FASD: What Teachers Can Do

The State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services and Department of Education and Early Development recently published “Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: Alaska Educator’s Guide.” As part of this guide, there is a list of qualities found in teacher that have made a difference in the lives of children with FASD. These qualities, as reported by parents of Alaskan children, include:

- A teacher who believes that learning, especially for a child with disabilities, is more about the relationship between the student and the teacher and the parent than it is about system services and programs
- A teacher who tells me she enjoys having my child as part of her class
- A teacher and staff that takes time to find out what my child’s “gifts and talents” are and using them to build my child’s self-esteem
- A teacher who communicates with me regularly regarding my child’s day
- A teacher, aide and resource teacher that have an understanding as well as specialized training in FASD
- A teacher who is flexible and inventive with problem solving
- A teacher who makes the link between my child’s learning behavior and his disability, and who shares what she’s learned with me
- A teacher who believes in my child and who will work with him/her individually and patiently to help him/her achieve
- A team of teachers and counselor who meet with me almost monthly and email me almost weekly. During these meetings we live with the theme: The honor of one is the honor of all
A team who is enthusiastic about new ideas for the accommodation plan, inviting the use of new assessment instruments, still in their clinical trials

A teacher who is eager to report success

A teacher who believes that successful learning is about sincere devotion and caring attention and collaboration in the spirit of service to the best interests of the student

For further information about this guide for educators, please contact the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Office of FASD at 1-877-393-2287.

For further information regarding Georgia’s FASD prevention efforts, please contact Karen Kuehn Howell, Ph.D., at the Maternal Substance Abuse and Child Development Project, Emory University School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, 1256 Briarcliff Road, N.E., Suite 309W, Atlanta, Georgia, 30306. You can also phone us at 404-712-9800 or visit our website at

http://www.emory.edu/MSACD

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