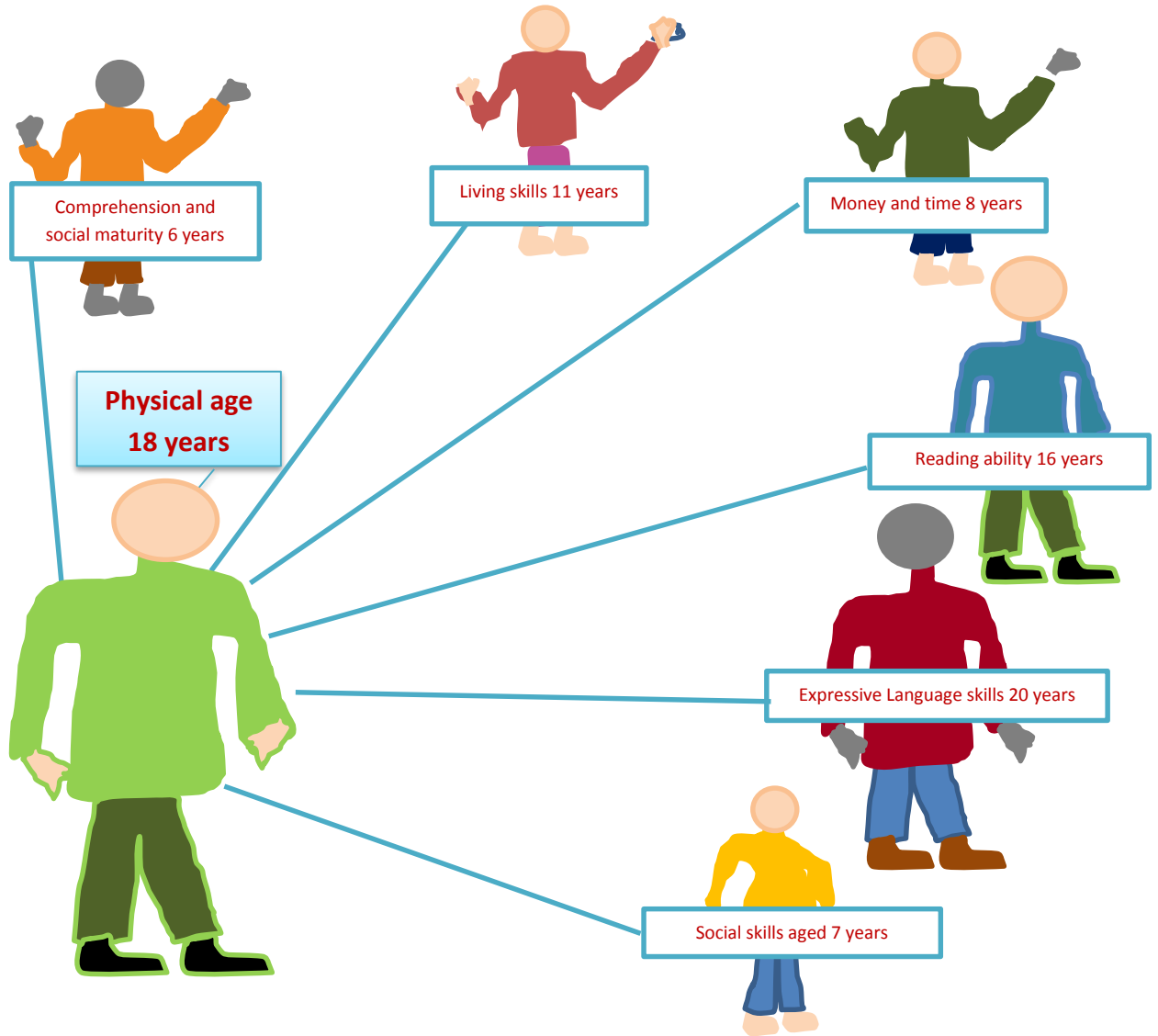


FACT SHEET

Russell Family Fetal Alcohol Disorders Association Inc IMMATURE BEHAVIOUR

¹Professor Barry Carpenter, OBE, PhD Academic Director, UK The Schools Network

1



Immature behaviour is normal in children and teenagers to a certain extent, however the sort of immature behaviour that accompanies FASD is related to damage to the frontal lobes, specifically the executive function.

As children get older, they learn how to regulate their behaviour so that they intentionally act in a way that is consistent with social rules and the needs of others. This behaviour is also strategic in relation to academic and employment success. The same self-regulatory skills underlie social | behavioural self-regulation [eg inhibiting impulses, deferring gratification, benefitting from feedback] and cognitive-academic self-regulation [eg strategic reading, effective studying, and taking responsibility for academic success].

¹ Professor Barry Carpenter, OBE, PhD Academic Director, UK The Schools Network

²Self-regulation [executive function] develops very gradually in children, beginning in infancy and continuing through the adolescent years. Under normal developmental conditions, the growth of self-regulation [executive functioning] is positively influenced by:

- Neurologic maturation, especially development of the frontal lobes of the brain
- Stability, organisation, and predictability in the home environment
- Reasonable emotional attachment of children to important adults in their life
- Adequate opportunities for children to exercise control over events in their life
- A parenting style that steers between the extremes of permissiveness [at one end] and an overly authoritarian and controlling style [at the other]
- An environment that models, values, and rewards self-regulation, autonomy, and personal responsibility
- Reasonably effective development of language, for communication as well as for problem solving and self-regulatory self-talk
- Positive adult-child interactions that include the regulatory words, procedures, and themes that will eventually be internalised by children to become their internal self-regulatory system
- Development of a coherent and positive sense of self

When FASD is involved, the influencers above may not be relevant or may be compromised, for instance:

Influencers	FASD Involvement
Neurologic maturation, especially development of the frontal lobes of the brain	Frontal lobes do not develop normally
Stability, organisation, and predictability in the home environment	It is often found that in a family where there is a child or children with FASD, the home environment is not always stable, organised and predictable
Reasonable emotional attachment of children to important adults in their life	Only 10% of children with FASD remain with their family of origin
Adequate opportunities for children to exercise control over events in their life	Children with FASD require 24/7 supervision to keep them safe – for a child with FASD to have control over their lives is not possible if the safety and wellbeing of the child is to be maintained
A parenting style that steers between the extremes of permissiveness [at one end] and an overly authoritarian and controlling style [at the other]	Research from the United States by Clarke has shown that only 6% of mothers who have children with FASD are alcoholic women however in many families where alcohol is used can be dysfunctional and balanced parenting can be compromised
An environment that models, values, and rewards self-regulation, autonomy, and personal responsibility	With undiagnosed FASD, these are experiences which are unlikely to be experienced by a person with FASD therefore rewards are very few and far between even though the child is trying hard.
Reasonably effective development of language, for communication as well as for problem-solving and self-regulatory self-talk	People with FASD have a very mature verbal ability which again results in additional difficulties for them as their verbal competence will presuppose competence in other areas hence raising expectations of the child's ability
Positive adult-child interactions that include the regulatory words, procedures, and themes that will eventually be internalised by children to become their internal self-regulatory system	It is very difficult for a child/adolescent with FASD to self-regulate regardless as to how much repetition, learning and facilitation is involved

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

² Adapted from http://www.projectlearn.net.org/tutorials/sr_ef_routines.html