

Important Facts about Fetal  
Anti-Convulsant Syndrome  
(FACS) & Education

It is important to note that anti-convulsant medications are no longer only used or prescribed for Epilepsy but also for Bipolar, Depression, Migraine headaches and as Pain Relief.

Fetal Anti-Convulsant Syndrome is not only caused by one particular anti-convulsant medication, such as Valproate but the majority of AED's, around 10 of which, including the newer drugs, may cause the condition to varying degrees.

For More Information:

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## Fetal Valproate Syndrome & Educational Co-morbidities

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For Parents & Schools





## Fetal Anti-Convulsant Syndrome (FACS) & Emotions

FACS is the umbrella term which covers all anti-convulsant drugs when taken in pregnancy,

eg: Valproate Syndrome when Sodium Valproate was prescribed & used in pregnancy

Children affected by anti-convulsant medication, not only Valproate suffer with emotional behaviour and problems. Sometimes due to not understanding their environment and what is expected of them, fear of a situation, over excitability, inappropriate behaviour and simply not understanding the situation or explanation given to them.

Cognitive and neurodevelopmental problems play a huge part in FACS, and needs to be addressed promptly.

## Importance of Educational Support

For a child with FACS the world of education can be very daunting, as can understanding a child with FACS/FVS for the teacher.

Without **any** diagnosis it is important to understand the child's characteristics and mannerisms.

As with the majority of children affected by an anti-convulsant in pregnancy the mannerisms are extremely similar in each child. It is important to recognise the areas in which the child struggles. With FACS/FVS there may be the need of:

- ◆ Explanations in basic terms
- ◆ Simple structure
- ◆ Repetition
- ◆ Diagrams and visual prompts
- ◆ A calming environment
- ◆ Support and guidance

To recognise FACS/FVS you may also notice

- ◆ Noise Intolerance
- ◆ Speech and Language problems
- ◆ Hearing problems
- ◆ Fine and Gross motor problems
- ◆ Hypotonia (poor muscle tone)

All these may be noted as Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

## The Importance of Diagnosis

It is easy for the problems portrayed to be identified as Autistic tendencies, in which case you may not be far from the truth.

Due to research over the past 4 years we know that around 40% of children affected by the anti-convulsant medication Valproate will have a neurodevelopmental disorder such as Autism.

However, as this has been caused by the exposure to an anti-convulsant drug the primary condition will always be Fetal Anti-Convulsant Syndrome or FVS with the Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) being diagnosed as a secondary condition.

Diagnosis for these children is very important in order to ensure they receive the support within Education they need to continue to achieve.

A full assessment of their needs is paramount and an IEP is very important. Diagnosis of both FACS and ASD is possible and it is important to relay any possible information on to the parents and/or Teachers.

