



Primary Disabilities

Possible facial features associated with FAS/ARND include:

- **Short palpebral fissures (small eye slits)**
- **Short upturned nose**
- **Low nasal bridge**
- **Flat philtrum (vertical groove between the upper lip and nose)**
- **Thin upper lip**
- **Flat midface**
- **Small chin**
- **Simply formed, low set ears**

Other possible physical defects include:

- **Eye and ear defects**
- **Respiratory (lung) problems**
- **Heart murmur**
- **Limb reduction**
- **Low birth weight**
- **Hutchinson's teeth**

The following primary cognitive disabilities associated with FAS/ARND are caused by brain damage. Many of them overlap with diagnoses for other disabilities. Therefore many children will be misdiagnosed or underdiagnosed with such disorders as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Sensory Integration Disorder (SID), and Learning Disabilities (LD), among others:

- **Developmental delays** – often acts younger than his or her age
- **Inconsistent performance** – seems to “get it” one day and lose it the next. Leads people to believe that the child is intentionally being difficult.
- **Hyperactivity** – constantly in motion
- **Impulsivity** – says and does whatever comes to mind without thinking about consequences
- **Attention deficits, distractibility** – at times their lack of ability to stay focused on a task for very long is due to attention deficits; may also be easily distracted
- **Disorganization** – messy, can't find things, unprepared for school or work
- **Poor social skills** – has problems making and keeping friends, doesn't understand social cues or body language
- **Literal thinking** – doesn't understand subtle jokes or statements that have double meanings; take things very literally. For example, don't say, “Hit the road” when you mean “Leave” or “Cut it out” when you mean “Stop”.
- **Difficulty with abstractions** – struggles with abstract concepts such as math, money management, time, ownership, and consequences.
- **Difficulty with transitions** – needs help when switching from one activity to another. May become very involved in current activity and will have difficulty changing to a new one especially if it is felt that the current activity is incomplete.
- **Memory problems** – difficulty storing and retrieving information
- **Processing deficits** – may think more slowly, may only understand every third word of normally paced conversation.
- **Ability to repeat instructions, but inability to put them into action** – can “talk the talk but not walk the walk”
- **Inability to predict outcomes or understand consequences and cause/effect** – poor judgment
- **Difficulty generalizing from one situation to another** – a lesson learned in one situation does not carry over to a new situation.

