



Inclusive
Education
SOUTH AFRICA

FASD AND ITS IMPACT ON LEARNING

Presented by Inclusive Education South Africa

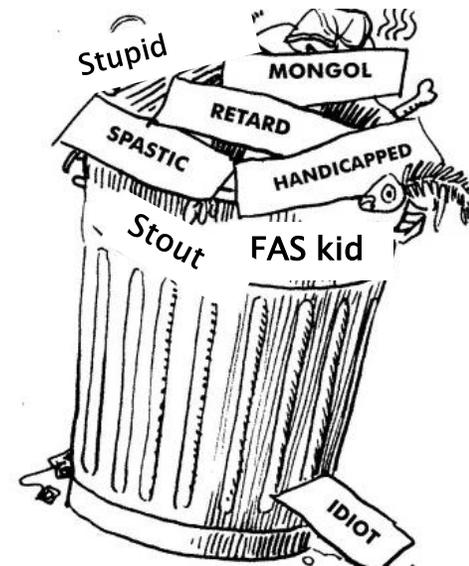
UNDERSTANDING FASD

- ▶ Shift from Foetal Alcohol Syndrome to Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- No two children are affected in exactly the same way – It can be dependent on:
 - ❖ The amount of exposure to alcohol
 - ❖ The timing of exposure to alcohol
 - ❖ The pattern of prenatal exposure to alcohol
 - ❖ Other factors (genetics, nutrition and stress levels)



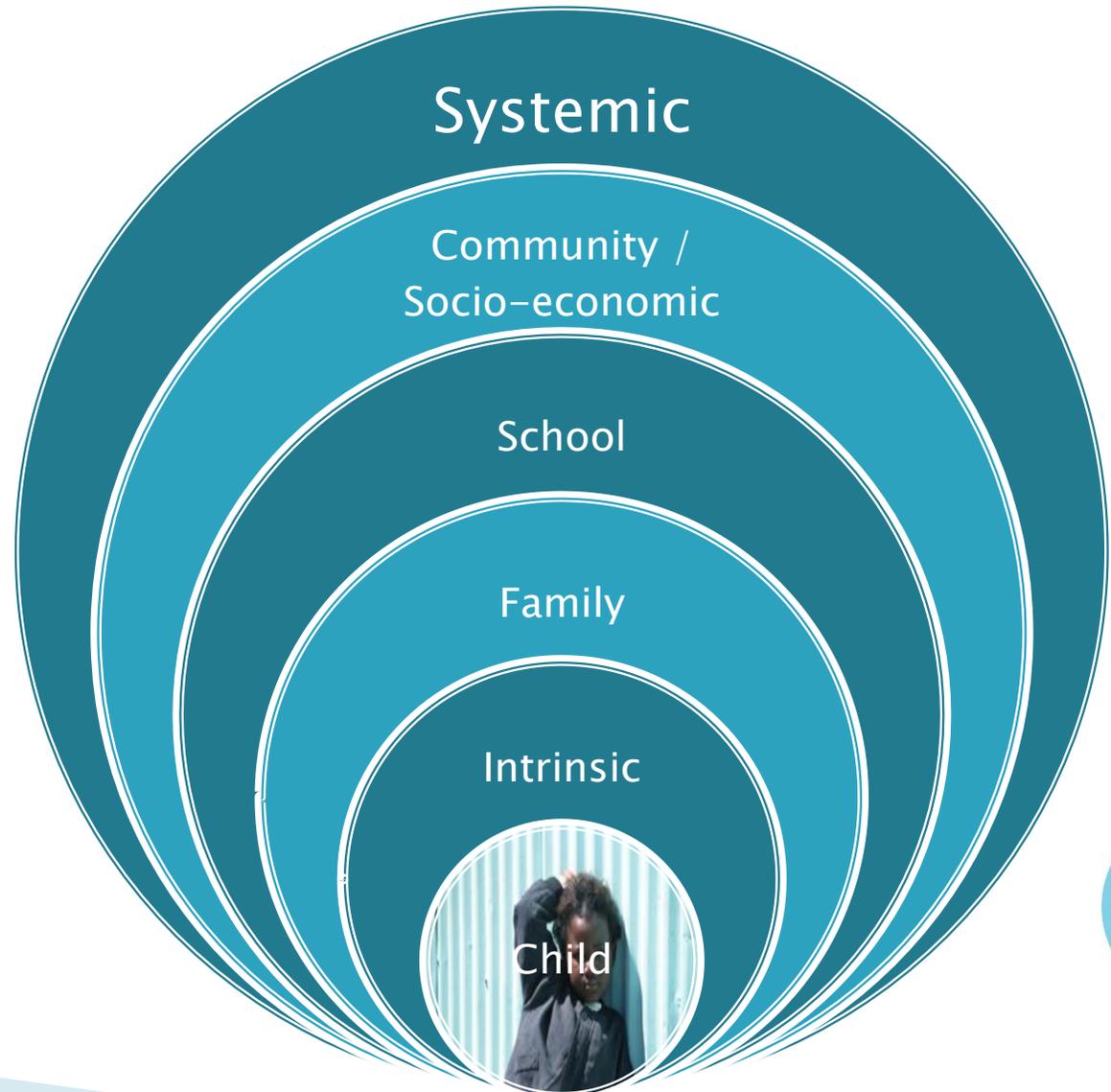
UNDERSTANDING FASD

- ▶ Understanding how FASD impacts learning and behaviour and not just labelling a child as a “FAS child” is crucial.
- ▶ Look at each child as an individual with individual challenges and strengths.
- ▶ Many children experience different barriers to learning.



BARRIERS TO LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ A Barrier to learning is anything that stands in the way of a child being able to learn!
- ▶ It is important to identify the real barrier to learning in order to find appropriate ways to support a child.



HOW DOES FASD AFFECT LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE

In Children with FASD normal brain development has been impacted. This may affect a child's learning abilities in the following ways:

- ▶ Attention deficits, Memory problems
- ▶ Impulsivity
- ▶ Distractibility, Hyperactivity
- ▶ Poor fine motor skills
- ▶ Written language difficulties
- ▶ Below average math skills
- ▶ Lack of cause and effect thinking (not learning from experience)



Other FASD symptoms which may add to learning difficulties...

- ▶ Sleep Problems
- ▶ Difficulty in mood regulation
- ▶ Feeding issues
- ▶ Poor balance and coordination
- ▶ Eyesight irregularities
- ▶ Hearing issues
- ▶ Weak immune system and a range of other medical issues



EXPECTATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ The impact of prenatal exposure to alcohol can affect the ability to mature in varying degrees and across different developmental domains:

Social
Development

Emotional
Development

Cognitive
Development

Language
Development

Behavioural
Development



INATTENTION

- ▶ Commonly children with FASD have difficulties with:
 - Inattention:
 - Careless mistakes / not paying attention to detail
 - Difficulty sustaining activities / distractible (focus)
 - Not well organised
 - Difficulties with planning (don't work from start to finish)
 - Don't listen / don't follow through on instructions
 - Forgetful
 - Avoids sustained mental effort



IMPULSIVITY / IMPULSE CONTROL

- Impulsive behaviour
- Difficulty waiting their turn
- Often blurts out answers
- Interrupting games / activities
- Poor delayed gratification
- Inability to learn from previous experience
- Low frustration tolerance



HYPERACTIVITY

(more common amongst boys than girls)

- Fidgeting / squirming in a chair
- Moving about excessively / over activity
- Unable to relax or play quietly
- Talking excessively



COGNITIVE FATIGUE

- ▶ Children affected by FASD experience cognitive fatigue because their brain has to work harder.
- ▶ The children have to utilize more brain areas to concentrate on tasks that other children of the same age can do easily.
- ▶ Children's academic performance may deteriorate as the day progresses or towards the end of the school week or term.
- ▶ May not be able to concentrate for as long as their peers
- ▶ Without appropriate time-out the child may become irritable, unmotivated, muddled.



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN FASD IS NOT UNDERSTOOD?

- ▶ **Learners with FASD suffer from low self esteem**
 - they are constantly in trouble,
 - often sent out of the class,
 - frustrated because they are not doing well in school,
 - often labelled as stupid or naughty,
 - they struggle socially,
 - are often bullied or are bullies themselves,
 - they are often excluded from learning and from social activities

“Self esteem is destiny” N Branden



STRATEGIES AT HOME AND IN SCHOOL

- ▶ Implement a structured and predictable routine
- ▶ Maintain low stress levels
- ▶ Avoid sensory and cognitive overload
- ▶ Teach life skills eg planning time, managing money, keeping safe.
- ▶ Build a positive relationships with your child's teacher and encourage support at school and at home.

**If I cannot learn the way you teach,
teach me the way I can learn.**

