

Community Action Campaign to Reduce Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders in Florida



Torchbearer Advocacy Kit



The Florida Fights FASD campaign is a grassroots advocacy and outreach initiative of the Florida Center for Early Childhood, Inc., dedicated to educating Florida's citizens that there is no safe amount of alcohol nor safe time to drink while pregnant. This campaign was developed by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council with funding from the United States Department of Health and Human Services and Administration on Developmental Disabilities.

**Community Action Campaign to Reduce
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) in Florida
Florida Fights FASD
Advocacy Kit**

Table of Contents

Florida Fights FASD: An Overview..... - 4 -

Media Outreach..... - 6 -

 Objectives:..... - 6 -

 Target Audiences:..... - 6 -

 Tactics: - 6 -

 Key Messages..... - 6 -

 Press Release..... - 6 -

 Written Opinion-Editorial. - 7 -

 Letter to the Editor..... - 8 -

 Desk-Side Chat with Reporters. - 8 -

 Editorial Board Meetings. - 8 -

 Editorial Columns. - 8 -

 Media Advisories..... - 8 -

 Public Service Announcements..... - 9 -

 Community Calendar. - 9 -

 Blogs. - 9 -

 Friendly Reporter Research and Database..... - 9 -

 Media Resource Directory..... - 9 -

 Press Kits..... - 10 -

 Broadcast Interviews..... - 10 -

 Commemorations & Observances. - 10 -

 Mainstream Media..... - 10 -

Community Outreach - 11 -

 Objectives:..... - 12 -

 Target Audiences:..... - 12 -

 Tactics: - 13 -

 Organizational Engagement..... - 13 -

 Event Participation. - 13 -

 Public Presentations. - 14 -

 Social Media - 14 -

 E-mail Network (ListServ). - 16 -

Torchbearer Recruitment - 17 -

 Objectives:..... - 17 -

 Target Audiences:..... - 17 -

 Tactics: - 18 -

 Community-Action Summit DVDs. - 18 -

 Public Presentations. - 19 -

 Community Partnerships..... - 19 -

Tools Inventory

- Key Messages
- Sample Press Release
- Sample Op-Ed
- Sample Letter to the Editor
- Sample Media Advisory
- Sample Public Service Announcements
- Media Submission Guidelines/Sample Pitch Messages
- Media Resource Directory
- Interview Tips and Guidelines
- Mainstream Daily Newspapers
- Mainstream Broadcast – TV Outlets
- Mainstream Broadcast – Radio Outlets
- Sample Newsletter
- Tabletop Display
- Campaign Brochure
- Campaign Flyer
- Social Media Flyer
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Sample Social Media Posts
- Torchbearer Interest Form
- Community Action Summit DVD
- Electronic Advocacy Kit (CD)

Florida Fights FASD: An Overview

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) was first recognized as a birth defect in 1973 and originally was thought to occur only in children born to alcoholic mothers. However, further research has shown that detrimental effects, known as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), can result from *any* prenatal alcohol exposure. FASD-related conditions range in severity, with FAS representing the most severe form. FASD affects one in 100 infants each year and approximately 40,000 infants annually, yet is 100 percent preventable.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there is no known amount of alcohol that is safe to drink while pregnant, and there is no safe time to drink during pregnancy. The CDC's position is shared by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), which states that, "no amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy and nursing," and the March of Dimes, which concludes that, "no level of alcohol use during pregnancy has been proven safe."

Following the scientific and medical recognition of FASD, published articles by researchers and scholars began to significantly increase – drawing more public attention to the matter. Although great strides have been made through science, medicine and research to help gain a comprehensive understanding of the causes and effects of FAS and FASD, the dangers of drinking during pregnancy have been largely overlooked. Furthermore, general public awareness and communication of risk factors have been, for the most part, inconsistent.

FASD is a serious, permanent and lifelong condition that may cause physical and mental disabilities. The changes alcohol can cause in the brain are irreversible. Alcohol produces more serious neurobehavioral effects in the fetus than illicit drugs such as heroin, cocaine or marijuana. We believe that many people would be stunned by this knowledge. We were.

People with FASD might have problems with learning, memory, attention span, communication, vision, hearing or a combination of these. Problems associated with FAS and FASD often lead to difficulties in school and social settings, living independently and securing (and maintaining) gainful employment. It also increases the likelihood of entering the criminal justice system. It affects every aspect of an individual's life and the lives of his or her family and caregivers.

Health care costs associated with FAS and FASD prove they are expensive problems, too. According to the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, lifetime care of an individual born with FAS can range from \$860,000 to \$4.2 million. Nationally, care for those with the condition cost \$5.4 billion in 2003, not including those with milder spectrum disorders. Therefore, prevention, reduction and the eventual elimination of this disability will provide cost-effective outcomes while improving quality of life for mothers, their affected children, their families and all of society.

There are those who feel an occasional drink is allowable and safe during pregnancy. Unfortunately, this cannot be proven. While milder cases of FASD can leave an individual apparently quite capable as an adult, that person might have had other abilities in addition had fetal alcohol exposure not occurred.

Consumption of alcohol is a personal choice. However, if a woman chooses to drink alcohol while pregnant, she not only is affecting her health, but risking the health of her unborn child for the rest of his or her life. Is alcohol consumption during pregnancy – even in small amounts – truly worth any risk, when the potential damage that can be done by alcohol is totally preventable by abstinence? We believe the answer is an unequivocal "No." Therefore, it is

Florida Fights FASD Advocacy Kit

recommended that women abstain from drinking alcohol at any time during pregnancy and, furthermore, that the risks involved be communicated to expectant mothers.

In 2009, the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council developed a statewide public awareness campaign titled “Florida Fights FASD” in an effort to address this serious public health issue facing our state and nation. The campaign was later adopted by The Florida Center for Early Childhood, Inc., in 2011 as a permanent outreach initiative. The mission of the campaign is to engage and educate Floridians about the dangers of alcohol consumption during pregnancy and, ultimately, to reduce the number of children born with FASD in Florida.

Knowledge is power – which is why the Florida Fights FASD campaign is necessary. By communicating campaign messages and educating our target audiences, we can help achieve the goal of significantly reducing or eliminating alcohol consumption by pregnant women, women who intend to become pregnant, and those who do not practice a reliable method of birth control.

We must engage the identified at-risk target audience(s) and the general public by connecting with them on a personal level. We must engage communities and advocates, or “torchbearers,” to champion this cause and establish prevention and education activities. We must arm them with the facts in an effort to effectively fight the battle of reducing and eliminating FASD in Florida.

A critical weapon in this fight is aggressive, consistent and effective communications. This Advocacy Kit will serve as a comprehensive communications plan to help FASD torchbearers achieve the goal of implementing the Florida Fights FASD campaign in their communities through effective media outreach; sharing messages of prevention, awareness and education; and recruiting fellow torchbearers to join the fight.

Each section – media outreach, public outreach and torchbearer recruitment – includes detailed objectives, target audiences, tactics and tools. It is the intent that this advocacy kit will provide the information needed to implement this campaign in communities throughout Florida thereby increasing the overall impact and building an army to help win the battle against FASD.

Media Outreach

There are many ways to utilize and engage the media to generate awareness of an issue, idea or event. Defined below are examples and descriptions of communication tools that can be used to target different media channels. All of the methods are used to obtain the same goal: establishing relationships with the media and sharing knowledge and information about FASD.

The strategies in this plan reflect an integrated communications approach, meaning that all media relations and educational outreach messaging and activities should be conducted in a consistent manner, regardless of which channel is used.

Objectives:

- To increase awareness and understanding of the causes and repercussions of FASD.
- To generate awareness of the dangers of consuming alcohol while pregnant and convey that FAS and FASD are 100 percent preventable.
- To secure positive, comprehensive, media coverage through various outlets, and work towards creating a media environment that understands, accepts and communicates the need for staying alcohol-free during pregnancy.
- To identify, recruit and ignite torchbearers (individuals willing to champion the cause) by providing ideas and tools to propel the overall purpose of the campaign.
- To generate awareness of the Florida Fights FASD campaign, including key messages, mission and purpose.

Target Audiences:

- Members of the media, including health editors and/or reporters, local and/or metro editors, editorial page editors and opinion page editors
- The general public
- Women who are pregnant or may become pregnant and their families
- Potential torchbearers, partners and other advocates

Tactics:

Key Messages. To maintain consistency in all communications, key messages related to FASD and the mission of the Florida Fights FASD campaign are included in this kit. These key messages should be used in all media relations, external communications, educational and community outreach materials and activities. The key messages document is for internal use and may also be distributed to members of the media.

The key messages for the Florida Fights FASD campaign can be found in the Tools Section.

Press Release. A press release is a short announcement written in the form of a news story designed to inform the media about something newsworthy. While a press release is short, it is filled with useful and accurate information. Press releases are used to capture the interest and attention of the reporter and provide the necessary information needed to write a story. The who, what, when, where, why and how should all be mentioned in the first few sentences so an editor or reporter can immediately see what the press release is about. Always keep the audience you are targeting in mind and use information in the release that is relevant to that group. The release should be written in an “inverted pyramid” format, with the heavier, most important information presented first, and the less important information at the end of the release. If the most valuable information cannot be seen in the first sentence, the release will likely be disregarded.

Florida Fights FASD Advocacy Kit

When writing a press release, be sure to include relevant quotes from respected sources. Again, keep your audience in mind and try to provide quotes from an FASD expert and/or a respected member of that population or group. If possible, it is always best to obtain a quote from someone who meets the aforementioned requirements and is also a member of the local community.

The format of the press release is the same in every situation. If the release is being written by a specific organization, it should be written on company letterhead. All other releases should be written on the Florida Fights FASD letterhead, which can be downloaded from the www.FASD-FL.org website. On the top right-hand side of the paper, include a contact name, the contact's title, the name of the organization, the organization's address and the contact's phone number and email address. The headline should be a short sentence, bolded and centered over the body copy. At the end of the press release, "# # #" should be centered under the body to signify that there are no additional pages. If and where possible, press releases should be one page in length and no longer than two pages in length.

Press releases are sent to an editor or reporter at a media outlet that would be interested in the subject of your press release. Press releases are typically sent to the appropriate contact via e-mail. Releases should be accompanied by a pitch message, which is a short e-mail to a reporter mentioning the most important points of the release. Copy and paste the release into the body of the e-mail, usually under the auto signature, as reporters may be reluctant to open attachments. Follow up by phone after a day or two to ensure the editor or reporter received your release and understands the importance. There are also national websites where you can post your press release, such as PR Newswire, PR Web or Erelease, for increased visibility and wider distribution, as well as Sayfie Review (Florida) and many local newspaper websites.

For an example of a press release and pitch message specific to the Florida Fights FASD campaign, see the Tools section. A document providing tips and guidelines for submitting press releases is also included in the Tools section.

Written Opinion-Editorial. Also known as op-ed pieces, written opinion-editorials are located on or near the editorial page in a newspaper. Op-eds give companies, organizations and people of the community a chance to present their views to the readership of a newspaper. Op-eds should clearly advocate a point, provide adequate research to support the point and suggest a call to action. Op-eds should not only be informative, but also persuasive and compelling.

Different news outlets have specific guidelines on how to submit op-eds; the best place to find instructions is on the newspaper's website. Op-eds are typically under 800 words and are submitted through the newspaper's website or via email. If available, include a photographic head shot of the author and a two-line biography with your submission. Always follow up with the editor after submitting an op-ed piece. If an editor publishes your piece, it is customary to thank them for the inclusion. If they are not interested in publishing the piece, thank them for their time. If there is no response to the initial submission, send a timely follow-up email.

An op-ed for the Florida Fights FASD campaign has been created. It has been pre-approved by The Florida Center for Early Childhood and the author, Kathryn Shea, president and CEO of The Florida Center for Early Childhood.

For a sample op-ed specific to the Florida Fights FASD campaign, see the Tools section. A document providing tips and guidelines for submitting op-eds is also included in the Tools section.

Florida Fights FASD Advocacy Kit

Letter to the Editor. Letters to the editor are a good way to present ideas, promote a campaign or respond to a previously published article. Letters to the editor are often used as opinion pieces.

When writing a letter to the editor, keep the length to 150 words or less. Editors often receive thousands of letters a day so it is best to keep them short, compelling and to the point. If the letter is responding to a previously printed article, mention the title of the article and the date it was published. Letters to the editor can be sent via e-mail or submitted through the newspaper's website. Include your name, address, phone number and e-mail address at the bottom of the letter as a signature of authenticity. For the purpose of the Florida Fights FASD campaign, a sample letter to the editor is included in this kit that may be utilized by local torchbearers. The letter will need to be "signed" and submitted to your local newspaper by following the instructions provided above.

To find the "ready to use" letter to the editor, see the Tools section. A document providing tips and guidelines for submitting letters to the editor is also included in the Tools section.

Desk-Side Chat with Reporters. This tool refers to a private meeting or extra time spent with reporters or editors to convey information and build strong media relationships. This includes speaking with them on the phone, e-mail correspondence or meeting with the reporter in person. Always be sure to have key messages either memorized or handy to reference. Reporters are often very busy so the quicker you get your point across the better.

Editorial Board Meetings. An editorial board meeting takes time to coordinate, but it is well worth the effort to gain the support of a newspaper. The intended outcome is to have an editor write an opinion piece about your organization, event or idea. To arrange a meeting, call the newsroom (or, in some markets, a television station) and ask to speak to the person in charge of scheduling an editorial board meeting. It is best to call a few weeks in advance to provide ample time to schedule as editors are often very busy. When you do have an editorial board meeting, have clear notes about why it would be good for the newspaper to support your position, issue or topic. Also, bring printed copies of your information to leave behind for editors' reference. Be sure to maintain good eye contact to engage your audience. Always send a thank-you note following the meeting.

Editorial Columns. Written by newspaper columnists, editorial columns can be used to attract attention to an issue, idea or event. By targeting a specific columnist, you can educate the writer on your topic and persuade the writer why he or she should focus on the issue. Many columnists have loyal readers and can inform a particular segment of the community. You can improve your chances for securing a column on your topic by studying your local newspaper columnists' writings and identifying which ones have written about or shown interest in your topic previously; use that as an opening to get your "foot in the door" in pitching a column. After initially contacting the columnist (usually via email), follow up with a phone call.

Media Advisories. Media advisories are similar to press releases in writing style, though usually follow a memorandum format. Media advisories are sent to invite a journalist to attend and/or cover an event to increase awareness and attendance. The media advisory states the who, what, where, when, why and how of the event as well as details that are specific to the journalist. Details may include information such as when they can set up equipment and where to park. Events that warrant sending a media advisory to a journalist include press conferences, fundraising events, health fairs, events to raise awareness on a specific issue or a response to a crisis situation in the community. Be sure to make a follow-up call before the day of the event to see if the journalist is planning on attending or covering it.

Florida Fights FASD Advocacy Kit

For an example of a media advisory specific to the Florida Fights FASD campaign, see the Tools section. A document providing tips and guidelines for submitting media advisories is also included in the Tools section.

Public Service Announcements. Also known as PSAs, Public Service Announcements are created for, or by, non-profit organizations and target radio and television stations. PSAs are meant to inform and persuade viewers or listeners to support a cause or share information about a problem, issue or campaign. PSAs always conclude with a “call to action” (how to stop the problem, how to help, etc.) and provide a resource for more information (web address, hotline phone number, etc.). Media outlets run PSAs at no cost, but this results in heavy competition. An effective PSA contains a strong message, convincing call to action and emotional appeal. The information in PSAs should be beneficial to the target audience without being controversial or political. PSAs are generally sent to public service directors, public affairs directors or general managers of radio and/or television stations with a request for airing.

For 10-second and 30-second PSA samples specific to the Florida Fights FASD campaign, see the Tools section.

Community Calendar. Hosted by local television stations and newspapers, community calendars highlight events and activities occurring in a community online, in print or on air. To have an event published in a community calendar, send a press release or calendar announcement to a newsroom or television station a few weeks prior to the event. Each website and station has specific submission guidelines; be sure to follow the correct format.

Blogs. Blogs are websites that can be seen as a publicly accessible journal, reflecting the mission and goals of an organization as well as the personality of an author. Blogs can be used to inform readers about stories, future events, news articles or anything else that will make an organization seem more personable. Blogs have features such as pictures, videos, embedded links and visitor comment sections, which increase interaction on the site. Bloggers are oftentimes considered citizen journalists and can be targeted with press releases and news stories, just as you would target a traditional journalist. Use online search tools and “keywords” to identify bloggers in your area who are writing about topics such as health, families, babies, children and motherhood, as well as drinking and alcohol. Instead of sending a formal pitch message, send a more personal email explaining the issue and why you think their readers would be interested in the topic.

Friendly Reporter Research and Database. It is always important to conduct research to identify reporters, editors and other media representatives who have reported favorably on FASD issues or women and child health in the past or who have direct personal knowledge of and/or interest in these subjects. These members of the media are considered “friendly reporters” and may have a vested interest in the topic. Therefore, they may be more likely to report on a story related to FASD.

Media Resource Directory. As part of the Florida Fights FASD campaign, a comprehensive media resource directory has been developed and is available at www.FASD-FL.org. The directory is broken down by media market and lists resources, contact information and expert,

“quotable” sources that local media can turn to for information to include in news and feature stories relating to FASD. The directory includes key campaign contacts, selected individuals affected by FASD and/or members of their families and other state and local officials. As previously mentioned, journalists usually prefer to speak to a member of the local community when writing their story so that the information they are sharing is more relevant to their readers.

Florida Fights FASD Advocacy Kit

But, they also will want to talk to public health and medical experts. Providing the media with a strong array of local, state and national experts will improve your chances for coverage.

Press Kits. Sometimes at events where you have various materials to share with important attendees or members of the media in attendance, it may be wise to create a press kit to distribute. This will serve as a comprehensive package of informational materials designed to provide a broad spectrum of relevant background information for targeted media. Press kits usually include the following:

- news releases
- fact sheets
- media resource directories

To assemble the kit, simply take a plain, solid-colored pocket folder and insert materials inside. You may also want to print labels with the Florida Fights FASD logo to affix on the outside (usually centered at the top) of the folders.

For a statewide media resource directory, see the Tools section.

Broadcast Interviews. Another way to share prevention and awareness messages and educate the local community about FASD is to participate in radio or TV interviews. Torchbearers, individuals or family members affected by FASD and/or other advocates can be scheduled to appear on television and radio public affairs programs, news/feature segments and "talk" shows. Torchbearer efforts will most likely be best spent by focusing specifically on television and radio public affairs programs, news/feature and guest-interview shows and local news and talk radio programming as interviews of this nature are typical for this type of programming.

To find out about local TV and radio programs, including air time, host, format, etc., visit the websites of your local stations. If you are unable to locate the information, simply call the station and ask to speak to the news director. During your call, explain the nature of your inquiry and briefly describe FASD and why the listeners or viewers of his/her particular station might be interested in the topic.

For interview tips and guidelines, see the Tools section.

Commemorations & Observances. Another useful way to capture the attention of the media is to tie your topic or issue to a commemoration or observance. Conduct research to identify special state and national commemorations and observances that can provide additional opportunities to secure media coverage (i.e., Alcohol Awareness Month in April, National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month in September and, most importantly, *International Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Awareness Day, observed annually on September 9*).

Mainstream Media. Many Americans receive and digest their local, state and national news through the mainstream media. Whether they watch it on their morning news program, read it in their local and regional newspaper or hear it on the radio during their drive-time commute, the mainstream media is a major way the public stays informed.

Channels:

- Print media
 - See Tools section for a comprehensive list of Florida daily newspapers.
- Broadcast media

Florida Fights FASD Advocacy Kit

- *See Tools section for a comprehensive list of Florida ABC, CBS, FOX and NBC-affiliated broadcast television stations.*
- *See Tools section for a comprehensive list of Florida NPR-affiliated broadcast radio stations.*

Tools for Print Media:

- Press releases
- Written opinion-editorials (also known as op-eds)
- Letters to the editors
- Media Advisories
- Desk-side chats with reporters
- Editorial board meetings
- Editorial columns

Tools for Television Media:

- Press releases
- Media advisories
- Public service announcements

Tools for Radio Media:

- Press releases
- Media advisories
- Public service announcements

Tools for Digital Media:

- Blogs
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube)

Community Outreach

One of the most important aspects of the Florida Fights FASD campaign is sharing education and public awareness messages directly to local residents in communities throughout Florida to ensure statewide impact. Together we can increase awareness about the causes and repercussions of FASD. No amount of alcohol is safe while pregnant and everyone, everywhere, needs to know it.

In this section, we will provide an overview of tactics that can be executed at the local level to maximize the impact of campaign efforts, build partnerships with existing organizations and explain existing tools available to support these efforts.

Objectives:

- To increase awareness and understanding of the causes and repercussions of FASD.
- To convey the message of prevention by generating awareness of the dangers of consuming alcohol while pregnant and communicating that FAS and FASD are 100 percent preventable.
- To build working relationships with third-party organizations whose focus is related and/or relevant to FASD.
- To secure positive, comprehensive coverage in third-party publications.
- To identify, recruit and ignite torchbearers (individuals willing to champion the cause) by providing ideas and tools to propel the overall purpose of the campaign.
- To generate awareness of the Florida Fights FASD campaign, including key messages, mission and purpose.

Target Audiences:

- Women who are pregnant or may become pregnant and their families
- The general public
- Potential torchbearers, partners and other advocates
- Third-party organizations, including, but not limited to:
 - Parent-teacher organizations at local high schools
 - Local Junior League chapters
 - The Center for Autism and Related Disorders, Inc. (CARD)
 - Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) local chapters
 - Civic organizations (Rotary, Exchange, Kiwanis, etc.)
 - Women's clubs
 - Adoption and foster care organizations
 - Developmental disabilities organizations and parent support groups
 - Guardian ad Litem
 - Text 4 Baby (a free mobile information service designed to promote maternal and child health)
 - Adult day training organizations (Pyramid, Opportunity Services, etc.)
 - Local March of Dimes chapters
 - Local hospitals
 - Substance abuse and addiction recovery organizations
 - Local Healthy Start coalitions
 - Sexual violence organizations
 - Local medical societies and medical/physician groups (especially family practices and OB/GYNs)
 - University and community college health departments and university Greek organizations

Florida Fights FASD Advocacy Kit

- Local NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) chapters
- School board/educators associations
- Local “Moms Like Me” and parenting organizations
- Churches, synagogues and faith-based organizations

Tactics:

Organizational Engagement. There are many organizations and special-interest groups that may also have an interest in topics related to FASD (women, alcohol, community-service, children, addiction recovery, etc.) and can be targeted for partnership opportunities. Organizations can be beneficial in serving the goals of the campaign by sharing FASD information with their members and enlisting the support of the entire organization. In addition to special-interest groups, there are also civic groups (i.e. Rotary, Exchange, Kiwanis), associations, churches and faith-based organizations, neighborhood associations, women’s groups, business and chamber organizations, parent-teacher organizations and professional and trade organizations.

It is important to identify the groups that can be used as channels to share information with and engage target audiences. Most organizations have meetings, events and member communication tools. First, contact the organization to identify what communication tools they use to communicate with their members. Next, work with the organization to determine opportunities for inclusion of Florida Fights FASD messages. With community outreach, you want to provide information to an organization and have them distribute the information to their members for you. Generally, the tools that exist in most organizations include:

- Newsletters
- Magazines
- Websites
- Routine e-mail communications

There are a variety of ways to utilize organizations’ tools to convey information about FASD. Some of these include:

- Writing articles to publish in community newsletters or magazines
- Requesting publication of a calendar announcement about an event
- Sending HTML emails to organizations and asking them to forward the email to their member database
- Providing information and/or a web banner for an organization’s website
- Giving presentations at organization, civic group, parent-teacher organization meetings or other community meetings
- Setting up displays and producing handouts for distribution at organizations’ meetings
- Having an announcement made on your behalf by a meeting’s leader or emcee
- Placing notices in public areas around the community

For a sample newsletter article specific to the Florida Fights FASD campaign, see the Tools section.

Event Participation. Identify other related and/or relevant local events within your community that will provide opportunities to share information about and increase awareness of FASD. These events may include health fairs, community meetings, prenatal information sessions, baby expos, etc. A three-panel, table-top informational display that provides a visually appealing presentation of FASD information has been produced for the Florida Fights FASD campaign. The display is available for use by FASD Torchbearers and may be requested at any time. To request the display, contact The Florida Center for Early Childhood at (800) 587-1385, or email Kristie Skoglund at Kristie.Skoglund@thefloridacenter.org.

Florida Fights FASD Advocacy Kit

Shipping and handling costs will be covered.

Additionally, a full-color brochure, campaign flyer, social media flyer and frequently asked questions handout are included in this advocacy kit. These materials are excellent “takeaway” items to distribute to attendees at an event. The above items can be printed from a personal, at-home printer or taken to a local print/copy shop for duplication. The brochure and fliers are available in both color and black and white versions.

Photos of the table-top display and copies of the brochure, campaign flyer, social media flyer and frequently asked questions handout are available in the Tools section.

Public Presentations. Presentations to community groups and organizations are a great way to share information about FASD with a captive, engaged audience. To schedule presentations with civic organizations in your local community, contact the organization directly by phone or e-mail. Explain the nature of your proposal, give a brief description of what you plan to discuss and explain how it is relevant to the audience. A community outreach PowerPoint presentation and script has been created for the campaign and can be used for these kinds of presentations. The PowerPoint includes general information about FASD, background information about the Florida Fights FASD campaign and recruitment information for those interested in becoming torchbearers. As previously mentioned, a campaign brochure, campaign flyer and social media flyer have also been produced and would be excellent handouts for community presentations.

The Florida Fights FASD PowerPoint presentation is available on CD in the Tools section.

Social Media. Social media is influential because it gives real-time news and industry information, as well as provides opportunities to meet and interact with people that can be advantageous to a company, group or organization. Social media is about building relationships with others that have common interests, similar occupations or skills. Social media can be used to reach out to third-party organizations, fellow advocates, and members of the community to share and receive important information. For the purpose of the Florida Fights FASD campaign, social media sites are being utilized to share campaign messages, specifically targeting audiences which focus on health, conception and pregnancy, alcohol abuse, etc. *(NOTE: With new media channels growing exponentially, this tactic will be an imperative means of reaching target audience(s), especially college and university students given their fluency with and affinity for the Internet and social media.)*

- **Facebook:** Facebook is the most-used social networking site in the world. Organizations can create Facebook pages to interact with their constituents and followers. A Facebook “fan” or group page has already been created for the Florida Fights FASD campaign and is actively being used to share news, information about upcoming events, photos, etc. with its “fans.” If you already have a Facebook account, be sure to find the **Florida Fights FASD** group and click the “like” button at the top of the page. If you would like to start a local Florida Fights FASD Facebook group page to communicate with your local partners and advocates directly, please feel free to do so. It is easy to start a group or fan page: create a profile identity (e.g. Miami Fights FASD or Tampa Fights FASD); fill out your organization’s information on the page, invite friends to “like” the page and then start using the page to reach out to your target audiences. By posting updates in the “What’s on your mind?” section of the page, followers can be alerted about updates within the organization, media coverage and events. Interaction between organizations and followers increases awareness, and through Facebook pages organizations can increase online interaction by asking questions to followers, creating contests and giving away prizes. Pictures, videos and blogs can also be uploaded to Facebook pages,

Florida Fights FASD Advocacy Kit

allowing followers to see what your group is doing or what you are planning. By updating the page consistently, followers will feel connected and engaged.

For sample, ready-to-use Facebook posts specific to the Florida Fights FASD campaign, see the Tools section.

- **Twitter:** Twitter is a social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read messages known as “tweets.” Tweets are text-based, SMS (short-messaging service) posts of up to 140 characters. Tweets are displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to the author's subscribers who are known as “followers.” Twitter can be used to build relationships with potential advocates, increase support for the campaign, participate in conversations with target audiences, share information about FASD, or alert followers of news or events. A Twitter profile has already been created for the Florida Fights FASD campaign (@FASD_FL) and is actively being used to share news and information about FASD with followers. If you already have a personal Twitter profile, be sure to find and follow @FASD_FL. If you are actively using Twitter, feel free to “retweet” posts from @FASD_FL or develop and share your own tweets about FASD. If you'd prefer, you can also create a Twitter profile for your local Florida Fights FASD “chapter.”

To use Twitter effectively, it is imperative to know the symbols frequently used in tweets.

- **Reply (@):** Whenever a username is preceded by an @ symbol, it means that the tweet is for that specific person (even though it is public). For example, “@jtsmith The NACDD conference is this weekend. Are you excited?” Once @jtsmith sees this, he will know that he can respond to the question. This also serves important search and sort functions.
- **Retweets (RT):** Retweeting is a huge part of Twitter's viral success. If a follower tweets an article or link that the user finds interesting and they think their followers will appreciate the information, the user should retweet it for their readers. Essentially, a retweet quotes the original person's tweet and gives them the credit, so people can see the tweet and then choose to follow that person. It is important to keep a Twitter username under 10 characters because it makes retweeting more effective. When retweeting someone, start the tweet off with RT @jtsmith:. Retweeting something @jtsmith posted takes an additional 12 characters and when Twitter only allows you to use 140, it is important to keep it short, simple and succinct.
- **Direct Message (D):** Direct messages are just like e-mail. They are personal and confidential between the sender and the receiver. Users can utilize this when a user mentions them in a post and the organization wants to contact them in more than 140 characters. Direct messages can only be sent to people that are following the user and the user is following in return.
- **Hashtag (#):** Hashtags enable easy categorization of tweets for effective searching. For example, when tweeting about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), simply put a hashtag in front of the word FASD (#FASD) and anyone who searches for the word FASD will see the tweet and any other tweet mentioning FASD.
- **URL Shorteners:** These can be very helpful since Twitter only allows 140 characters per tweet. Sharing an article that has a 70 character URL defeats the purpose of tweeting. The most common and easiest URL shortening website is <http://bit.ly/>. Go to the website, paste the long URL in the box and click the button that says, “shorten.” Use the shortened URL to make the tweet more effective.

Florida Fights FASD Advocacy Kit

For sample, ready-to-use Twitter posts specific to the Florida Fights FASD campaign, see the Tools section.

- **LinkedIn:** LinkedIn allows professionals to reconnect with old colleagues and coworkers, make connections when looking for a job in a specific field or ask questions of knowledgeable professionals. Unlike Facebook, LinkedIn is more about getting answers and helping the user. Instead of staying in contact with people, it is a site about making new connections that can help. Organizations can make pages that members can join, establishing connections within the company. Organizations can also reach out to certain individuals or people. Having a page on LinkedIn shows target audiences that you are available for questions, connections or support. LinkedIn is particularly effective for creating groups with special interests and facilitating discussions and chats on specific topics. A LinkedIn group page has already been created for the Florida Fights FASD campaign. If you already have a LinkedIn account, be sure to search for “Florida Fights FASD” and submit a request to join the group!

E-mail Network (ListServ). A great way to quickly, consistently share news and information with target audiences is to create a database of e-mail addresses of torchbearers, advocates, partners, community leaders, etc. and send “viral” e-mail messages (i.e., brief but informative e-mail messages sent to previously identified parties who are encouraged to forward them along to people in their e-mail directories, who are then asked to forward to others, who will also forward to others, and so on). This e-mail database is commonly referred to as a “ListServ” and can be utilized to send e-mail alerts to contacts, transmit urgent information and encourage recipients to share the message with others, increasing the “viral” aspect of e-mail messages (i.e., enhancing their being forwarded along to other friends, family and contacts in their e-mail directories, who are then asked to forward to others, who will also forward to others, and so on).

Torchbearer Recruitment

Advocates, or “torchbearers,” are critical components of the Florida Fights FASD campaign. In order for the campaign to reach its greatest potential for success, we need the support of local and statewide advocates so that together we can work to overcome one of the most critical health concerns facing local communities today. Ideal torchbearers are individuals, businesses, organizations, associations and other groups with an interest in addressing concerns related to alcohol, women’s issues, maternal and child health and families (including the role of men).

Torchbearers can help promote healthy behaviors among women in the community, provide health education and other services. They can also help generate awareness, advocate for prevention and promote education within their local communities.

If you have already agreed to participate as a torchbearer, thank you for your interest and support. In addition to your personal commitment, you can also help recruit others in your community to get involved. This section provides ideas, tactics and tools for recruiting additional torchbearers to help support the Florida Fights FASD campaign.

Objectives:

- To identify, recruit and ignite torchbearers (individuals willing to champion the cause) by providing ideas and tools to propel the overall purpose of the campaign.
- To increase awareness and understanding of the causes and repercussions of FASD.
- To convey the message of prevention by generating awareness of the dangers of consuming alcohol while pregnant and communicating that FAS and FASD are 100 percent preventable.
- To identify, recruit and ignite torchbearers (individuals willing to champion the cause) by providing ideas and tools to propel the overall purpose of the campaign.
- To generate awareness of the Florida Fights FASD campaign, including key messages, mission and purpose.
- To establish working relationships with third-party organizations related and/or relevant to FASD and their members to cultivate leadership, communication and support necessary to execute a successful statewide campaign.

Target Audiences:

- Women who are pregnant or may become pregnant and their families
- The general public
- Potential torchbearers, partners and other advocates
- Third-party organizations, including, but not limited to:
 - Parent-teacher organizations at local high schools
 - Local Junior League chapters
 - The Center for Autism and Related Disorders, Inc. (CARD)
 - Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) local chapters
 - Civic organizations (Rotary, Exchange, Kiwanis, etc.)
 - Women’s clubs
 - Adoption and foster care organizations
 - Developmental disabilities organizations and parent support groups
 - Guardian ad Litem
 - Text 4 Baby (a free mobile information service designed to promote maternal and child health)

Florida Fights FASD Advocacy Kit

- Adult day training organizations (Pyramid, Opportunity Services, etc.)
- Local March of Dimes chapters
- Local hospitals
- Substance abuse and addiction recovery organizations
- Local Healthy Start coalitions
- Sexual violence organizations
- Local medical societies and medical/physician groups (especially family practices and OB/GYNs)
- University and community college health departments and university Greek organizations
- Local NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) chapters
- School board/educators associations
- Local “Moms Like Me” and parenting organizations
- Churches, synagogues and faith-based organizations

Target advocates/torchbearers include but are not limited to:

- **Neighborhood groups and community centers** such as libraries, charities, shelters and food pantries
- **Local health departments** that have experience promoting healthy behavior
- **Civic organizations** such as the Junior League, women’s clubs, PTOs, chambers of commerce, Kiwanis or Rotary clubs
- **Recreation businesses** such as restaurants, bars, movie theaters and video stores that can distribute public education materials
- **Consumer outlets** such as grocery stores, farmers’ markets, department stores, beauty salons and barber shops that can assist with promotional activities
- **Business groups** such as local photocopy shops and printers that can help duplicate materials
- **Faith-based organizations**, religious leaders and individual members who often play leading roles in community health efforts
- **Employers** who can reach various population segments ranging from farm workers to military personnel, from university and public school employees to local government staff members
- **Coalitions and advocacy groups** focused on women’s health issues
- **Local media**, including print and broadcast outlets, transit and outdoor outlets that can maximize placement of messages
- **Provider organizations** that employ medical, social service and health education professionals who can distribute materials and provide additional education and counseling
- **Medical groups**, such as local medical societies and group practices of family-practice physicians, obstetricians, gynecologists and pediatricians.

A description of torchbearer roles and responsibilities is available in the Tools section.

Tactics:

Community-Action Summit DVDs. An important component of the Florida Fights FASD campaign was the Community-Action Summit held October 20-21, 2010, in Tallahassee. The goal of the summit was to ignite torchbearers for the cause to serve as community advocates and take FASD prevention activities and public awareness messages back to their local communities and/or share information with members of their organizations. Summit attendees participated in an educational forum where expert speakers led discussions about the prevalence of FASD and what can be done to combat it. Additionally, an outstanding group of

Florida Fights FASD Advocacy Kit

medical doctors, parents, professionals, teachers, advocates and others from throughout Florida came together to share their knowledge and expertise on the subject. The summit was recorded in its entirety and DVDs were produced that are available to torchbearers in this advocacy kit and upon request. Summit DVDs are a great tool to share with potential or newly recruited torchbearers.

One copy of the DVD is included in the Tools section, but additional copies can be requested by contacting The Florida Center for Early Childhood at (800) 587-1385, or emailing Kristie Skoglund at Kristie.Skoglund@thefloridacenter.org.

For a copy of the Community-Action Summit DVD, see the Tools section.

Public Presentations. Presentations to community groups and organizations are a great way to share information about FASD and also recruit torchbearers for the cause. To schedule presentations to civic organizations in your local community, contact the organization directly by phone or email. Explain the nature of your proposal, give a brief description of what you plan to discuss and explain how it is relevant to the audience. A community outreach PowerPoint presentation and script have been created for the campaign and can be used for these kinds of presentations. The PowerPoint includes general information about FASD, background information about the Florida Fights FASD campaign and recruitment information for those interested in becoming a torchbearer. As previously mentioned, a campaign brochure has also been produced and would be a great handout for community presentations. In addition to the brochure, a one-page, full-color informational flyer has been created and can be printed either from a personal, home computer or taken to a local copy/print shop for printing and duplication. It is also a good idea to distribute a torchbearer interest form requesting information from attendees so that you may follow up with them after the meeting or presentation.

The Florida Fights FASD PowerPoint presentation, brochure and torchbearer interest form are all available in the Tools section.

Community Partnerships. Leveraging relationships with partners who have existing PR/marketing/communications departments to help share the message of the campaign is a very valuable tactic. It is likely that these organizations already have a strong following/readership and have established outlets for communicating with their audiences. Local PR/marketing/advertising firms that would be willing to partner or offer pro bono help to spread the word through their various channels (media relations, communications collateral, social media, etc.) could also be a valuable community partnership to establish.

E-mail Network (ListServ). A great way to quickly and consistently share news and information with target audiences is to create a database of email addresses for torchbearers, advocates, partners, community leaders, etc. and send “viral” email messages (i.e., brief but informative email messages sent to previously identified parties who are encouraged to forward them along to people in their email directories, who are then asked to forward to others, who will also forward to others, and so on). This email database is commonly referred to as a “ListServ” and can be utilized to send email alerts to contacts, transmit urgent information and encourage recipients to share the message with others, increasing the “viral” outreach of e-mail messages.

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Thank you for your interest in serving as a torchbearer and advocate in our fight against FASD. We hope you find this advocacy kit useful and are ready to help lead the fight and recruit others to join us. Together, we can reduce and prevent FASD in Florida.