

Fetal alcohol syndrome



Teachers and FAS-diagnosed ment of the problem Dybdhal and Ryan (2009) conducted a study focusing on room practices for with fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) in recognizing through previous studies that not much has been done in schools to cater to the needs of these children. Although many efforts have been implemented to discourage mothers from consuming alcohol during their pregnancy, cases of children with FAS never seem to cease. Children with FAS have particular facial characteristics, and most demonstrate impaired learning abilities. Although FAS is seen as a leading cause of mental retardation, only approximately 20% are mentally retarded, which may explain evidences of behavior problems. In addition, these children are placed in regular schools, where most of the time teachers do not have concrete ideas on how to enhance learning specifically for these students. Participants The three-year study was participated by three students diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), who were also previously part of a larger research study concerning the condition, and they were K-12 school-aged when the present study was conducted. The 13 teachers who willingly participated involved 7 men and 6 women. The educators differed in specialized content areas, including math, physical education, English and language arts, and keyboarding, with varied professional experiences, ranging from 1 to 24 years. They were selected from three sites, Windy Way, Fishport, and Island City. Methods Qualitative methods were used in the study and data collection methods included (a) individual or group interviews with teachers on-site, (b) participants' classroom observations, and, (c) retrieval of the students' relevant educational and medical records. A total of 26 interviews were conducted during the course of the study, in which these were all taped and

transcribed. Interviews involved questions significant to FAS that would assess teachers' knowledge and methods. Classroom observations were completed during the three years and interview data were coded by authors separately to ensure validity. Results Data revealed that teachers did not have formal trainings that focus on FAS-inclusion in their classrooms, or found them ineffective for several reasons in cases where such were held. Despite these, teachers expressed their willingness to learn how to improve their practice by being given the appropriate measures. In addition, educators do not tend to stereotype students according to given FAS symptoms, but rather respond according to observed behavior. Academic performances of students are not necessarily low, but more concern is given on their unpredictable behavior. Teachers also expressed disappointment with lack of time and coordination among other educators, which could help FAS-diagnosed students. Strategies developed by teachers to support the said students include (1) focus and refocus, (2) providing individual attention, (3) establishing positive relationship, (4) facilitating partner work, (5) attending to seat assignment, and (6) promoting self-control (Dybdahl & Ryan, 2009, pp. 191-192). Conclusions In line with given results, authors recommend that teachers should be given in-service programs that would specifically suit the needs of FAS-diagnosed students and teachers as well. There should also be raised awareness among schools regarding the presence of these cases in their areas. Moreover, there should be support towards teachers to be involved in researches that would help them handle these situations. The study helps raise awareness among academic institutions to enhance programs in consideration to FAS-diagnosed students. Teachers have expressed their willingness to learn specific

methods to improve practice. FAS-diagnosed students have high possibilities of adequate learning; they just need to be given attention and proper guidance by teachers. Reference Dybdahl, C. S., & Ryan, S. (2009). Inclusion for students with fetal alcohol syndrome: Classroom teachers talk about practice. *Preventing School Failure*, 53 (3), 185-195.