

## FASD Video Series Transcript: Celebration and Resilience

**Narrator:** Stories of FASD Celebration and Resilience.

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) are a group of conditions that can occur in a person who is exposed to alcohol before birth. FASDs can have lifelong effects, including problems with behavior and learning, as well as physical problems.

It is estimated that up to 1 in 20 U.S. school-aged children may have FASDs.

**Emily:** There's so many people that need to understand they're not just an FASD, they're not just that negative prognosis that so often comes with it. They're not just the health struggles. Yeah, okay we might be running the race with a few extra weights in our backpack, but that makes us strong, right? So, as I share my story, as I research FASD, I am hoping that others are also finding their strength in this, that others are understanding they are not alone. You have challenges. Your voice needs to be heard, but you also have strengths and we can all build upon those.

**Jen:** If I were talking to another caregiver who either knew or suspected that their kiddo has FASD, I would tell them that it's tough in the beginning because we don't know. It's tough because we may be sad about what we envision for our children might not be possible, but our children are going to show us how amazing they are. Our children are gonna show us how successful they can be. And when we find those other caregivers, when we know we don't have to do it alone, we can truly accomplish anything. What keeps me positive is knowing that there are others on this journey with me, and we will not stop.

**Rebecca:** Those of you out there with an FASD if you just got diagnosed. It's not the end of the world. And you may go through feeling mad and sad and glad and happy and confused, and those are normal feelings. You need to feel them and work through them. We all have strengths with an FASD, and you will find yours if you don't know them already. It doesn't have to define you. Go out in the world and advocate because we don't have enough advocates, and it gets easier. There will be tough times, but as you learn who you are and what your supports are and how you can be successful, you'll be just that. You'll be successful and you'll be wonderful. And the good times really do overshadow the bad.

**Rachel:** You know, if you told us 10 years ago that this is who Patima would be today, it was hard to imagine. And so, for doctors and other medical professionals to know this is, it's a very different developmental trajectory. Once we started hearing about that as well, we became more hopeful. That it's a different curve. So, there are so many strengths Patima has that I think are somewhat associated with FASD. She has this incredible resilience. She has an incredible ability to persist. She's a fabulous artist because when she loves something, she just keeps at it and keeps doing it. And I think that's another thing that medical practitioners need to know as well, that it's a whole child. And so, there's gonna be beautiful talents and strengths that that child has that may or may not be associated with FASD, we don't know. Probably there needs to be research on FASD and all the cool strengths that come with it, as well as all the challenges. 'Cause we tend to focus on the deficits and the challenges.

**Debbie:** We have a really good life, we advocate a lot. We go back to his high school every year and present to the leadership class on FASD, and we just, you know, have fun and relish every day because we only do this, you know, life once. You know, parenting or caregiving an individual with an FASD is a hard journey. And, you know, you gotta have some moxie to be able to do it. But find your people. You need community. You need self-care. You're gonna need to ask for it. You're gonna need to step out of your comfort zone and, you know, just keep fighting for your child and there's people out there that will be there for you and support you.

**Wyatt:** I encourage you to advocate. It can be scary, and sometimes your audience may look at you like you're green, but that's okay.

**Debbie:** I don't just do this for my child. I do this for the millions of families across the United States that are just like me and don't have a voice or a diagnosis. And they're fighting for their child so that they're heard, and you know, know where to go and how to support their child's brain.

**Annette:** But the one great strength of our kids that have been affected is that they get up every day. I can't imagine how strong and brave they are. I mean, they are. One condition that my oldest son in particular has is, we called it perseveration. He would just get an idea and he can't let it go. He's a dog with a bone. He just perseverate on an idea. But the flip of that is it's perseverance, they persevere. And I think that's one of their greatest strengths.

**Sean Patrick:** My life today is awesome. It's amazing. But becoming an FASD advocate, getting to travel, meeting other people, it helps me to understand myself and others who are impacted by FASD.

**Laura:** Why are we here? To create more opportunities, right? To spread that awareness, that advocacy. If you're getting this diagnosis, embrace yourself. All those strengths that you have, that you've made it, whether it's five years, 20 years, 50 years, you've done so many wonderful things without even knowing. And now that you do have that diagnosis, you know, again, asking for those supports so that you can continue to do those and have those same successes, but without so much energy and effort having to go into it. With FASD, we all have strengths, we all have challenges, and it's focusing on those strengths. What is that individual superpower? I could see with Sean, his superpower is that he's never met a stranger. He will go talk with anyone and everyone. And so, let's turn that into a positive and with that FASD message.

**Sean Patrick:** Because in my world, there are no strangers unless they're strangers.  
[Sean and Laura laughing]

**Narrator:** For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/fasd](http://www.cdc.gov/fasd).