

September is FASD Awareness Month



Mark Your Calendar



September 9th is
International FASD Day!

This important day has been celebrated since 1999 and aims to raise awareness of FASD. We can make a difference by improving prevention, diagnosis, and support for individuals with FASD.

But let's not stop there! We encourage everyone to continue working towards increased awareness of FASD throughout FASD Month and beyond. .

Here is what you will find in our 10th Edition ...

- A message from Darlene Carifelle, Metis Settlements Provincial Service Network Coordinator
- Back To School Tips For Caregivers
- Did You Know?
- Red Shoes Rock
- Northwest Peace FASD update
- NWR FASD Society Mackenzie Network update
- CanFASD definition of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
- CanFASD University of Alberta 2023 Research Update
- CanFASD info graphic for caregivers

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Message from Darlene the Network Coordinator

Hello members, Summer is almost gone, and school days are near.

We again were faced with various hurdles that affect our mental health being displaced due to wildfires, all of which affect our traditional way of life. It is important to always be kind to others and if need be, reach out for help before you get too overwhelmed.

Teach your children there is no reason to make fun of anyone or to exclude them from “being different” or not having the same things as you.

Reminder: Sept. 9, 2023, is FASD Awareness Day please check with your communities for events and awareness sessions they may be hosting.

Quote (author unknown) “Be grateful for every second of every day that you get to spend with the people you love. Life is so precious.”

In closing, I hope you enjoy this edition of the Metis Settlements FASD Network newsletter and I wish you all continued health.

With Respect,

Darlene Carifelle

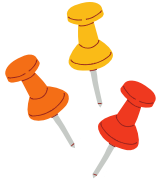
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GET ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & SUPPORT

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BACK TO SCHOOL

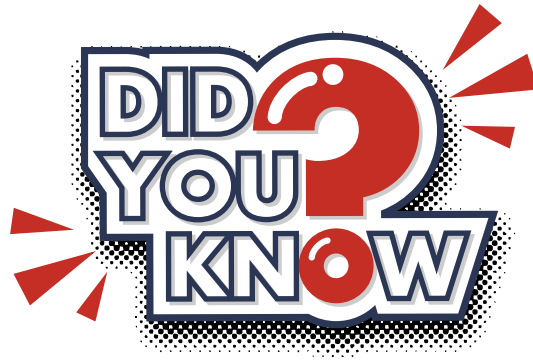


Here Are 5 Tips To Help Caregivers Support Children With FASD In A School Setting:

- 1 Advocate for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP):** Work closely with the school's special education team to develop an IEP tailored to your child's specific needs. Ensure that the plan includes accommodations and modifications that address their cognitive and behavioral challenges. Regularly review and update the IEP as needed.
- 2 Provide Consistency and Structure:** Children with FASD often benefit from a structured environment with clear routines and expectations. Communicate with teachers about the importance of consistency in the classroom. This can help reduce anxiety and improve their ability to focus and learn.
- 3 Use Visual Supports:** Visual aids, such as visual schedules, social stories, and visual cues, can be highly effective in helping children with FASD understand and follow instructions. Work with the school to implement these visual supports both at home and in the classroom.
- 4 Educate Teachers and Staff:** Share information about FASD with your child's teachers and school staff. Provide resources and training materials to help them better understand the condition and its impact on learning and behavior. Encourage open communication between home and school.
- 5 Promote Self-Advocacy and Emotional Regulation:** Help your child develop self-advocacy skills and strategies for emotional regulation. Teach them to recognize their own triggers and emotions and provide tools, like deep breathing exercises or a sensory toolkit, that can help them manage their reactions in a school environment.

With the beginning of the school year, it's *important* that every child feels included!





-  Did you know that Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is the leading developmental disability in Canada? It impacts more people than autism, cerebral palsy, and Down syndrome combined.
-  FASD can be challenging to diagnose accurately due to its wide range of symptoms and the lack of specific biomarkers. As a result, many individuals with FASD go undiagnosed.
-  The lifetime cost of caring for an individual with FASD can be substantial. It is estimated to cost an average of \$1.8 million per person with FASD over their lifetime.
-  FASD is overrepresented in the Canadian youth justice system. Studies have shown that a significant proportion of young offenders in Canada have FASD, which can lead to further challenges in the justice system.
-  Children with FASD often struggle in school. It is estimated that approximately 30-50% of individuals with FASD have some form of learning disability.
-  Individuals with FASD require comprehensive support services, including speech therapy, occupational therapy, and behavioral interventions. Access to these services can vary across different provinces and territories.
-  FASD is a lifelong condition, and individuals with FASD may face challenges in various aspects of their lives, including education, employment, and social relationships.
-  There is ongoing research and advocacy for FASD in Canada, with organizations and researchers working to increase awareness, improve diagnosis and treatment, and reduce the stigma associated with the disorder.



Red Shoes Rock

is an international awareness campaign giving voice and support to those affected by prenatal alcohol exposure.

FASD Month is a special time dedicated to spreading knowledge and understanding about fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD).

With events happening worldwide, this month goes beyond a single day of recognition. In 2020, the Government of Canada officially designated September as FASD Awareness Month, creating more opportunities to raise awareness and dispel misconceptions about this condition.

During FASD Month, we aim to celebrate individuals with FASD, challenge the stigma associated with the disability, and promote accurate information about the disorder.

Across Canada will light up in red, serving as a visual reminder of FASD awareness. From **Edmonton's High Level Bridge** to many other iconic sites, 45 landmarks will participate in this movement!!

Capture the moment, snap a photo of your red shoes and spread it on social media to help raise even more awareness. Together, we can make a difference!

**Join us by wearing
RED SHOES on September 9th
Click here to get your
FREE EVENT KIT**





Northwest Peace FASD

- Northwest FASD Society** (City of Grande Prairie)
- Peavine
- East Prairie
- Gift Lake

Find us on 

Northwest Peace is proud of our Mentors in all three Settlements for their hard work and dedication to supporting individuals and families throughout the wildfire season. There was such uncertainty as communities were put on alert and evacuated. Our hearts go out to all those affected and especially to the East Prairie Metis Settlement that lost homes and essential services to the wildfires.

Northwest Peace FASD Network continues to offer Supports, Prevention, and Diagnosis. Please reach out to the mentor in your area for more information.

FASD Mentor, Gift Lake Metis Settlement: Marge Cunningham

The FASD Mentor is a combination of FASD support and PCAP Mentor Program. Offering services to individuals and families within the Gift Lake Metis Settlement.

Email: marge@giftlakemetis.ca

FASD Mentor, Peavine Metis Settlement: Valerie Donison

The FASD Mentor is a combination of FASD support and PCAP Mentor Program. Offering services to individuals and families within the Peavine Metis Settlement.

Email: valerie.donison@peavinemetis.com

FASD Mentor, East Prairie Metis Settlement: Donna Grier

The FASD Mentor is a combination of FASD support and PCAP Mentor Program. Offering services to individuals and families within the East Prairie Metis Settlement.

Email: donna@epms.ca

Northwest Peace FASD Network, Grande Prairie Office Contacts:

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Jen Richards, Community Resource Advocate: jenr@nwfasd.ca

Leanne Aspen, Prevention Facilitator: leanne@nwfasd.ca

Jen Duperron-Trydal, Wrap 2.0 Instructional Coach: jen@nwfasd.ca



International FASD Awareness Day

Let's take a walk!

September 7, 2023

- Walk at your own pace and take 1 of 3 routes throughout the day. Walk from home if you can't join us in the park
- Visit our display table from 10am-2pm at the Pavilion for information on the event and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder services in Grande Prairie
- Door prizes for those that let us know how far they have gone!
- FREE face painting* from 11-1
- Visit our Facebook Page for more information www.facebook.com/nwfasdnetwork



Brought to you by:





The NWR FASD Society Mackenzie Network

Find us on 

We at the NWR FASD Society have been provided by the Paddle Prairie Settlement with a physical presence in the community. We are in the former Seniors Centre by the main office. Lorraine McGillivray is the frontline worker in the community and is providing service 3-4 days a week to the people of Paddle Prairie.

Lorraine's office is open and available for anyone who needs supports or just needs to debrief. In the Spring Lorraine hosted bi-weekly Lunch and Learns, from introducing the programs available, a bit about the prevention of prenatal alcohol exposure to the last one we discussed the process of diagnostic clinics.

Over July and August, we have gone to one Lunch and Learn per month. Join us for a light lunch and lively discussion. We will be talking about the brain domains impacted during prenatal alcohol exposure.

We did have our AGM meeting in June and Kathy Omoth has volunteered to be the representative on the board from Paddle! We are blessed to have such a knowledgeable person volunteer for our board of directors. We would love to hear from community members to guide the programming that is done and try new ways to connect to get our prevention message across and provide appropriate supports to those impacted by FASD!

Wanda Beland
NWR FASD Society Mackenzie Network - High Level, Alberta
780-926-3375 (T)

***Welcome to FASD Awareness Month
9th Month - 9 months of pregnancy!***



The NWR FASD Society Mackenzie Network



In preparation for September 9th, International FASD Day our staff have been busy posting signs around town to raise awareness.



CanFASD developed a standard definition of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a diagnostic term used to describe impacts on the brain and body of individuals prenatally exposed to alcohol.

FASD is a lifelong disability. Individuals with FASD will experience some degree of challenges in their daily living, and need support with motor skills, physical health, learning, memory, attention, communication, emotional regulation, and social skills to reach their full potential.

Each individual with FASD is unique and has areas of both strengths and challenges.

This definition can help to:

- ✓ Reduce stigma
- ✓ Increase consistency in practice
- ✓ Improve knowledge and understanding of FASD
- ✓ Change the perspective of FASD to focus on strengths.



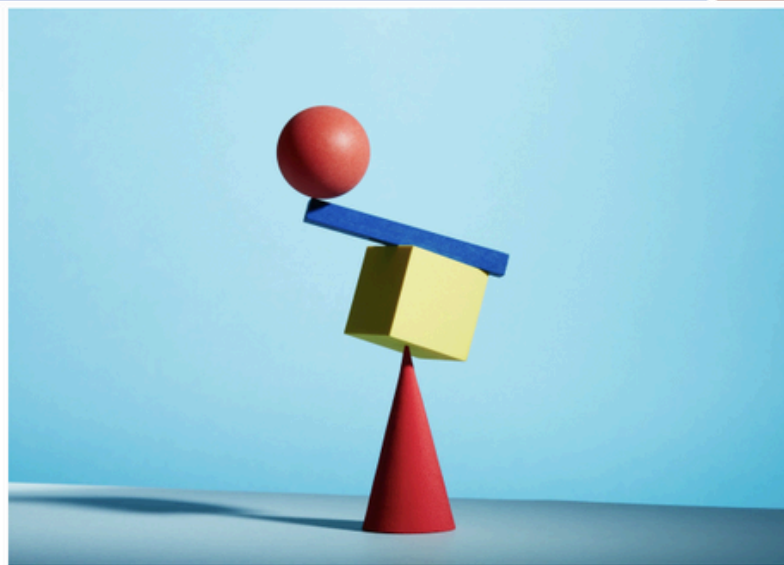
Project Update:

Caregiver Approaches, Resiliencies, and Experiences Raising Individuals with FASD *Trends in Alcohol and Substance Use*

SPRING 2023

Participant Snapshot

- 202 respondents as of April, 2023
- Average age of 54 years (range 25 to 78)
- 95% identify as women
- Most (58%) are adoptive parents; 17% biological parents; 12% other/extended family members; 6% foster parents, and 2% kinship carers
- The majority (67%) of respondents live in Canada; 21% live in the US; and 5% in Australia
- Caregivers reported on 407 children or adults (78% of whom have diagnosed or possible FASD)
- 39% of respondents are caregiving on their own



Substance Use Among Caregivers

8% of caregivers reported using alcohol/other substance to cope*



77% of these caregivers report using substances weekly or more

46% of these caregivers reported that it is *not* a helpful strategy

*Comparable to problematic substance use rates in the general population, though estimates range widely.

More Helpful Coping Strategies



25%

Talking/
expressing
feelings



24%

Movement



18%

Spiritual
Practice

(% of caregivers who rated these strategies as the *most helpful*)

Key Findings

Substance Use Among Individuals with FASD

99 caregivers answered questions about substance use among their dependent(s)



28% reported that a loved one with FASD in their care has struggled with substance use

Among these individuals with FASD...

15 years

Average age of substance use onset

33%

Hospitalized for substance use crisis

87%

Use(d) more than one substance

Most Commonly Reported Substances of Concern

80%

cannabis

73%

alcohol

47%

tobacco

Areas for Improvement

Caregivers reported low levels of satisfaction around...

- X** Supports to navigate systems/resources
- X** Access to adequate treatment/support
- X** Appropriateness of medical system to address needs

...this highlights areas for improved care.

Words of Hope

"Both my children, despite their addictions are still alive. As long as they are alive, there is hope things will change for the better."

"I think I understand my son well and know how to talk to him. I'm comforted that he's made it to twenty without any addictions."

THANK YOU to those who have participated in this study! Email katy.flannigan@canfasd.ca if you have questions.

Access and share the survey [HERE](#).

Research & Resources

Relevant Studies

- Interventions to improve mental health and substance use outcomes ([Flannigan et al.](#))
- Women's perspectives on substance use treatment ([Rutman](#))

Other Resources

- [Guide for FASD-informed substance use treatment](#)
- [Environmental scan of substance use programs](#)
- [Substance use treatment webinar](#)

I AM A CAREGIVER!



FOR A PERSON WITH FASD

THE CHALLENGES	THE SUPPORT I NEED	MY CAREGIVING JOB
<p>Age 0-2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory integration issues including aversion to touch, light and sound are common • Failure to thrive due to feeding difficulties • Significant difficulties in emotional regulation • Sleeping patterns may be disrupted • Major developmental milestones are missed 	<p>RESPIRE</p> <p>I need access to respite services so I can restore my own emotional reserves.</p> <p>EARLY INTERVENTION</p> <p>I need access to early intervention to help me maximize my child's skill development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster healthy attachment through responsive caregiving • Learn my child's likes and dislikes • Provide a controlled and stable environment for my child • Seek early intervention and occupational therapy programs
<p>Age 2-5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems learning and understanding language • Children are easily overstimulated • Struggles with transitions and activity changes • Hyperactivity • Oppositional behaviours • Difficulties in learning through consequences 	<p>SPECIALISTS</p> <p>I need access to specialists that can help with developmental delays.</p> <p>DISABILITY FUNDING</p> <p>I need access to additional funding to support my child's life-long needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish regular routines with extra attention to activity transitions • Provide extra opportunities for language learning • Learn the early signs of overstimulation and behaviour issues • Exercise patience and consistency
<p>Age 5-10:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggles in school due to inattention, hyperactivity, language difficulties and oppositional behaviours • Difficulties in planning and following routines • Major sleep problems • Sensory issues and environmental sensitivities 	<p>EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT</p> <p>I need a school with funding to provide my child with individualized educational supports.</p> <p>TRAINING</p> <p>I need training on meeting challenges, caring for myself and helping my child succeed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a learning plan with my child's school and teacher • Provide a consistent, predictable routine • Modify my child's environment to reduce sensory stresses • Address challenging behaviours immediately as they develop
<p>Age 10-15:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with FASD are easily influenced by peers • Behaviour issues can escalate and may include theft, lying and violence • Struggles with abstract concepts like money and time • Lack of empathy and significant social difficulties • Underdeveloped emotion regulation skills 	<p>BEHAVIOURAL SUPPORT</p> <p>I need access to specialists that can advise me on dealing with difficult behaviours.</p> <p>COMMUNITY PROGRAMS</p> <p>I need community programs that give my child a chance to be social and successful.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor behaviour and friends closely • Seek professional help for major behaviour issues • Create a plan with my child to address emotional episodes • Teach my child about social situations with many cues and reminders
<p>Age 15-20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual health, drugs and alcohol use are risk areas • Continued struggles with impulse control, planning and understanding abstract concepts (math etc.) • Oppositional behaviours and possible violence • Depression and other disorders may appear • Reach legal adulthood – developmentally immature 	<p>MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS</p> <p>I need medical professionals that understand the challenges of FASD.</p> <p>INFORMATION AND PLANNING</p> <p>I need information on what options exist for my child in adulthood.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively talk about major issues like sex, drugs and alcohol use • Get help immediately for extreme behaviours or psychological symptoms • Plan for my child's adulthood, trusteeship & guardianship • Talk about my child's goals and dreams
<p>Adulthood and Beyond:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults often appear more competent than they are • Difficulty holding employment • Involvement with the legal system • Unintended pregnancy and parenthood • Continued risky/impulsive behaviours • Addictions 	<p>LEGAL HELP</p> <p>I need access to legal advice related to lifespan planning and any legal system problems.</p> <p>FINANCIAL RESOURCES</p> <p>I need to know that the person I have cared for will have ongoing financial support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide support with daily living activities • Ensure a safe and supportive living environment • Help others understand that while the person I care for may look mature, they have a life-long disability and face many challenges

MY JOB IS NOT EASY. MY CHILD WILL FACE CHALLENGES. BUT WITH SUPPORT... WE CAN THRIVE!