

Russell Family Fetal Alcohol Disorders Association Inc FASD 'Red Flags'

The 'red flags' for FASD are many and varied. Just one or two by themselves are not indicative of this condition but should there be more than 3 or 4 and there is confirmed prenatal exposure to alcohol, then this condition is something which may need to be considered by an expert diagnostic team.

Babies

- Poor | weak sucking reflex
- Tires easily
- Doesn't thrive
- Shaky cry
- Hyper or hypo tonic (poor muscle tone | rigidity)
- Seems to settle better when wrapped snugly in a dark room
- Developmental delay
- Small head circumference
- Premature delivery
- If meconium is tested it will show the presence of alcohol
- Low birth weight

School aged child

- Does reasonably well at school until he or she reaches the higher grades
- Is always in trouble often for the same thing
- Is unable to focus to do homework
- Becomes angry, frustrated and has tantrums after school (has used all self-discipline at school)
- Is very concrete (may take instructions literally – for example if told to learn a sentence by reading it aloud to everyone including the neighbour's dog, may take it literally and not be satisfied until the sentence is also read to the dog)
- Makes friends but then loses them quickly
- May have trouble getting anyone to come to birthday parties
- Is clearly unhappy
- Lacks confidence
- Has problems with mathematics but can add and subtract mentally quite well
- Is boisterous and aggressive when a lot of children around him | her

Toddlers

- Hyperactive
- Aggressive
- Poor attachment
- Clothing or food sensitivity
- Prefers not to have certain fabrics on his or her skin
- Has a difficult sleep | wake cycle (can wake in the middle of the night and eat or play)
- Seems to not learn from mistakes or experience
- Will go to anyone – seems to have no particular attachment to parents
- Is small of stature, thin with some skeletal problems
- Developmental delays

Teenager

- May get in trouble with police
- Does silly things that are counterproductive for his | her goals
- Cannot manage money
- Is always asking for money
- Can get a job but finds it had to keep it longer than a month or so
- Wants his own way regardless of consequences to himself or others
- Likes animals
- May wish to buy toys or items which are for younger people
- Can get on well with younger children
- Will have started exploring sexuality at a very young age
- Will be using alcohol and drugs (cannabis preferentially)
- May become depressed and suicidal
- Leaves school early
- Is suspended and | or expelled from school

- Drug and | or alcohol use
- Premature puberty
- Leaves school early
- Is suspended and | or expelled from school
- Comprehension is problematic
- May have trouble reading and writing
- Often diagnosed with ADHD | ADD | RAD | ODD | Bipolar | Autism | Asperger's
- Socially | personally immature
- Cannot understand social situations
- Struggles to follow rules | instructions
- Learning problems at school
- Difficulty remembering things
- Gets upset easily at little things
- Difficulty making and keeping friends
- Long-term bed wetting
- Ongoing behavioural problems (often in trouble with the law)
- Ongoing health problems
- Acts younger than their age
- Doesn't understand consequences of their actions
- Comprehension is problematic
- May have trouble reading and writing
- Often diagnosed with ADHD | ADD | RAD | ODD | Bipolar | Autism | Asperger's
- Has a mental health disorder – anxiety | depression
- Socially | personally immature
- Cannot understand social situations
- Ongoing behavioural problems (often in trouble with the law)
- Ongoing health problems
- Acts younger than their age
- Doesn't understand consequences of their actions
- Struggles to follow rules | instructions
- Being homeless or difficulty keeping accommodation
- Long-time unemployed or difficulty getting employment
- Impulsive behaviour; anger issues, poor social skills
- Poor time management
- Poor self-care
- Kids on welfare

Adult

- Has substance use disorder
- May not be able to manage a relationship longer than a few months
- Cannot parent well
- Will not wear prophylactics
- Will often behave like a young teenager
- Is socially immature while physically mature
- Will come to the notice of the police
- Is unable to organise a day off
- May say he will do something and then it will not be done
- Will get belligerent if he doesn't get his | her way
- Is constantly making silly | inappropriate decisions
- Is unable to problem-solve simple problems
- Is verbally competent but cannot follow instructions
- Will not be on time for appointments
- Can get a job but cannot hold it down
- Comprehension is problematic
- Has been in prison or confined in a mental health institution
- Has a mental health disorder – anxiety | depression
- Does not have stable accommodation
- Lives on the street
- Couch surfs

Developed by the Russell Family Fetal Alcohol Disorders Association as a community service