

SEPTEMBER IS FASD AWARENESS MONTH



FASD Awareness Month 2022

Partner Media Guide

Sample Social Media Messages

FASD United recommends pairing messages on the prevention of prenatal alcohol exposure with messages raising awareness of FASD and promoting the visibility of individuals living with FASD, recognizing that at a prevalence rate of 1 in 20, people with FASD live, work and play among us in all of our communities, and deserve to be recognized for the unique gifts, strengths and talents they bring.

FASD is a complex and nuanced topic, and it is important to ensure that our efforts to reduce the incidence of prenatal alcohol exposure are aligned with and supportive of our work to increase the visibility, recognition, and support of all people, children and adults, living with FASD in our communities.

As you roll out social media messaging for FASD Awareness month and beyond, we make the following suggestions:

- Use person first language, like person with FASD or children with FASD. Avoid words like suffering from FASD or damaged by FASD.
- Stigma matters. The language we use around prenatal alcohol exposure can help pregnant people feel safe asking questions about alcohol use during pregnancy or asking for help if they are having difficulties stopping their use. Avoid using terms like “innocent victims” or implying that women who drink don’t care about their children.
- Photos are powerful. When choosing images, it’s important to consider and minimize unintended consequences like reinforcing stigma or stereotypes about people with FASD.

Messages on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD):

- It is important to recognize the strengths, talents and gifts that individuals diagnosed with FASD bring to our communities.

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- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) describes the range of effects that can occur in an individual prenatally exposed to alcohol. These effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities with lifelong implications.
- In a recent major study of first graders, the prevalence of FASDs was found to be as high as 1 in 20.
- FASD is an umbrella term for a range of diagnosable disabilities. While the term Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is most commonly recognized by the community at large, it is only one of a range of diagnoses in the spectrum of prenatal alcohol related disabilities.
- Early identification, support and evidence-based interventions can improve outcomes across the lifespan of individuals with FASD.
- The disabilities associated with FASD can persist throughout life.
- FASD can be an “hidden disability” that is often missed, misdiagnosed, or mistreated.
- Individuals with FASD may have difficulty with neurologically based skills involving control and self-regulation, and adaptive behavior, and the ability to manage and control personal actions.
- People with FASD and their families need support in many areas, including educational resources and respite care.
- Adults with FASD can experience problems with adaptive skills and executive functioning and may need lifelong support.
- Individuals with FASD may come into contact with the criminal justice system, often due to deficits in impulse control, judgment, and being easily led. FASD informed legal support is needed.
- People with FASD are at a higher risk for criminal victimization, and often benefit from support and guidance throughout adulthood.
- FASDs are disproportionately present among youth in child welfare & juvenile justice systems. These systems need to be informed of FASD and provide resources to those in their care.

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- Unfortunately, FASD is under recognized, with supports and services not widely available, and far too few diagnostic and treatment services currently available.
- Individuals living with FASDs benefit from structure, support, understanding and most importantly, early diagnosis, early intervention and FASD informed medical and mental health care.

Messages on Prenatal Alcohol Exposure:

- Alcohol and Pregnancy Don't Mix
- When it comes to alcohol and pregnancy, there is no safe time, no safe type, and no safe amount.
- No amount of alcohol is known to be safe during pregnancy.
- Risky alcohol use includes ANY amount by pregnant people.
- Make a plan for a healthy baby --don't drink any alcohol if you are pregnant or may be pregnant.
- The primary factors that determine the risk of PAE are the quantity (the amount), frequency (how often), and the timing (when during a pregnancy) of the alcohol exposure.
- Every day matters. Abstaining from alcohol at any time in pregnancy, as soon as possible, is best for the health of the pregnancy.
- FASDs can occur at any stage of pregnancy.
- Exposure to alcohol from all types of beverages, including beer and wine, is unsafe during pregnancy.
- Alcohol screening and counseling is recommended for all adults, including pregnant people.
- Alcohol exposure during pregnancy is a leading known cause of birth defects, developmental disorders, and learning disabilities.
- Alcohol exposure during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth, prematurity, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

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- In addition to avoiding alcohol, it is important to avoid other substances known to harm fetal development, including opioids, cannabis, cocaine, and other drugs.
- Partners of pregnant people can help prevent alcohol exposure during pregnancy by expressing support and avoiding alcohol themselves.