Children who have difficulty with attention, prolonged tantrums and other self-regulation challenges can be misdiagnosed and should be screened for prenatal alcohol exposure.

Three quarters of children with one of the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs) have an attention problem and may be diagnosed as having ADHD without considering other diagnoses. FASDs may occur in a child who was exposed to alcohol prenatally and may include physical, mental, behavioral and/or learning problems. Children with one of the FASDs often present clinically with a combination of mild impairments. It is important to consider prenatal alcohol exposure when assessing children with attention issues, neurocognitive and behavioral concerns.

Pediatricians and other pediatric health professionals can make a lifetime of difference through early identification and therapeutic interventions. An online FASD Toolkit at aap.org/fasd provides an evidence-based approach and resources to help identify children who may have one of the FASDs and facilitates management and care to improve lifelong health outcomes.

FASDs can’t be cured, but early recognition and diagnosis-specific interventions can improve outcomes that last a lifetime.

Your awareness can make a lifetime of difference. aap.org/fasd