

FASD: What Employers Should Know

FASD is not rare, impacting 1 in 20 Americans. 1 in 7 pregnancies are self-reported as alcohol exposed

FASD is an umbrella term used to describe a life-long range of diagnosable conditions that impact the brain and body of people prenatally exposed to alcohol. FASD is a developmental disability resulting in neurodiversity, similar to Autism or ADHD.

Each person with FASD is unique with different strengths and abilities and can make great employees. Getting to know the person and their talents, as well as their support needs, creates the best environment for successful employment.

Pathways to Employment Success

- **Job Fit is Important** - In a job with a good fit, success is experienced through a sense of independence, increased confidence and pride, enjoyment of work, and gaining new skills.
- **Relationships are Key** - When employees with FASD have personal supports and positive relationships with their supervisors and co-workers, they are more likely to experience employment success

What is Executive Function?

Executive function refers to a group of key mental skills and abilities. The three main executive skills are working memory, flexible thinking, and inhibitory control (including self-control). But executive function covers other abilities, too, like focusing, managing time, and thinking things through before acting.

Employees with FASD will operate with various levels of executive function.

Helpful workplace accommodations for employees with FASD may include:

- Frequent breaks
- Calm, structured environment
- Sensory supports
- Mentors who model co-regulation
- Frequent check-ins for understanding
- Support with memory and recall
- Consistent scheduling
- Resources for financial literacy
- Scaffolding to encourage time management
- Assistance with cash-handling
- Prompts for task initiation

Employees with FASD may perform very well in tasks that involve:

- Verbal engagement
- Customer support
- Problem solving for others
- Artistic and creative work
- Hands-on work
- Sales
- Caring for others
- Hospitality

Employees with FASD may function unevenly across tasks, with high abilities in some areas but not others. This may also fluctuate on a day to day basis.



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