



# Reporting on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in Nunavut

PREPARED BY PIRUQATIGIIT RESOURCE  
CENTRE

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# INTRODUCTION

Reporting on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) impacts individuals and families affected.

Journalists can have an important role in reducing stigma associated with FASD by reporting accurately and with dignity. When using out of date terms and information, the media can perpetuate misinformation, stigma and negative stereotypes about people and families living with FASD.

This resource will provide information to be used when reporting on FASD in Nunavut.



## DEFINITION

"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."

- Canada Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Research Network (CanFASD)

## KEY MESSAGES

- Experts estimate 4% of the Canadian population is affected by FASD.
- FASD is a spectrum, which means no two people with FASD are exactly alike.
- People with FASD have many strengths, talents and abilities. Millions of people around the world live successfully with FASD.
- FASD affects people wherever alcohol is consumed.

# GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING

1. **Use appropriate terminology.** Person-first language (ex. "individual with FASD") acknowledges the person before the disorder. This is already reflected in Inuktitut and Inuit way tells us not to label people. English speakers can use person-first language to reflect Inuit way, reinforcing the worldview of inclusion. Additionally, the definition of FASD has changed over time, and the current Canadian definition should be used.
2. **Include strengths-based stories.** People with FASD have many abilities and strengths. Some news stories focus only on negative aspects of FASD. Including strengths-based stories provides hope and recognizes the whole story of FASD.
3. **Consult experts in the field of FASD, including those with lived experience.** People with FASD and their caregivers are important parts of the conversation, and should be included as sources, when possible.
4. **Avoid sensationalizing FASD.** People affected by FASD are valuable members of our community and will likely read news stories related to FASD. Reporting promotes dignity when stories are sensitive to their experience.
5. **Provide resources.** Support is available for Nunavummiut affected by FASD. Stories should include where to go for more resources if the reader wishes to learn more (see page 6).

# LANGUAGE EXAMPLES

## Avoid

- "FASD Person/Kid"
- "Suffering from FASD"
- Framing FASD as "caused by maternal alcohol use"
- Stating that "FASD is 100% preventable."

## Recommended

- "Person/individual with FASD"
- "Affected by FASD"
- Framing FASD as "caused by prenatal alcohol exposure"
- This statement oversimplifies the complex issue of substance use during pregnancy and increases stigma for birth parents and people affected by FASD.
- A community-centred message, focusing on support for healthy pregnancies.
- Harm reduction messages are less stigmatizing, such as "It is safest not to drink alcohol during pregnancy."



# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Piruaqtigiit Resource Centre** has readily available information on our website, as well as offering workshops and training.

- Website: [piruaqtigiit.ca](http://piruaqtigiit.ca)
- Main Info Line: 867-877-4155 (voicemail only)
- General Information: [info@piruaqtigiit.ca](mailto:info@piruaqtigiit.ca)
- Main office location: 1089F Mivvik St, Iqaluit

Additional current Canadian information, statistics and research can be found at **CanFASD**.

- General Information: [canfasd.ca](http://canfasd.ca)
- Media Guide: [canfasd.ca/media/media-resources/](http://canfasd.ca/media/media-resources/)

## Support Resources

- Canada FASD Research Network: [canfasd.ca](http://canfasd.ca)
- Child First Initiative (Financial support):  
[www.canada.ca/supporting-inuit-children](http://www.canada.ca/supporting-inuit-children)
- Government of Nunavut Department of Health:  
[livehealthy.gov.nu.ca](http://livehealthy.gov.nu.ca)
- Dr. Stuart Shanker Self-Reg & The Mehrit Centre: [self-reg.ca](http://self-reg.ca)
- POPFASD: [fasdoutreach.ca](http://fasdoutreach.ca)
- Kids Brain Health Network: [kidsbrainhealth.ca](http://kidsbrainhealth.ca)
- I Respect Myself [irespectmyself.ca](http://irespectmyself.ca)
- Kamatsiaqtut Nunavut Helpline [nunavuthelpline.ca](http://nunavuthelpline.ca)
- Hope for Wellness [hopeforwellness.ca](http://hopeforwellness.ca)