

# **nofasard**

**national organisation for fetal alcohol  
syndrome and related disorders**

**Sue Miers AM**

[www.nofasard.org.au](http://www.nofasard.org.au)

[sue@nofasard.org.au](mailto:sue@nofasard.org.au)

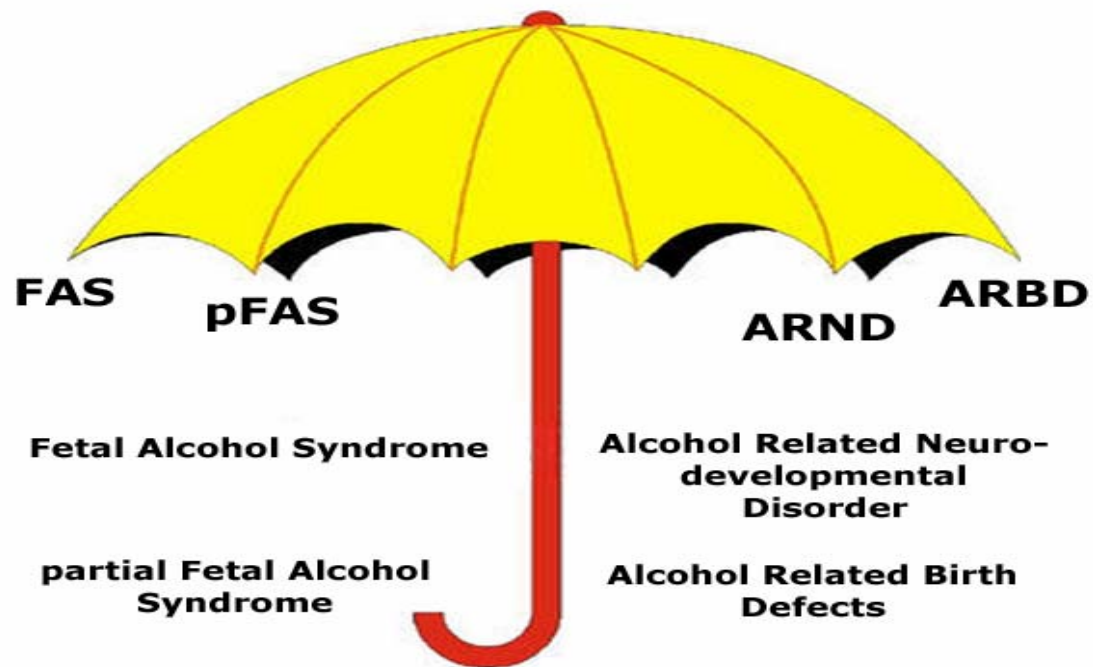
ph 0418 854 947

PO Box 323, Blackwood

South Australia 5051

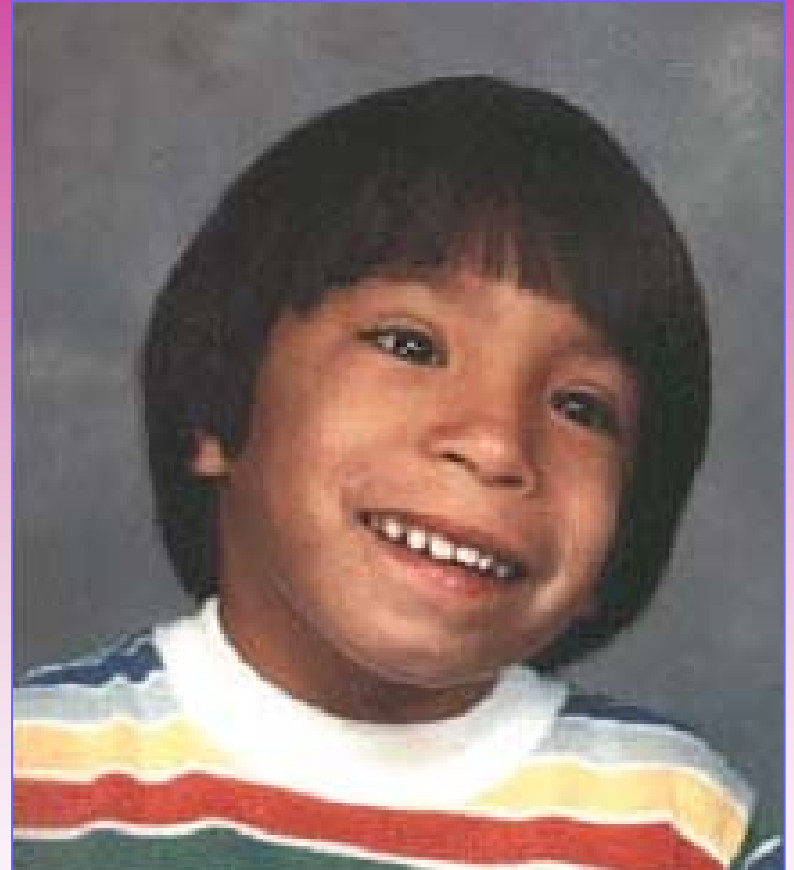


## **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder**



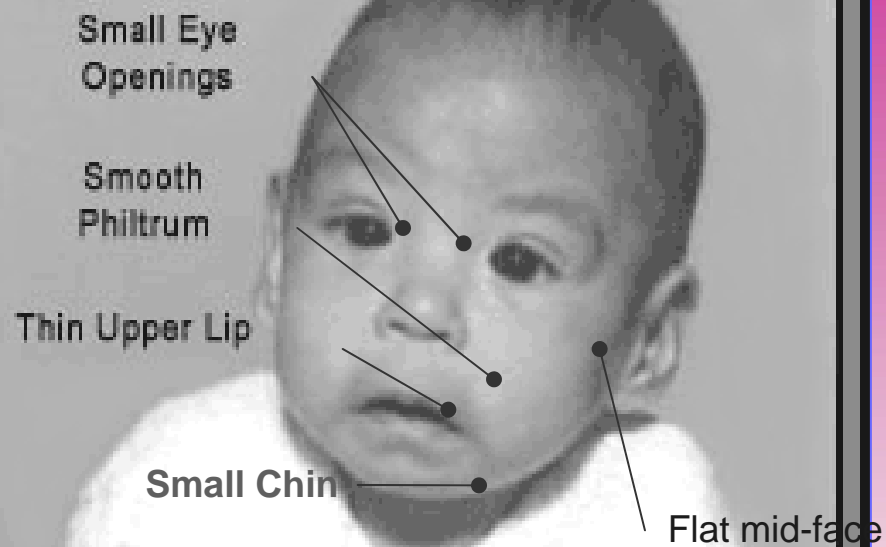
# Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

- Specific pattern of facial features
- Pre- and/or postnatal growth deficiency
- Evidence of central nervous system dysfunction



*Photo courtesy Teresa Kellerman*

## FAS Facial Characteristics



© 1999 Teresa Kellerman [www.fasstar.com](http://www.fasstar.com)

# Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

An iceberg floating in dark blue water under a cloudy sky. The small tip of the iceberg is above the water line, while the much larger, jagged mass of the iceberg is submerged below the surface. The text 'Fetal Alcohol Syndrome' is written in large, bold, black letters across the top of the image, spanning both the visible tip and the submerged part.

- Partial Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- Alcohol Related Neuro-developmental disorder
- Alcohol Related Birth Defects



nofasard

# Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder is the most common preventable cause of birth defects and brain damage in children. It is a lifelong disorder, caused by prenatal alcohol exposure.

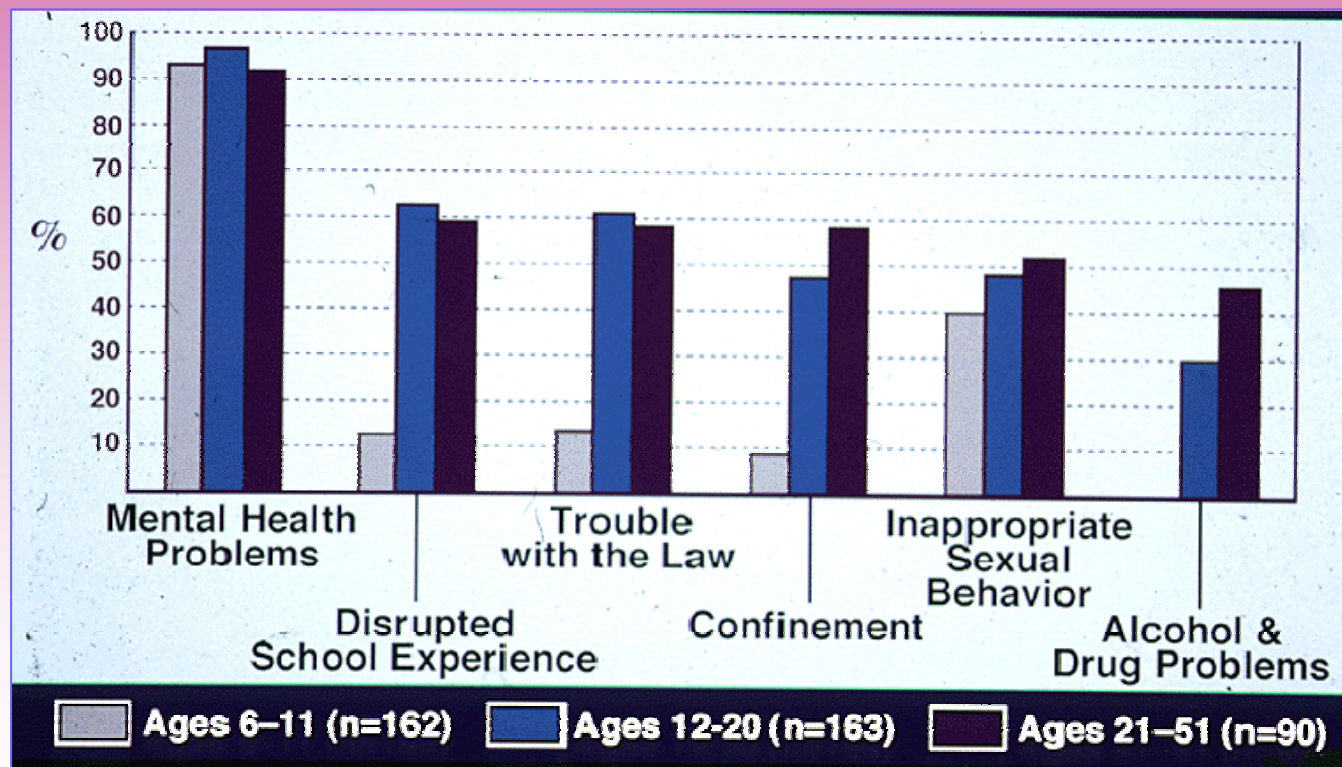


# Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

- Estimated Incidence Rate: 1/100 live births  
(Sampson et al, Teratology 56:317-326, 1997)
- Incidence rates surpass Down Syndrome and Spina Bifida (WHO)

# Secondary Disabilities

Individuals with FAS/FAE have a range of secondary disabilities – disabilities that the individual is not born with, and which could be improved with appropriate interventions.



Streissguth, et al., 1996



# Universal Protective Factors

- Living in stable home with nurturing parents and minimum of changes in household
- Diagnosis and the implementation of appropriate interventions before the age of six
- Protection from violence


*Streissguth et al 1996*

# Diagnosis is Crucial

- Essential to improve the quality of life for the affected child
- Helps to stabilize the home and improve parenting
- Allows for early intervention, appropriate treatment and support.
- Helps families and support people understand behaviours as reflective of brain damage rather than being the result of poor parenting
- Is the key to preventing further affected births

# FASD in Australia

- Assessment and diagnostic services not routinely available
- Doctors have received very little training in diagnosing FASD
- FASD is poorly understood by most health professionals and glaringly absent in policy in most areas where it should be receiving attention.



[ABOUT US](#)
[SERVICES](#)
[INFORMATION](#)
[PUBLICATIONS](#)

**arbias Ltd** was established in 1990. We are a not for profit national company managed by a board of directors from the corporate and community sectors.


**arbias Ltd** provides specialist services in alcohol and other substance related brain impairment. We are staffed by over 50 employees in the areas of neuropsychology, psychology, social work, community development and case management.

**arbias Ltd** services include:

**International services:**  
Information, training and consultation.

**National services:**  
Information, training and consultation.

**Victorian services:**  
Neuropsychological assessment, case management, housing, lifestyle support, information and workforce training and development.




**BECOME A MEMBER**

**DONATIONS**

**RELEVANT LINKS**


**HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?**



*"I believe that the work that you do, is very, very important."*  
Quoted by his Holiness, the Dalai Lama, on the work undertaken by **arbias** Ltd, Business Leaders Luncheon, Sydney 2007

**arbias Ltd.** Telephone: (03) 8388 1222 [arbias@arbias.com.au](mailto:arbias@arbias.com.au)

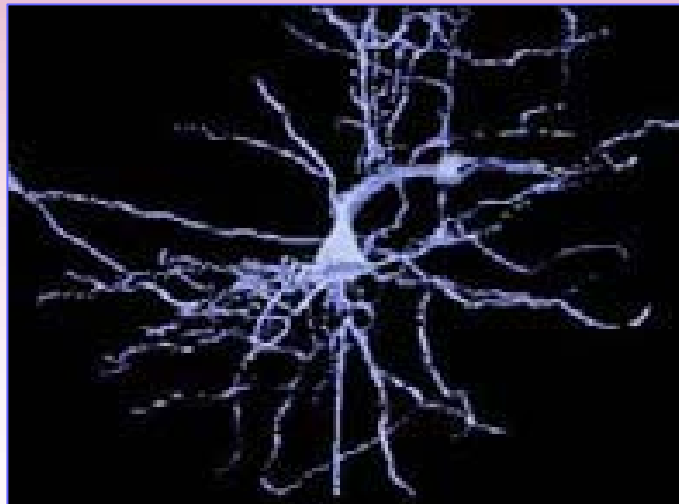
Site built by WebDynamic - eCommerce, Search Engine Optimisation, Email Marketing, Website Design & Development, Melbourne, Australia

 **MULTI-LINGUAL ACCESS**

# Neural Pathways

40 days post conception – 50,000 nerve cells form per minute. During this period, transient ethanol exposure can delete millions of neurons from the developing brain.

*Mann et al – Florida Dept Health*



# FASD & Societal Expectations

## A poor fit!

Societal Expectations	Values	Assumptions	Interventions	Reaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Based on age and appearance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Age appropriate</li><li>• Conform</li><li>• Comply with rules</li><li>• Take responsibility for actions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Non-compliance equals laziness, recalcitrance, spoilt, stupid</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Imposing will, punishments</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disruptive behaviour, anger, acting out, anxiety, shutting down</li></ul>

*Adapted from D Malbin FASCETS ©*

# Individuals with FASD CAN learn!!

***We firstly have to make a huge paradigm shift***

- Understand that the brain is the source of all behaviour
- Individuals with FASD have brain difference
- Brain difference = different behaviour = normal for them
- Accept as individuals who “can’t do” rather than “won’t do”

# Fair doesn't necessarily mean same

- In order to be fair individuals with FASD may need to be treated differently
- This means giving them what they need so that they can experience success just as we do for individuals with more familiar disabilities



# FASD impacts on all sectors of our community

- Education
- Health
- Family & Community Services
- Drug & Alcohol / Mental Health Sector
- Disability Sector
- Criminal Justice System

# Failure to address FASD is a human rights issue

It is critical that FASD is acknowledged in public policy and receives appropriate support and service delivery that enhances the rights, capacities, choices, and dignity of affected individuals and their parents, families and carers.