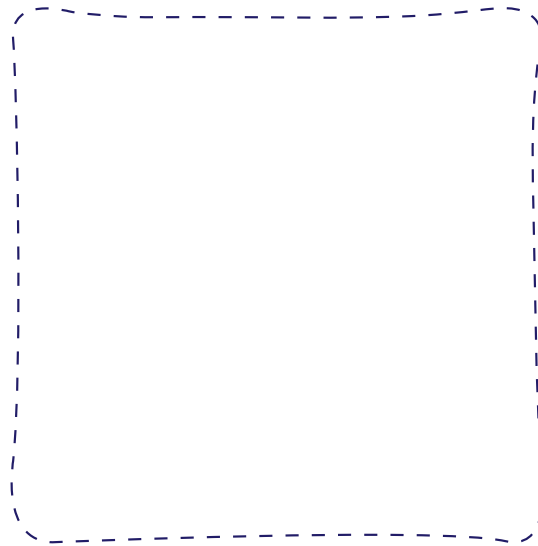


A decorative wavy line with three horizontal bands of color: blue on top, yellow in the middle, and red on the bottom. It curves across the page.

By Cindy Male

Parent & Member of the Hamilton FASD Resource Team



Insert Picture of the Child

This booklet contains private information about me that I would like to share, so that you can get to know me better. I would really like everyone that works with me (custodian, secretary, librarian, teachers, EA's, supply teachers) to read this booklet.

I think you will find it helpful – to better understand me,
as well as make my day successful.

I have some struggles because my brain was affected by alcohol before I was born.

Alcohol changed the way my brain developed, and this can show up as a
behaviour issue instead of a **brain** issue.

I want to do my best. I want to wake up in the morning feeling excited about my day,
and I want to go to bed at night feeling good about myself.

Thanks so much for reading my book and using the strategies that will make my day
more successful.

Insert Child's Name



Getting To Know Me

I have people in my life who love me very much. Here are some of the things that the people closest to me like the BEST about me:

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

My family consists of _____

| |
|-------|
| _____ |
| _____ |
| _____ |

My birthday is on _____ and I am _____ years old.

I am interested in many things:

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

There are lots of things that I like to do:

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |





I Respond Best to People Who Are:

Patient – Please understand that I am a “10 second kid in a 1 second world”. Most children can respond instantly to a request – it takes my brain up to 10 seconds to process the request and then act on it. If you are patient with me, most of the time I can do what you ask.

Calm – Because of my organic brain injury I absorb the emotions around me. If you are upset, frustrated and highly excitable then I will be as well.

Structured – I do best when my day is structured and I know what the routine will be. I know that there are times that routines need to change due to unforeseen circumstances but know this will be challenging for me.

Remember this is brain not behaviour.

Consistent – I do best if you are consistent with me. Using the same approach helps me, I know what to expect. If you are trying to teach me new skills know that it is going to take lots of repetition but I can learn.

More Interesting Things About Me

My verbal receptive language is more damaged than my expressive language. This means I can talk quite knowledgably about a lot of stuff – but don’t necessarily completely understand what I am saying or am able to do what I say I can do. This is an important point to remember about me. I can talk the talk – but can’t necessarily walk the walk.

My working memory is also damaged. You will note that I remember lots of interesting details about some things but you can ask me to do a couple tasks and I can forget before I go off to do them. I am more successful if you provide instructions to me one step at a time – using plain language. You may need to write them down and/or give me a visual cue to help me remember.

As I get older you would typically begin to give me some more opportunities to be independent and discover who I am. For me that would be dangerous. I am an individual who needs to be successfully dependent all my life.

I will do best when I am closely supervised – otherwise I might make some poor choices. An area I need close supervision around is my interactions with my fellow students (especially those of the opposite sex). I have difficulty understanding personal space and this can be misunderstood very easily.

Help me by supervising me!



Strategies to Help You Manage Me

One of the most difficult aspects of working with children like me is that traditional behaviour management strategies do not work. Because I have an organic brain injury you must modify my environment for me to be successful. I need you to see my behaviour as a symptom of my brain dysfunction not wilful non compliance.

If I am having a good day it is because you are managing my environment effectively (not me)!

I will do best when you build on my competencies. If there are things you need me to do “sandwich” them between things I like to do and am good at. An example would be . . . if you want me to do some math, start by having me do something I like and am good at like helping the janitor. This makes me feel good about myself and then I am compliant.

Competency = Compliance = Connection “Relationships”

I am different than most kids – consequences are not effective. They are too abstract and I forget very quickly. If you want me to sit out for a while or not do something that I was having difficulty with that is okay – as long as you know that this will not lead to me learning from it. An example would be if I do not come off the computer and my consequence is to lose computer time for a week. It is okay for you to not let me use the computer for a week but remember I am not going to have an “Ah Ha Moment” and not do the behaviour again.

Remember Brain not Behaviour

You will have the MOST success if you “Get ahead of my thinking”. If you know certain situations are difficult for me – strategize ahead of time around how you can better manage my environment. An example is if I have a hard time getting off the computer only let me go on just leading into lunch. I love my lunch and will get off to eat lunch. This is getting ahead of my thinking. Try to think ahead and identify the “hot spots” in my day. Brainstorm a possible solution before it occurs. If things don’t turn out perfect – try something different the next day. The answers are with you **not me**. Try different not harder!

Transitions are difficult for me – this would be a great time for you to “get ahead of my thinking” and be playful about how you will manage them.



My Emotional Responses

Sometimes I have problems expressing emotions in appropriate ways. This gets in the way of my learning, my friendships and my daily life.

All kids get upset. However, I can't always depend on the part of my brain that regulates emotions. My responses to situations may be exaggerated or inappropriate, and I may not be able to regain control on my own. Please recognize how hard I try, even though my behaviour may be challenging.

Because of my organic brain injury I can escalate very quickly over what some people might think are really small situations. A good analogy to help you understand this is – I feel every bump like an assault. Something as simple as someone else cleaning the chalk board when I wanted to do it can escalate me very quickly.

Strategies to Help Me Calm Down

I escalate very quickly but the good news is I can calm just as quickly if I am given space. Stop talking to me, give me space. After a few moments you can cue me to do some deep breathing. It is helpful for me if you model some exaggerated deep breaths with me. When upset I can easily forget what deep breathing looks like.

One of the most important things that I want you to know about me is that if I am upset or not doing something that you want me to do and you put your hands on me (or reach in front of me to shut off the computer) I can quickly become physically aggressive. This is as scary for me as it is for you. Because of my organic brain injury I do not have the ability to regulate my emotions. Only put your hands on me if there is an immediate safety risk to me or others. As frustrating as it is you probably need to wait me out and adapt the environment for the next time.

One more thing I want you to know about me becoming physical. You might have noticed – once I start a behaviour it is hard to get me stopped – if I start being physical there is a strong risk that becoming physical will be my “go to behaviour” regularly. This is how my brain functions – so please help me not be physical.

Get ahead of my thinking and help me not get into non compliance situations...if I do – wait me out unless it is a safety issue!



I want you to know that I am really a cool kid and I really enjoy coming to school.

My _____ know a lot about my brain and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder so feel free to ask them questions and/or brainstorm solutions to situations.

I hope by reading my booklet you feel you have a better understanding of me and my brain. Thanks for taking the time to read it, this will make my day and your day more successful.

Much thanks,

Insert Child's Name

