

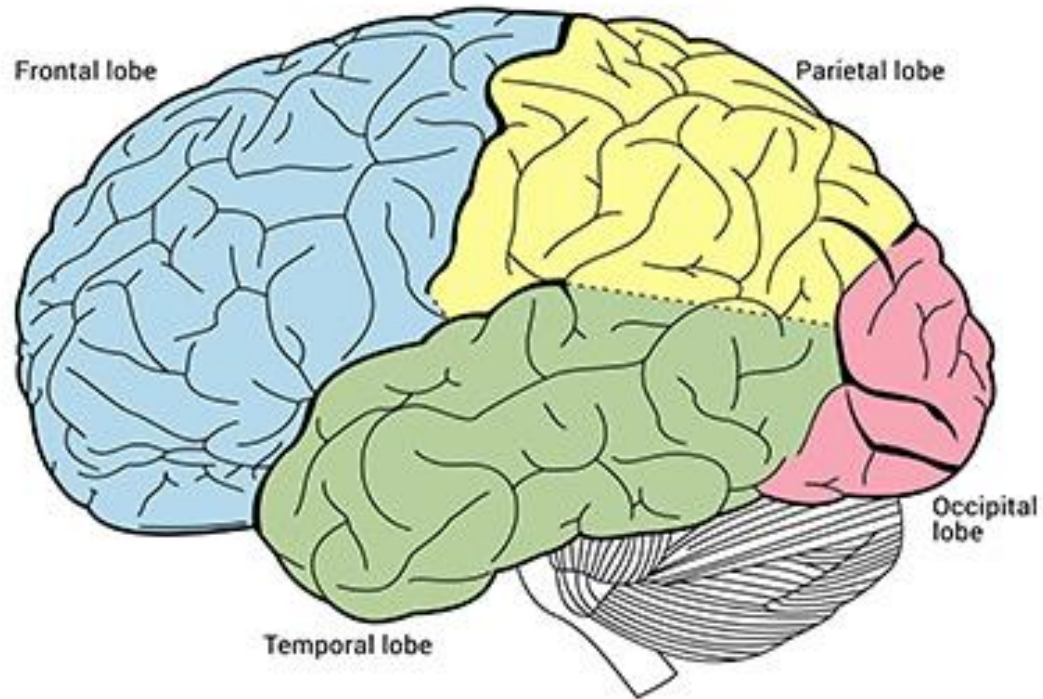


A practical guide to differentiating FASD from other neurodevelopmental disorders, supporting more accurate identification, assessment, and appropriate intervention across health, education, and social care settings

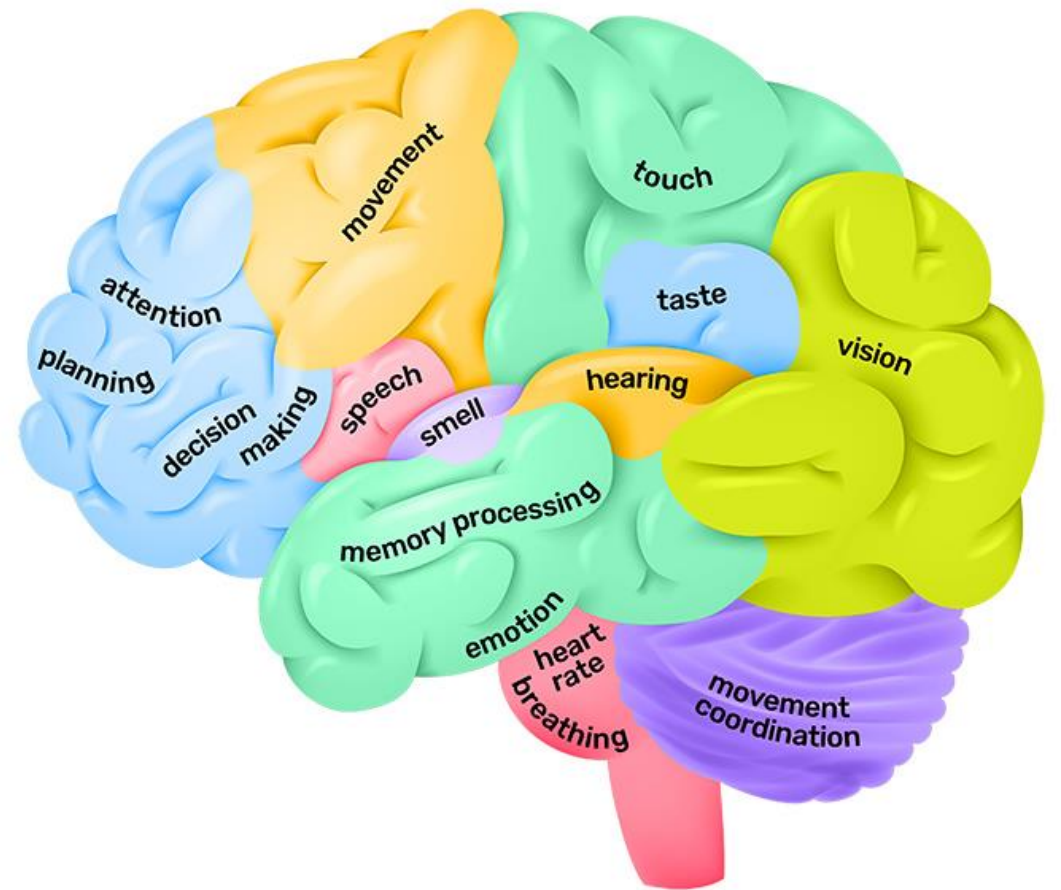
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Friday, May 15th, 2026

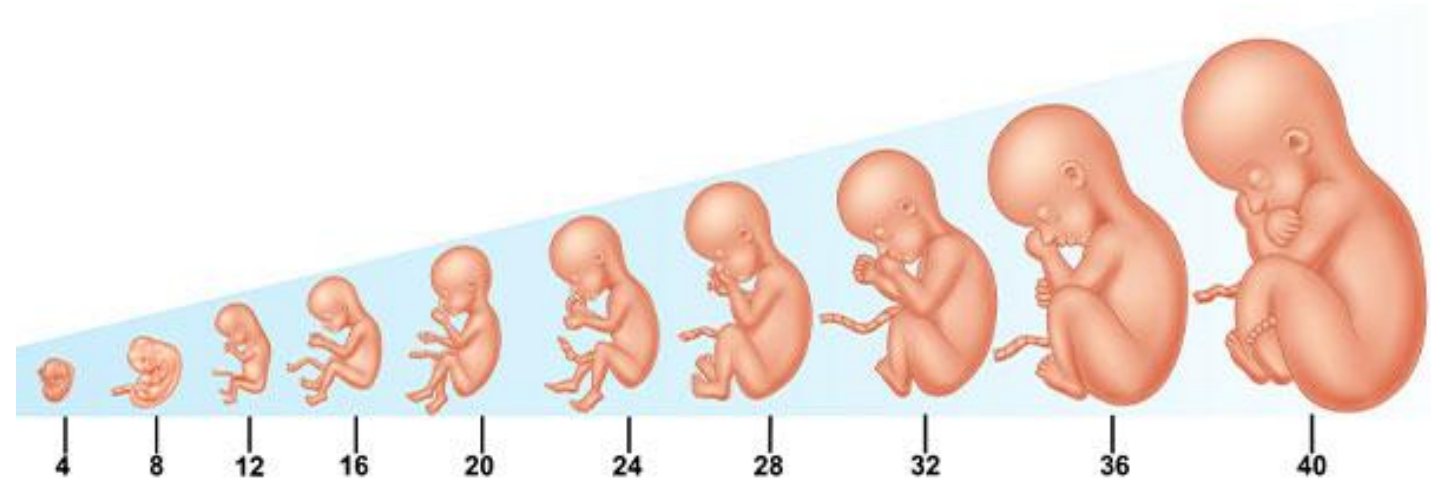
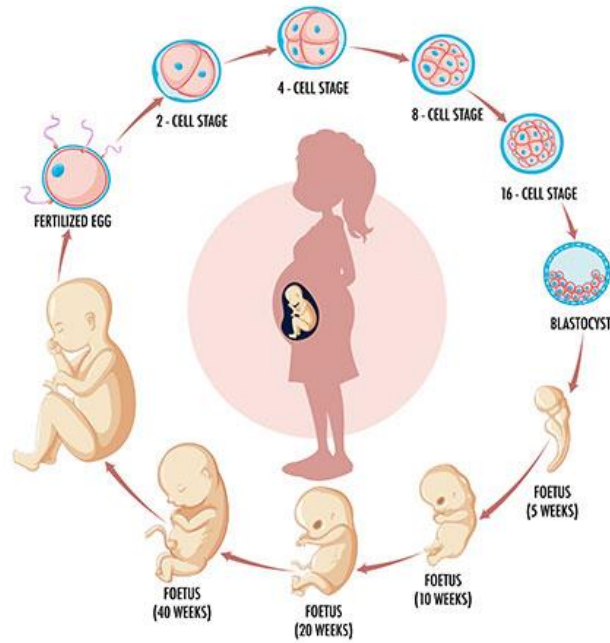


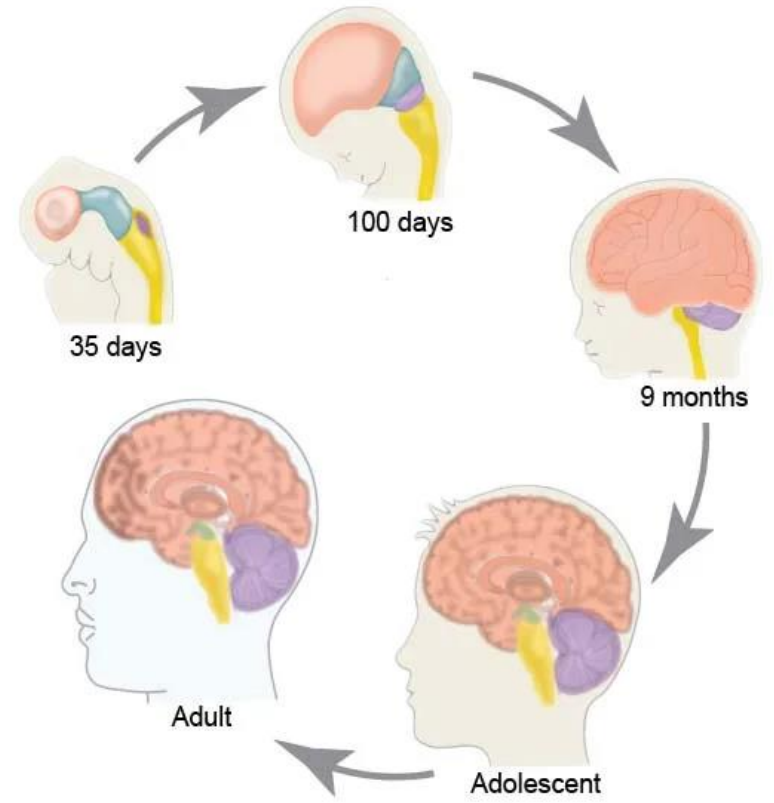
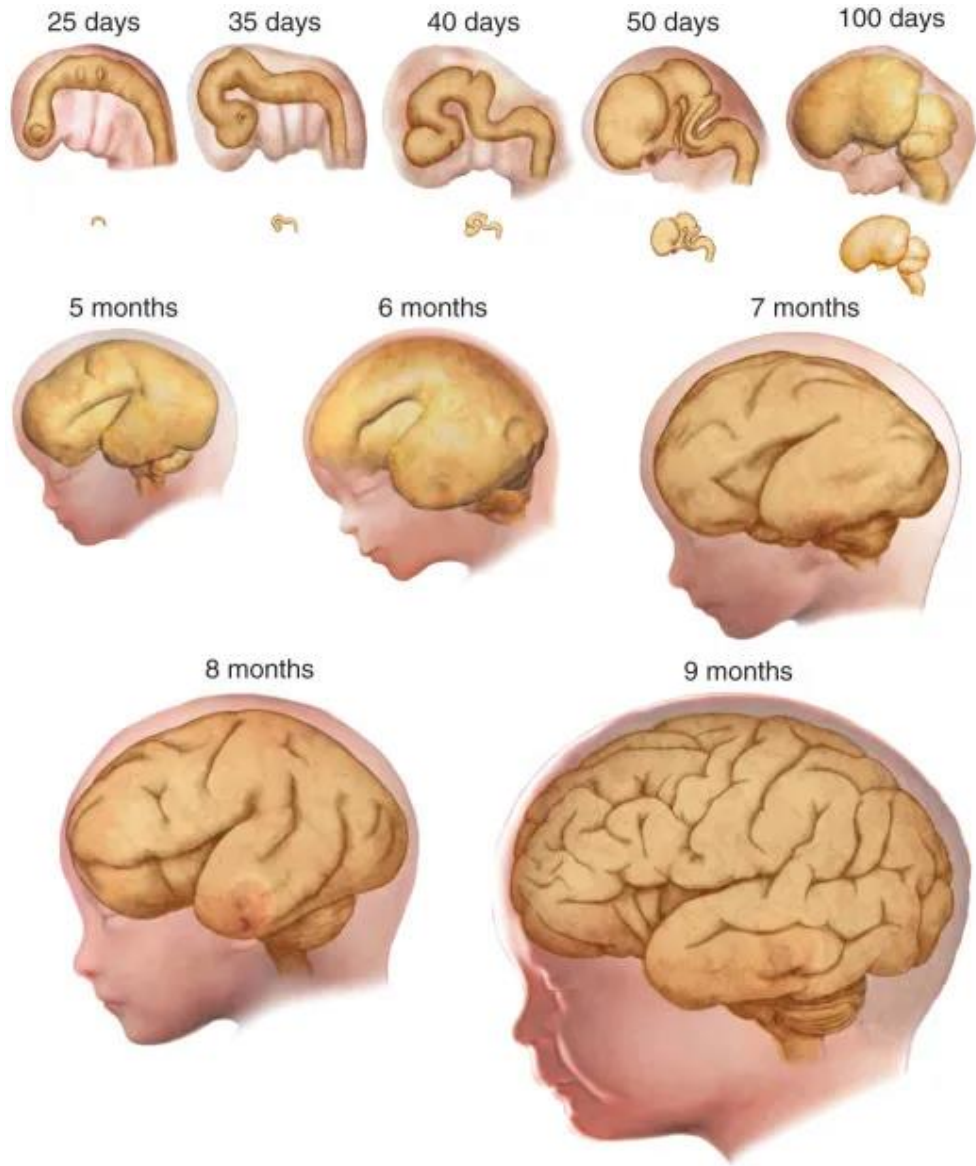
(Wikimedia)



(QBI)

Fetal Growth From 4 to 40 Weeks





Assessment

Robust assessment needs to include:

- Prenatal Alcohol
- Genetic Factors
- Prematurity
- Prenatal Drugs
- Trauma
- Post Natal Neglect
- Comprehensive assessment of neuro-cognitive function, neurodevelopment and educational attainment



New Research

- Many genes have been linked to autism (hundreds)
- But how can so many different genes produce the same or very similar outcomes in the brain?
- New study reveals how the diverse range of genes linked to neurodevelopmental disorders like autism disrupt the brain in similar ways
- Genes “converge” on a shared set of biological pathways in the brain triggering similar downstream effects as brain cells mature
- Opens huge possibilities for research into new treatments for many neurodevelopmental disorders
- It may also explain overlapping symptoms across different neurodevelopmental disorders

Overlapping Symptoms with ASD

Both FASD and ASD, for example, can feature symptoms of varying severity related to:

- Poor Impulse Control
- Difficulty with Transitions
- Behavioural Rigidity – preference for routines and resistance to change
- Executive Dysfunction – for example, difficulties organising or planning tasks
- Sensory Processing Issues
- Social Communication Difficulties
- Difficulties with Adaptive Skills

Overlapping Symptoms with ADHD

Both FASD and ADHD, for example, can feature symptoms of varying severity related to:

- Inattention
- Impulsivity
- Hyperactivity
- Poor Emotional Regulation
- Forgetfulness

FASD Strengths (Protective Factors)

- Social and Affectionate
- Resilient and Determined
- Artistic and Creative
- Hand-On Learners
- Good Long-Term Memory
- Kind and Helpful

FASD Weaknesses and Challenges

- Executive Functioning Difficulties
- Cognitive Processing Difficulties
- Memory Difficulties
- Sensory Overload
- Adaptive Behavioural Difficulties
- Learning Difficulties – particularly in maths and abstract reasoning

Key Considerations for Support

- Environment/Structural Support – consistent and structured environment with limited distractions
- Early Diagnosis – more appropriate support when needed, clarity about diagnosis/diagnoses
- Needs-Based Approach – no two people with FASD are the same
- Understanding Behaviour – some behavioural and emotional traits are actually symptoms of brain injury and not what most people think they are

Comprehensive Assessment

Comprehensive Assessment will:

- Look at many factors about you and FASD – everyone is different!
- Identify your strengths and weaknesses – strengths and weaknesses can help identify what subjects or career pathways are most suitable for you
- Look at other neurodevelopmental difficulties – ADHD, ASD, Specific Learning Difficulties, Sensory Processing Difficulties
- Propose a pathway for intervention and support

Questions?