

## **FASD Brain Damage at School**

### **Schools require students with these abilities**

Thinking quickly

Making good decisions

Paying attention

Staying focused

Understanding concepts and abstract thought

Positive social skills

Good communication

### **With FASD, schools get disabilities**

Slow cognitive/aural pace

Poor executive functioning

Distraction

Impulsivity

Variable memory

Inability to generalize

Confabulates

Poor social skills and boundaries

### **Brain Damage Also Causes Dysmaturity**

Read more on this FASD concept in Diane Malbin's *Trying Differently Not Harder* (2002). This section on Dysmaturity is taken from this resource.

- *Dysmaturity* is a classic sign of FASD – it is a critical concept to understand for success with students who have FASD.
- Pupil will appear to be acting like (s)he is 6, 8, 11 and 15 years old all at the same time. E.g. S/he is 6 socially, 8 emotionally, 11 in reading ability but is actually age 15.

- This is VERY confusing for parents and teachers – s/he seems to be many different ages!
- All modifications should be planned around where the pupil seems to be developmentally.
- “Figure out where they ARE developmentally and start there, not where their age says they should be”. D.Malbin
- These “kids are younger than they are”, a 15 year-old may be developmentally only 8 or 10 – always think younger when planning potential curriculum or expectations around behaviour. What is a 10 year-old like? What should I teach a 10 year-old? Try to figure out where they are developmentally and start there.
- Research shows that people with FASD tend to become “more together” and mellow out as they age. They reach this stage by about age 30, too late for the school system but still hopeful.

### **Examples of Dymaturity at School – Always Think Developmentally Younger with FASD**

Start your programming with where they seem to be developmentally not what their age says.

#### ***Typical 5 Year- Old***

*Goes to school, follows 3 instructions, sits still for 15 minutes, plays and takes turns*

#### ***5 Year-Old with FASD***

*Needs to take a nap, follows 1 instruction if shown, sits for 5 minutes, engages in parallel play, wants their own way ( Acts like a 2 or 3 year old)*

#### ***Typical 10 Year-Old***

*Stays focused for 60 minutes, reads and write fluently, learns from worksheets, plays well at recess, gets along, does not tire easily*

#### ***10 Year-Old with FASD***

*Pays attention for 10 minutes, is learning to read and write, learns by doing/experiencing, is easily tired and becomes overwhelmed easily (Acts 6 )*

#### ***Typical 18 Year-Old***

*Is an almost independent, drive a car, graduates from high school, has a life plan, practices safe sex if active, usually acts responsibly*

#### ***18 Year-Old with FASD***

*Needs structure/guidance, plays with toys, lives in the “now”, has no life plan, may act out sexually, is immature, curious and impulsive, acts like a responsible 10 year-old and will need to be supported in interdependent relationships forever*