



WEBINAR: ROADS TO RESILIENCE

Identifying FASD in Court-Involved Youth

Presented by the University of San Diego School of Law's Children's Advocacy Institute in partnership with the University of San Diego Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science, and Project TeamUp

Thursday, Oct. 14, 2021

2pm-4pm (via zoom)

Dr. Kenneth Lyons Jones, M.D. University of California , San Diego

Judge Marian Gaston (Juvenile Judge San Diego County)

William J. Edwards, Deputy Public Defender, Los Angeles County Mental Health Court

Webinar Description

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a severe developmental disability that begins at birth. Current prevalence rates suggest that 1-5% of school aged children (1 of every 20) meet diagnostic criteria for FASD. Children with FASD have multiple developmental disabilities and increased rates of mental health disorders (ADHD, intellectual disability, sleep disorders, anxiety, and learning disorders). Most children with FASD go through life never being diagnosed. Many of these children are in the foster care system and the failure to provide them with diagnosis-informed care can result in multiple foster placements and high rates of exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). These lead to secondary disabilities that are largely preventable. For example, the inability to read social clues may lead to delays in development, decision-making, impulse control, and learning, which for many results in school failure, behavioral and mental health challenges, and involvement in the juvenile and adult justice system.

It is vital that children with FASD are identified and receive early and ongoing intervention. Advocates and others working with children must learn to recognize FASD and work to ensure that access to services is based on the level of "severity of the disability" rather than the misleading criteria of IQ. In order

to promote recognition and treatment of FASD and improve outcomes for children involved in the court system, Dr. Kenneth Lyons Jones, considered the “father of FAS,” attorney Billy Edwards, and Judge Marion Gaston will provide information about FASD, the challenges of early diagnosis, and the red flags attorneys and judges should be aware of to better identify a child who has been prenatally exposed to alcohol in utero.

Learning Outcomes:

- Describe the impact of in-utero exposure to alcohol on the development of the child
- Explain why FASD is a severe developmental disability and why FASD is equivalent to having an intellectual disability.
- Recognize the signs of FASD at various ages
- Identify the prevalence of FASD among court-involved children
- Recognize red flags attorneys and judges should be aware of to better identify a child who has been prenatally exposed to alcohol in utero.
- Explain how to obtain a proper diagnosis
- Identify advocacy strategies for improving outcomes for children with FASD involved in the court

Presenter Bios

Dr. Kenneth Lyons Jones is the Chief of the Division of Dysmorphology & Teratology at the Department of Pediatrics at UCSD, Medical Director of the MotherToBaby California Pregnancy Health Information Line, and co-Director of the Center for Better Beginnings. He is a pediatrician by training, specializing in the identification and treatment of birth defects. He is actively involved in research, teaching, clinical work, and University and public service. He is considered the leading expert of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), as he was one of two doctors at the University of Washington who first identified FAS in the United States in 1973.

Dr. Jones’ research has focused on the evaluation and diagnosis of birth defects, identifying the mechanisms of normal and abnormal fetal development, and the recognition of new environmental agents that cause birth defects. Dr. Jones has authored over 400 publications in scientific journals as well as several books, and is the author of the textbook titled *Smith’s Recognizable Patterns of Human Malformation*.

Billy Edwards is considered one of the early pioneers in the training of attorneys around issues involving fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD). William (Billy) Edwards is a Deputy Public Defender in Los Angeles California, working in the Los Angeles County Mental Health Court, representing clients with mental illness and developmental disorders. Prior to that Billy worked on capital habeas appeals in Florida, and a paper he co-authored on people with intellectual disabilities on death row in the United States was cited by the United States Supreme in *Atkins v. Virginia*. In 2006, Edwards was appointed to serve on the *President’s Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities* and later was appointed for a second term. While serving on this Presidential Committee he became interested in FASD and initiated a series of workshops (still ongoing) on the disorder for attorneys around the US and the world. In 2011, he served as the editor of a landmark two-volume issue of the *Journal of Psychiatry and Law* which focused on the legal aspects of FASD. In 2012 he

helped to draft and secure the passage of a resolution by the *American Bar Association*, calling on all people working in the criminal justice system to be aware of FASD.

On March 13, 2014, Mr. Edwards was appointed to serve on the Board of Directors for the *National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome* in Washington, D.C. In 2019, he was invited to assist the *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)* to develop policies aimed at reducing the lifelong burden on children and families that arise from *in-utero* exposure to alcohol.

Judge Marian Gaston currently presides over a dependency courtroom in San Diego, where she also presides over the delinquency court dedicated to commercially sexually exploited youth. Prior to her appointment to the bench by Governor Jerry Brown in 2015, Judge Gaston served as a deputy public defender for 19 years. This included several years in the Juvenile Delinquency Division as an attorney and Assistant Supervisor. During her time as an attorney, she developed a particular interest in the effects of early childhood trauma and in utero exposure to drugs and alcohol. Judge Gaston earned her Juris Doctor from the University of California at Berkeley School of Law in 1996.

MCLE: The University of San Diego School of Law is a State Bar of California-approved MCLE provider and this event has been approved for 2 hours of General MCLE credit.

RN CEU: The University of San Diego Hahn School of Nursing is approved by the California Board of Registered Nursing as a provider of continuing education, BRN Provider #CEP488. This event has been approved for two (2) contact hours.

CEUs for California licensed mental health professionals: 2 hours of CE credits are being offered to LMFTs, LPCCs, LCSWs, and Psychologists based on the total instruction time of 120 minutes within the duration of the event. Project TeamUP at the University of San Diego is approved by the California Psychological Association to provide continuing professional education for psychologists and other licensed mental health professionals. Project TeamUP at the University of San Diego maintains responsibility for this program and its content.