

This learning guide is designed for use by Professional Learning Communities, learning coaches and teacher leaders or as a self-paced study.

Prenatal Alcohol Exposure and the Developing Brain Module One: Part B



This guide is intended to facilitate conversation after viewing the video clip [Module One: Prenatal Alcohol Exposure and the Developing Brain](#) (1:56 – 3:55 minutes)

General synopsis

Module One: *Prenatal Alcohol Exposure and the Developing Brain* covers three key points: A) Alcohol is a teratogen, B) Brain growth during pregnancy occurs from bottom to top, and C) During pregnancy, brain growth is impacted by alcohol.

Key point B:

Brain Growth During Pregnancy Occurs from Bottom to Top

- The brain begins as a tube (the brain stem) Brain cells (neurons) grow from the brain stem in an upward and outward direction to build the brain.
- If alcohol is consumed during pregnancy, it may disrupt the growth and distribution of the neurons in a variety of ways, and may even kill some neurons.
- Alcohol impacts each developing brain differently based on the timing and amount of alcohol consumed. It is difficult to predict what areas of the developing brain will be impacted and how severe the impact may be.
- Because of the range of possible symptoms of FASD, we must keep in mind that understanding one individual may not give us insight into another and what may be a useful support or strategy for one individual with FASD may not work with another.
- It is crucial to respond to the needs of each individual with FASD in a flexible and adaptive manner.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

- How does it change your practice knowing that understanding one individual with an FASD may not provide insight into another?
- What is the impact of alcohol on a developing fetus? How are development and learning affected?

For more information:

The Canada FASD Research Network (CanFASD) is a leading source for information related to FASD in Canada:

<http://www.canfasd.ca/>

Alberta FASD Home (Alberta government):

<http://fasd.alberta.ca/index.aspx>.

KNOWFASD is a resource maintained by the University of Alberta: www.knowfasd.ca

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