfortable. When seem to think that you are a no-count, you will sense it, if you are an adult or a child.

When my daughter began attending a small Catholic high school, she was eager to make new friends. The school was largely white. I was not a known mover and shaker in that environment. In her freshman year, my daughter signed up to attend a weekend school trip to Washington, DC. She was excited to go on the trip and eager to make new friends. She came home and reported that it went well, she was especially happy that she had made a new friend. The first day back to school after and the trip, my daughter was called to the Dean's office. He told her in no uncertain terms that she was to have no more contact with one particular girl, the new friend that she had made on the trip. She would be punished if she did. He offered her no

explanation as to why. She was devastated. I subsequently made an appointment with the Dean. He would not tell me what the complaint of the other parent was. He said it was private information. I said that if my daughter was being punished, we had a right to know what she had done wrong, so that she could improve her behavior. He was undaunted. My daughter did her best to comply with the “stay away” rules. The girl in question came to my daughter privately/secretly a few times, apologized profusely saying that her mother was “crazy” and she was very sorry. But still no information as to the mother’s complaint. This principle and dean were later dismissed. I added a new category of racist experience to my list: overt, covert, and “beyond belief crazy.”

I begin to think that I should have told my children about racism from the start. If you are a thinking, feeling person, and these things begin to keep happening to you, and you don’t know why, you begin to internalize your experience. (There’s something wrong with me, I don’t know what it is.) It is only with truly understand what racism is, what it looks like, and how it affects you ... These are all the path to healing and to developing positive self-esteem.

I am proud of my kids. But more importantly, I’m proud of the African-Americans living in the USA at such a time as this. They’ve been living with this covert racism a long time. Treyvon Martin could have been my kid. If your child is white, you can be absolutely confident that if your child dies while walking down the sidewalk, justice will be served. If your child is African-American, justice is uncertain at best.

People ask me what can I do? “Should I ask my black co-worker about what they’ve experienced? I’m afraid of saying the wrong thing.” I say that your instinct is correct. I would not ask that question, especially of an acquaintance. Let’s face it, both black and white people in the USA pre-judge each other. Black people don’t trust white people. Instead, of asking that question, you must start with looking at our own lives and our own judgements. How many of my best, most trusted friends are the same color skin as me? My world is too small. How many of my children’s African-American friends and families do I invite over on a regular basis? Their world is too a small. (I’m not talking about the token black person that you hired in your company or the token black family who managed to work their way up into your neighborhood ... the smile and wave it. I’m not talking about the young black kid that works at McDonald’s that you’re friendly to. And I’m not talking about the once-a-month soup kitchen where you and your kids help out.). These are all good and well, but this is not healing. Why are we afraid? Can we push past the fears? We may need to confront some hidden beliefs in ourselves that are uncomfortable for us to look at. At this point in history, we have an exciting opportunity to dig deeper, to make the internal changes necessary to reach out in a new way. We will personally grow richer from the experience. And our country will be moving toward peace.

Written by Carol Cole

NB This . . .

Sometimes we struggle to know how to most appropriately address our child's behavior in a neurobehavioral manner. Here's a scenario and a response to addressing the behavior using a neurobehavioral approach.



Scenario: Ever since my 9-year-old son saw a news program about the COVID-19 pandemic, he refused to leave the house. He even wanted to wear a mask inside the house.

1. Neurobehavioral Challenges: Challenges understanding the “sometimes” factor (i.e., sometimes we have to wear a mask, sometimes we don't). Sometimes gets stuck on one idea and “perseverates” on it, even with new information.

2. Scenario Without Accommodations: If we try to go outside, even on our own property, without a mask, he becomes very anxious, to the point of not being able to walk. He tells us he is afraid we will catch the virus.

3. Accommodations: Using words to explain the manner in which the virus is spread from person-to-person has been difficult for our son to understand, so we used visuals. We showed him pictures of a person sneezing and another of a person coughing and showed him how to keep a safe distance from others. We showed him the precautions that we take when we leave the house (i.e., wearing a mask when around non-family members, distancing ourselves in public places). Slowly, he started to leave the house. First, just to sit on the porch. Then, he started playing with his dog in the backyard. We have started walking up and down the street ensuring that we maintain a proper distance from others who are outside.

4. Neurobehavioral Approach to Success: We started where he was and addressed his needs before forcing him to do anything he was not comfortable doing. He was given space and time to ask all the questions he needed to ask. We also now severely limit his access to news programs or other information that might make him anxious because, at this time, he is unable to process the information.

5. Explanation: Validating our son's thoughts and concerns helped him to become less anxious. We are fortunate that we have been able to keep him at home where he has felt safe and secure. Providing information in a way that he could understand, helped him to become more comfortable in making the choice to go outside without fear and anxiety. Without pressuring him, we encourage him to play outside and join us on our walks around the neighborhood.

Documentary Viewing

MCFARES has a copy of the documentary film “Moment to Moment: Teens Growing Up with FASDs” by NTI Upstream. We would like to arrange viewings of the film around the state. If you are interested in viewing the film and/or are able to host a viewing, please contact Charisse at charisse@mcfares.org.



FASD and the Brain

Dad: J, what is $5 + 4$?

J: Cloudy with a chance of rain.

(Explanation: J had just heard the weather report and the forecast was for a high of 54 degrees and a chance of rain)

Pure Michigan



Fort Gratiot Lighthouse

Photo taken by Michelle R.

Macomb Project SAFE Coordinator and Michigan Project SAFE Consultant Update

Macomb Project SAFE held an in-person meeting in July, the first since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Though few people were available to attend, those in attendance enjoyed renewed fellowship and support. Macomb Project SAFE plans to meet again in August and a September meeting is planned to recognize International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day.

Project SAFE Groups

Macomb County Project SAFE: Macomb Project SAFE is held on the 2nd Saturday of each month in Sterling Heights. Monthly meetings are announced on the MCFARES Facebook page (www.facebook.com/groups/MCFARESFASD). For more information, contact Laurel at mama2russians@gmail.com

Kent County Project SAFE: If you are in the Kent County area and are interested in getting together with other families, please contact Juline Lloyd at jules@pjilloyd.us.

Lansing Area Project SAFE: If you are in the Lansing area and are interested in getting together with other families, especially families with school-aged children, please contact Brian Hagler at haglerb3@gmail.com.

Mid-Michigan/Central Michigan Area Project SAFE: Cathy Mielke is working with children with FASD in 11th grade and above with self-advocacy and support in the mid-Michigan and Central Michigan area. Please contact her at cathymielke1@gmail.com if interested.

Other: If you would like to start a Project S.A.F.E. group in your area and would like some pointers about how to get started, contact Laurel Smith at mama2russians@gmail.com.

Caregiver Meeting Via Zoom

An FASD-informed social worker has offered to moderate an online meeting (Zoom or another platform) for caregivers. If you are interested in joining an online support/information group, please send an email to charisse@mcfares.org. Include your preferred meeting times and suggested topics of interest. We hope to set something up very soon.

This is Me



Hi my name is anna I'm 23 old I love to ride a horse I now ride on a horse 1 day every week I ride this horse his name is Hershey'. he Was a Racing's horse before he came to BRIGHTON RECREATION he is for Only advanced riders like me he is the best horse to ride the trails are fun I Go up deep hill and go down deep hill and go around trees and another rider is fun

(If you would like to be featured in our next "This is Me" column, please send your story and a picture to info@mcfares.org.)

Pure Michigan



Algonac, Michigan

Photo taken by Sarah I.

Michigan FASD Champion Spotlight

Emily Rusnak, Ph. D., CCC-SLP

Tell us 3 things about yourself (two things are true, one is false):

1. My family were original settlers of Maryland in the mid-1600s.
2. I studied speech-language pathology in my undergrad program.
3. I'm related to the pioneer Daniel Boone.



What is your favorite season and why? Probably fall. I enjoy temperate (around 70°F) days with low humidity best.

It is a warm, sunny spring day. You are free all day to do whatever you wish. How will you spend your day? Probably what I always do-work at home with my family in the garden, doing chores, and cutting/splitting/stacking firewood for the winter months.

Favorite Color – As a child, blue and green together. As an adult, I have no preference really.

Favorite Sport – I am the last of the big sports fanatics out there, but we do have season tickets for Michigan women's basketball (an awesome family experience!).

Favorite Store – Tough one. I don't shop for fun, just for needs. I should probably own stock in hardware stores and Amazon, if it were based on purchases over the years.

What is your favorite movie? Why? I think if I had to choose just one movie to bring to an island with me, I'd probably bring the movie Dr. Zhivago, with Omar Sharif. It's a perfect film that did justice to the text. It has great cinematography, an excellent story line, it's REALLY long, and has basically stood the test of time.

What is one thing you could not go without during your day? Hands down, it would be my family. I feel least at ease away from them.

Tell us about your job: Well, I am not currently working in a job. I'm clinically trained as a speech-language pathologist and did research/taught in higher ed for years in my field. Currently I am what they call "FIRE-d". It looks like with that name that I was let go from my job, but it actually stands for Financial Independence, Retire Early. At this point I volunteer many hours of week of my time to MCFARES to help provide better supports for individuals with an FASD and their families in the state of Michigan.

What attracted you to your current job? For the FIRE'd part, we are a very frugal family that focuses on socially-responsible investing. We loathe debt and worked to free ourselves from the constant cycle of working just to pay off stuff we can't use because we are working all of the time. We focus on living well below our means and saving/investing as much as possible. As such, we maintain a very low tech environment in our home and access many free opportunities in our community.

For the MCFARES part, I saw the lack of services and supports in the state specific to FASD and wanted to help out. My own area of professional expertise is in environmental risk to development, so I came

somewhat hardwired for the work. My goal is to help Michigan stabilize viable pathways to success for all of those impacted by prenatal alcohol exposure.

What, in your opinion, is the biggest need related to FASD in Michigan? I think the biggest need for FASD in Michigan is streamlined systems of care to get folks to the services that will benefit them most. This also means that the service providers themselves (from therapists to teachers to coaches to ministers of faith, etc.) have to be well-trained in FASD, which is a major hole currently statewide. We have excellent social service opportunities in Michigan, but these providers do not serve our families well currently, as those systems of care are largely not tooled to consider neurodevelopmental disorders as a primary need (versus "behavioral health" or "mental health" needs...or autism...as the system is currently designed).

2 is false: Even though I'm certified as a speech-language pathologist, my undergraduate studies were in music performance (French horn) and Russian Language and Studies.

Simple Ways to Help Raise Funds For MCFARES

GoodSearch

Please consider helping MCFARES 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.

Amazon Smile

If you shop on-line with Amazon.com, please consider using this link: A donation to MCFARES will be made each time you shop: smile.amazon.com/ch/35-2394822

Kroger Community Rewards

Please consider registering MCFARES as the beneficiary of rewards using your Kroger Plus card. The MCFARES organization number is **GK535**. 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.

Pure Michigan



Oscoda, Michigan
Photo taken by Jackie P.

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. If you have time to help us out with any of these activities, please send an email to Charisse at charisse@mcfares.org.

Here are some opportunities that require only a few hours a month or less:

- **Non-profit Accountant:** *Frequency:* probably 2-3 times/year. *Location:* from your office. *Time commitment:* probably no more than a couple hours/year.
- **Non-profit Lawyer:** *Frequency:* probably 1-2 times/year. *Location:* from your office. *Time commitment:* probably no more than a couple hours/year.
- **Project S.A.F.E.:** *Frequency:* about once a month. *Location:* varies. *Time commitment:* about 3 hours for each activity.
- **MCFARES FASD News and Views newsletter:** *Frequency:* four times/year. *Location:* varies. *Time commitment:* your choice.
- **Literature Packets:** *Frequency:* as your schedule permits. *Location:* your community. *Time commitment:* your choice.



Now that's Silly

Q: What creature is smarter than a talking parrot?

A: A spelling bee

Submitted by: anonymous

Looking for Resources, Education and Support? Help is Just a Click Away

If you are looking for resources, education and support for FASD, consider joining us online on both of the MCFARES Facebook pages.

MCFARES hosts a public Facebook page, where new research and information about FASD is discussed with Michiganders and folks interested in FASD from around the globe. We also make announcements about Project SAFE meetings and other events. Visit our public Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MCFARESFASD>

If you prefer a space on Facebook that does not post to your own newsfeed, then consider joining the MI FASD group--MCFARES social networking spot for families, practitioners, and self-advocates. We offer new research and information about FASD in this space. It is also a group that allows parents/caregivers, practitioners, and self-advocates to ask questions and receive support from people who "get it". Most of the members are from

Michigan, but we do have a number of national members including some national presenters on FASD. Visit our closed support group space here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/mifasd/>

Consider joining us online to help gain a better understanding of the disorder and find a support network of your peers!



Brag

Marcin, age 23....

Works full time at a large home improvement store where he continues to learn new tasks and now cashiers in all areas of the store. Also, he is the only employee in the entire store who did not take a leave during the pandemic. His family and friends are very impressed with his career accomplishments.



Niko, age 8 ½ . . .

Niko age 8.5, learned to ride a two-wheeler bike! He had GREAT perseverance and had it in less than an hour. I am very proud of him!



Joshua, age 26 . . .

Works part-time in the processing plant of a local food distributor. He enjoys the work and the responsibility of getting himself ready in the morning to get to his job.



If you would like to feature your brag in the next newsletter, please send the information to info@mcfares.org with "Newsletter Brag" in the subject line.



Vision: The Coalition strengthens served communities' ability to eliminate prenatal alcohol exposure and provide support to persons and families impacted by fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) by delivering exemplary professional education, public awareness, and support.

Mission: Bridging the gap between individual needs and community services

To find out how you can help us work toward our vision and mission, contact us at info@mcfares.org.

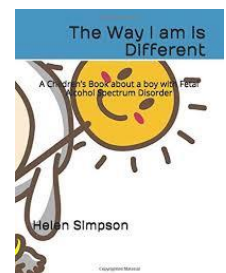
What Do you Read, Watch, Listen To?

In our attempts to learn more about fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, we scour libraries, explore the internet, and question anyone who might know about FASD. We'd like to know about your favorite websites, books, articles, videos, support groups, etc. We'll compile the information and include it on resource sheets or on our website. If you've got suggestions to share, please email your favorites to Charisse at charisse@mcfares.org. Thanks for your help.



This Quarter's Recommendation: *The Way I am is Different* by Helen Simpson

From Amazon.com: "In this children's book, a boy with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is about to embark on his third grade year. The boy describes his anxiety, fears, and discusses his struggles from an honest view point of what it is like to live with FASD in Elementary school. He shows us that the support from family, friends, and teachers certainly makes a positive difference. This book helps children understand their "different" is perfectly okay, and they are not alone."



This title is available through MeLCat (<https://mel.org/welcome>). If your local library has FASD-related resources, encourage them to offer those resources through the MeLCat system so that others in Michigan can also access them.



Information/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.

Ingham County

Lansing: Project SAFE, Meets monthly at various location in and around Ingham County. Contact Brian Hagler, bhagler3@icloud.com, or Cathy Mielke, cathymielke1@gmail.com, for more information.

Kalamazoo County

Kalamazoo Area Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (KAFASD) parent/caregiver support network is a local (West Michigan) closed Facebook support network, with occasional social events, trainings, meetings. Join KAFASD at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/KAFASD/> or contact Robin at 269-731-4577 or Kathy at 269-303-1402 for more information.

Kent County

West Michigan FASD Support Group, Meets 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 – 8:30 p.m. September – May (no December meeting), Westminster Presbyterian Church, 47 Jefferson Avenue, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Contact Sandy Kezenius, 616-648-9259 or sandnkez@hotmail.com; Cory Tait, 616-550-4273 or taitville@comcast.net; or Barbara Wybrecht, 616-485-8665 or bmwybrecht@gmail.com for more information.

Self-Advocates with and FASD in Action (SAFA), generally meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, September – May (no December meeting). The meeting is for adults age 18 and up who have an official FASD diagnosis. Contact Rob Wybrecht, 616-901-5980 (cell) or rob1195@yahoo.com or robw436@gmail.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, 1-855-MICH-P2P, x705 or sgarcia@afsn.com for more information.

Kent County Project SAFE, various activities planned around the county. Contact Juline Lloyd (jules@pjilloyd.us) for more information.

Macomb County

Macomb 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.

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).

Statewide List

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

On-line Information/Support

MCFARES: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MCFARESFASD/>

Michigan's FASD Advocacy and Social Network: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/mifasd/>

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Updated 10/19



MCFARES is the Michigan NOFAS Affiliate

MCFARES Member Agencies

Family members of affected individuals

Developmental Disabilities Institute, Detroit

Kids Belong/ACMH Board Member

Oakland University School of Nursing

Parent and Child Services, Inc.



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