

My name is Georgia. I am 18 years old. I am in foster care; I have been in foster care since I was 6 yrs old. I have been in more than 10 different foster homes. I cannot remember any happy times in my childhood only bad ones. I've seen pictures of me when I was young; I looked happy I guess.

I started school at a catholic school from kindergarten to grade eight. School for me was a little hard growing up. There were many distractions at school the big windows with people passing by, the conversations in the background. I had trouble refocusing. It was hard to ask questions in class, I would have to wait until after class because the students would pick on me and call me stupid. I prefer to learn by being shown hands on rather than listening. It was difficult to read teachers notes then copy them down. The teachers wrote too fast for me, I would say I was done when I wasn't I was too embarrassed to ask for extra time. I think I started modified programs at grade 7. I was picked on a lot by students; I was tripped up and shoved in lockers. One time I was in a focus group everyone was bugging me, they told the teacher it was I who was disturbing the group, I was sent out of the room. I felt hurt to be punished for something I didn't do especially by my favorite teacher who I thought I could trust. I was surprised to be picked on by other natives. Even my close friends turned on me and at times, I felt used. I was in the middle of my friends arguments and was always the one that passed messages to others. Once when I was taking a test I happened to look up the teacher started shouting at me because she thought I was cheating, she even poked me with her long fingernails. I was bullied so often I didn't want to go back to school. Eventually I was transferred to another school for grade nine. A close friend of the family was very disappointed in me for not graduating from the catholic school, I guess she didn't understand what I was putting up with there.

The new school was a big change for me the people were friendly, the girls were more affectionate they would hug and kiss each other on the cheek it grossed me out. The good thing about Maxwell school is that the classes are smaller and the teachers assistant could provide the attention needed for me to learn. At my old school, the classes were large and the TA couldn't support everyone who needed help. I had trouble with the class schedule, my friends could memorize it in a couple of days, and it took me all year. Math was my hardest topic but because of the smaller classes, I got more work done. I started to learn better, I was proud of my accomplishments; I brought my test results home and bragged to my friends. I had a hard time memorizing the multiplication tables, I learned better by being shown first then copying.

WORK EXPERIENCE

I had a work experience at the new school. It was to mark the attendance on the school bus, I would sit and watch people come on the bus and tick their names off the list. It was hard to put a face to the names but it became easier with repetition.

I was also a camp leader at a summer cultural camp. We would take kids to the river to swim or go to the pool. It was tough to watch kids swim without a lifeguard. They offered to train me to be a lifeguard but I was too afraid to, it is a lot of responsibility.

I helped with the garage sale at local community farm program. I was nervous around people especially when it came to giving the correct change because I am not good at math. I became more comfortable with people over time.

I have known that I have F.A.E for a while but never talked about it. I knew that I had it but didn't want to know I had it. I didn't want to be treated differently. I thought I had FAE because I couldn't learn the way other people do, I needed extra help. I knew that mum drank with all three of us. I was one of the lucky ones she didn't drink as much. FAS to me means that when a mother drinks while she is pregnant it affects the baby and depending on how much the mother drank the baby can come out with FAS or FAE. I have FAE which means I only got affected by it. I have an older brother and a younger sister and both of them have FAS, they were also born premature. Nothing has changed for me now that I know I have FAE, I try not to let things bug me. I sometimes wish I was a straight A student. My younger sister tells me to grow up and that I am immature, I just like to have fun.

I have not had access to any services or employment agencies. I did have a councilor when I was ten years old or so. I did not like her she kept bringing up the past all the time. I put the past behind me it was over already I hated it. What is the point of talking about what has happened in the past, you cannot change it. Even though I did not like my councilor, I think I could be good at talking to people, others maybe able to relate to my experiences.