



FASD NEWS AND VIEWS

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



Established in 2003

Questions We Are Asked:

My son is almost 10 years old and sometimes still needs help getting dressed. He'll put his shirts on backwards or have trouble putting socks on. Sometimes he needs help in the shower. How will he ever live on his own if he can't master these basic skills?

Sometimes it seems our kids will never learn the most basic of skills and then one day we look back and realize that the skills we were so worried about have just about been mastered.

In assessing your child's ability to successfully master a task, consider whether any physical or medical issues are preventing mastery of the skill. Is buttoning a challenge because your child has weak muscle tone? If so, consider requesting an OT evaluation. Also, rather than thinking about what is chronologically appropriate, consider what is appropriate for his maturity level. Think about what might be appropriate for a 5 year old and set your expectations at that level.

If no medical or physical challenges are causing delays, you can proceed to developing an intervention strategy. Teach the skill using clear, concise, understandable language and consider using visual charts that define steps to complete the task. Here is a website that can help with that:

<http://www.do2learn.com/>.
Look under "Picture Cards."

Consider using a permanent marker to label shoes with the letters "L" and "R" or with arrows to show which shoe goes on which foot. Also, use a permanent marker to mark the inside back of a shirt to indicate which part of the shirt goes in the back.

You can make a visual chart to help your son prepare to shower. Show all the items he needs to bring into the shower and the steps he needs to take to complete his shower. Review the chart before his shower and monitor him while he is completing the steps.

Remember, due to our children's brain differences, skills may need to be re-taught and re-practiced even after it seems mastery has been achieved. Continue offering opportunities to practice a skill without shaming or humiliating your child. Most children, given the opportunity and ability would complete a task if they could.

Independence will look

SPRING, 2011



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differently for each individual. We are all, to some degree, dependent on others. Most of us need help when our vehicle breaks down or when the furnace stops working. Independence for your son may mean living on his own, it may mean a supervised living home or a host of other options. What is important is that your son finds happiness and dignity in whatever living situation he is able to maintain.

If you have a question, please send it to Charisse at Charisse@mcfares.org.

Super Kids/Smart Choices Summer Socialization Program

The Super Kids/Smart Choices summer socialization program will be run again this summer. It will be held on the following dates: July 18, 19, 20, 21 and 25, 26, 27 and 28.

Students learn and practice skills that they will use throughout their lives. They also develop friendships that last well beyond the last day of the program.

Affected children ages 5 through about 12 are welcome to attend the program that will be held in Macomb County.

For more information, contact Charisse at Charisse@mcfares.org or call 586-329-6722.



It's a Matter of Perspective: Understanding How Our Kids' Brains Work

Parent of adult who has an FASD: "Systems see a snapshot of my child. I live the movie."

MCFARES Meeting Dates

Meetings are generally held on the fourth Monday of each month from 12:30 – 2:00 p.m. at the Arc-Macomb offices. Contact Charisse at Charisse@mcfares.org for more information.

May 23, 2011
June 27, 2011
July 25, 2011
August 22, 2011
Sept. 26, 2011

October 24, 2011
November 28, 2011
December (tbd),
probably a luncheon meeting

Visit MCFARES on the web at

<http://www.mcfares.org/index.html>

and on Facebook at

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=93728110628&v=wall&ref=ts>

Special Olympics: A Winner for Our Family

By Barb Parker

Special Olympics is a program that is near and dear to my family's heart. I began volunteering in high school, became a Special Education teacher taking my students and now our family either participates or volunteers at many events throughout the year. My husband even jumped into freezing water last winter to raise over \$1000 for the program!



To see the heart of those competing is very uplifting. Their oath, repeated in unison at the beginning of events is, "Let me win; but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt." The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for all children and adults with intellectual disabilities. But even more happens! Participants make new friends on the team and in the community. Skill improvement doesn't just happen in the fitness area; communication, self-confidence and many other areas see increases.

Our daughter will soon be training as a "Global Ambassador" for the program where

she will learn to share her passion. She participates in soccer, basketball, poly hockey, figure skating, bowling, golf and cycling and has also competed in swimming, track and field and volleyball. She followed her older brother's love of sport and competition. On a more level playing field, she challenges herself instead of giving up and offers encouragement to others. She has met many volunteers/"fans". Her favorites are law enforcement (who had her speak at a graduation where she met Lloyd Carr), dental care volunteers (who encourage her to floss more) and her family (who cheer and brag loudly).

To find out how to participate or volunteer in your area visit www.somi.org.



There are opportunities for everyone, even kids.

Why We Homeschool

By Barb Parker

As a former public school teacher, I had some ideas about homeschooling, especially the lack of social development I was certain would occur. For us, pre-school and lower elementary years went okay, but the list of things that weren't quite fitting was increasing. By now, a diagnosis on the FAS Spectrum was giving us more to learn. "Trying differently" and "you are the expert on your child" were ringing true, but not being understood by most school staff. I tried a school of choice which helped a little, but services offered were still not appropriate for her.

When a group of parents who had similar concerns were considering homeschooling, we felt ready for the change, too. Rather than passing our children along, we wanted to find ways for them to learn what they needed to be successful. Some of us worried it would cost too much, but we discovered many free, online materials, homeschool group co-op classes and community programs.

Our families have discovered many benefits. Our children are happier, calmer and more well-rounded kids. Since we set content expectations that are appropriate to our individual children, we can give as much individual attention as needed, provide the structure and supervision levels required, and repeat and re-teach information as needed. Our children have made great progress and we still have time for field trips, choir, art and music classes, American

Heritage Girls, Special Olympics, gymnastics and sports teams.

Each of us wondered if our kids would miss something and want to return when the newness wore off. Nope, none of the children wants to return. A teacher from one of the children's previous school saw her 3 weeks into the school year and commented, "You got your answer! She is doing so much better." It was comforting to know that the change was that noticeable.

Homeschooling is not an option or a desire for all families. What I wish to share with schools is that everyone who works with affected students needs to be trained about FASD's. For many, too high of expectations can cause frustration not seen at school, but still very real. Sensory overload and the need for more supervision need to be addressed. Organizational skills need to be taught, probably re-taught, and maintained throughout their school experience (and throughout their life). Structure and "visible" boundaries are very important. There are more kids in school, diagnosed or not, who will benefit from these techniques. These children show moments of higher ability but are not always able to recall information. While we want to encourage and give realistic hope, we must never shame a child whose brain is permanently affected. Proper teaming can be the answer to changing the sobering statistics facing children with FASD's.

Drawings by Andy

Andy has been drawing for about 3 years, mainly in pen and ink. He is also learning to tie flies, make jewelry, pottery and sculpture.



Andy's newest interest is photography. He has a "good eye" for interesting perspectives.

His exposure to the arts has been supplemented by Cub and Boy Scout experiences, including summer camp and two artistic aunts who encourage his talent.



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 3rd Wednesday of each month; 6:30 – 8 p.m., Thunder Bay Transportation Authority, 3022 US23 S, Alpena. Contact Mary Schalk at maryschalk@frontier.net or 989-734-2877 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. Charlotte Assembly of God Church, Charlotte, across from Meijer on M-50. Contact Michelle for more information at besa_93@yahoo.com.

Jackson County

Jackson County, Parenting Challenging Children. Meets 2nd Sunday of each month, 1 – 2 p.m. Cascades Fellowship CRC, 2390 W. High Street, Jackson, MI 49203. Monthly meeting includes family lunch, child care, crafts and videos for children and youth. Speaker occasionally scheduled. Contact Rev. Bob Devries or his wife Alice at 517-784-8034.

Kent County

West Michigan Support Group, Meets 3rd Tuesday of each month, 7 – 8:30 p.m., Westminster Presbyterian Church, 47 Jefferson Avenue, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Contact Barbara Wybrecht, 616-241-9128 or bmwybrecht@aol.com or Corry Tait, 616-878-1839 for more information.

Livingston County

FASD Living, Meets monthly on the 1st Thursday, 7 - 9 p.m., St. Joseph Mercy Livingston Hospital, cafeteria conference room, 620 Byron Road, Howell, MI 48843. Contact Terri Moore for more information, fasdliving@comcast.net or Family Resource Center at 517-548-2200.

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.

Monroe County

Adoptive Moms Group, Meets 2nd Wednesday of each month, 7 – 9 p.m. Original Gravity, 440 County Street, Milan, MI 48160. Contact Theresa Light at Theresa.light@yahoo.com for more information as dates and locations sometimes change.

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 Betsy for more information, betsysoden@juno.com.
- Parenting Children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, Meets monthly on the 3rd Thursday, 7 – 9 p.m. Home of New Vision, 3800 Packard Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48108, 2nd floor, Room is located next to Suite 201 and is labeled "Private". This group will provide parents and caregivers emotional support, FASD education, and community resources. The group will primarily focus on school-aged children. Contact Linda Rowse for more information, 734-668-8449, Linda@washtenawfasd.com, www.washtenaw.fasd.com

Wayne County

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Caregivers and Families Engaged, Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute, Wayne State University, Skillman Building, 100 East Palmer, Detroit, MI 48202. Contact Maureen Rashwan at 248-470-5469 for more information.

On-line Support

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

MCFARES Member Agencies

- Arc Services of Macomb (fiduciary)
- Family members of affected individuals
- Macomb Intermediate School District, Early On
- Fraser Public Schools
- Devon Behavioral Consulting
- Macomb Family Services
- Macomb County Health Department
- Madonna University
- Macomb County Office of Substance Abuse
- Oakland University School of Nursing



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

MCFARES

44050 N. Gratiot

Clinton Township, MI 48036

[Recipient]

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

Address Line 3

Address Line 4