



BACK TO SCHOOL

≡ 2026 ≡

Métis Settlements FASD Network

New teachers. New classrooms. Earlier mornings. Different expectations.

A little understanding can make a big difference.



A New School Year, A Fresh Start



You've
Got
This!



September brings new teachers, classrooms, schedules and routines.

For children and youth with FASD, all of that "new" can also mean a lot for the brain to process.

A student may be excited about school and still struggle with earlier mornings, transitions, remembering instructions, busy classrooms or managing everything expected of them throughout the day.

Starting the year with understanding can make a meaningful difference.

FASD & School: What We See Isn't Always the Whole Story

A student with FASD may:

- Forget something they knew yesterday
- Seem to ignore an instruction
- Have trouble getting started
- Become frustrated over something that seems small
- Lose supplies or forget homework
- Struggle when plans suddenly change

FASD is a brain-based disability. Memory, processing speed, executive functioning, emotional regulation and understanding cause-and-effect can all be affected.

Instead of asking:

"Why won't they do it?"

Try asking:

"What might be making this difficult?"





5 Ways to Make Back to School Easier



You've Got This!



1 Make the day visual

Pictures, calendars, checklists and visual schedules can reduce the amount of information a child has to hold in memory.

2 One step at a time

Instead of "Get ready for school," break the routine into concrete steps and move to the next step when the first is complete.

3 Prepare for changes

After school, some children need a snack, movement, quiet time or fewer immediate demands after working hard to regulate all day.

4 Create a soft landing

A substitute teacher, assembly, appointment or different bus can be a big change. Whenever possible, let the child know ahead of time.

5 Notice what IS working

Success may be asking for a break, remembering a backpack, getting through a difficult transition or trying again after frustration.



Try This:

The Backpack Reset



Evenings can become stressful whenever one is trying to remember what needs to go back to school tomorrow. Create one consistent Backpack Reset routine and keep the checklist in the same place.

- 
- ☐ Lunch kit emptied
 - ☐ Water bottle ready
 - ☐ School papers checked
 - ☐ Homework packed
 - ☐ Needed supplies inside
 - ☐ Clothes ready for tomorrow
 - ☐ Backpack placed by the door

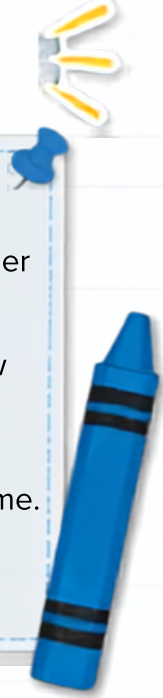


A Reminder for Parents & Caregivers



The beginning of the school year can be exhausting for you, too. There may be meetings, forms, new teachers to explain FASD to, changing routines and days when something that worked last year suddenly doesn't work anymore.

Look for what helps your child feel safe, understood and successful, and build from there.



A Reminder for Educators

Before assuming a student **won't**, consider whether they **can't yet** in that moment.

Reduce the number of instructions. Show instead of only telling. Give additional processing time. Make expectations concrete. Provide repetition without shame.

Understanding the brain changes how we support the student.



September Challenge: Catch Them Succeeding

This month, intentionally notice the small wins: remembering something independently, handling a transition better, asking for help, using a coping strategy, completing one more step, recovering after overwhelm or showing kindness.





Progress May Look Different



Success isn't always a perfect report card or getting through every school day without difficulty.

Sometimes success is asking for a break before becoming overwhelmed. Remembering one more step independently.

Walking into a new classroom even when it feels scary.

Building a relationship with a teacher who understands.

Or simply trying again tomorrow.



**Different doesn't mean less capable.
Sometimes it means a different approach is needed.**



Tell them you noticed. Children who regularly hear what they're doing wrong also need people reminding them of everything they're doing right.



Start the School Year With Understanding

Parents, caregivers, teachers, educational assistants, coaches and community members can all play a role in helping children and youth with FASD succeed.

When we move from "Why are they behaving this way?" to "What does this child need right now?" we create space for understanding instead of judgement.

Sometimes the greatest support we can give a child isn't asking them to fit into the environment around them. It's creating an environment where they have the opportunity to thrive.

Want to Better Understand FASD?

FREE Foundations in FASD Course

Continue building your understanding of how FASD can affect learning, behaviour and everyday life, and explore practical ways to support individuals at home, at school and throughout our communities.

Visit the [Métis Settlements FASD Network website](#) to learn more.

Métis Settlements FASD Network
Understanding. Support. Community.

IT TAKES A WHOLE COMMUNITY TO
RAISE A CHILD



CONTACT US

How to make a referral?
Can be made by anyone including
yourself, health care professionals,
AHS Addictions and Mental Health
Services, or Family members.

East Prairie, currently vacant
FASD@epms.ca
(W)780-523-2184

Gift Lake, Marge Cunningham
marge@giftlakemetis.ca
(W) 780-767-3794
(C) 780-283-2566

Peavine, Cheryl Carifelle
FASDsupport@peavinemetis.com
(W) 780-523-4495
(C) 780-536-0414



Parent and Child Assistant Program PCAP

PCAP supports individuals who
use substances of any type in
their journey toward healthy
pregnancies and healthy
families

PCAP Admission Criteria

- Individuals that can become pregnant and who are using alcohol or drugs, and are currently pregnant, or up to six months after birth

Or

- Individuals who have delivered a child with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) in the past and have an ongoing alcohol and/or drug use, and are still in childbearing years.



The Goals of PCAP

The goals of PCAP are to support individuals to reduce or stop alcohol and /or drugs use during pregnancy, to achieve and maintain recovery, and to support healthy pregnancies and lives for participants and their children. We do this by addressing the needs of the participants and getting them stabilized in a whole host of ways:

- to prevent future births of alcohol and drug exposed children
- obtaining alcohol/drug treatment
- staying in recovery; recovery oriented care for addictions
- daily living skills
- positive parenting solutions
- setting goals and identifying steps to achieve them
- effective family planning
- connecting to community services (Mental Health, Nutrition, Physical Health)
- transportation to appointments
- other supports depending on goals and needs of the participant

Mothers are not asked to leave the program if they relapse or experience setbacks.

Case managers provide extensive practical assistance and the long-term emotional support that is important to women who are making fundamental changes in their lives.

Trained and supervised case managers provide home visitation and intervention; with a focus on planning and additional support with services for up to 3 years.

*Healthy Families
are
Happy Families*

Lakeland Centre for FASD

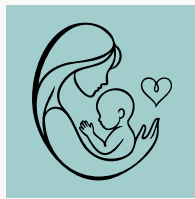
We proudly serve all Eastern Métis
Settlements, providing FASD Prevention,
Diagnostics and Intervention supports.



EASTERN MÉTIS SETTLEMENTS



**FASD
Diagnostics
Services**



**Mothers to Be
Mentorship**



**Client Resource
Navigation**



**Prevention
Conversation**

WE ALSO OFFER:

- Transition Planning
- Employment Supports
- Pre-Employment Workshops
- Caregiver Support Groups
- Court Support
- Empowering Communities
- Counselling
- 2nd Floor Women's Recovery
- Summer Camp for Kids
- Training & Awareness

HELP: It's What We Do

Cold Lake- 4823 50th Street

Bonnyville- 4313 50th Avenue- Unit 257

St. Paul- 4707 50th Avenue

Lac La Biche- 10117- 102 Avenue

☎ 780-594-9905

🌐 www.lcfasd.com

📍 PO Box 479, Cold Lake, AB T9M 1P1





FASD Awareness 2026

September is FASD Awareness month. Since 1999 International FASD Awareness Day has been recognized around the world. At 9:09 on the 9th day of the 9th month, bells would ring to bring attention to the topic of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

As with most disabilities, it took time to research, understand and adjust how we interpret behaviour and support individuals and families impacted by FASD. In 1973 the disability which resulted from prenatal alcohol use was first identified. Fifty years later we are still learning so much about the complexity of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. We learn through awareness campaigns, just getting the term “Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder” or FASD out in public. We use September to inform people about living with FASD and supporting individuals and families who may be experiencing life with FASD.

“Red Shoes Rock” has become our awareness campaign logo! This logo was inspired by **RJ Formanek**, who spoke about his red shoes reminding him of his strengths and all the amazing things he could do. In the same way that **Myles Himmelreich** stated in a presentation years ago “I am not FASD, I have FASD. FASD does not define who I am”. RJ and Myles are amazing FASD advocates in Canada and are constantly reminding those they speak to about how we can speak about FASD differently. How we can reframe how we think about not just FASD as a disability, but other disabilities as well.

In the Mackenzie region this September, watch for the Red Shoes Rock Posters. Become involved in the 9 Block Walk, ask questions of staff manning the many “Get To Know You Night” tables in our communities, come walk the 9 Block Walk if it is being done in your community. Become curious, seek to be FASD informed, become an advocate or mentor for people with FASD or any other disability.

In Paddle Prairie we have monthly sessions about FASD at the office. Stop by for a chat, coffee and food. We need many passionate people who strive to be advocates and FASD informed. In this way we can build capacity to support our people within each community!

Submitted by: Wanda Beland, Program Director/FASD Educator NWR FASD Society

