



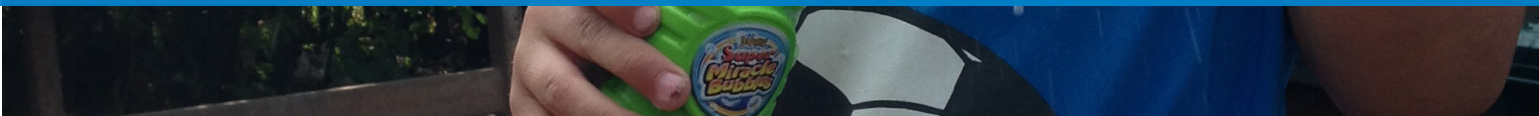
# The FASD Network's Supports and Services



## ABOUT THE NETWORK

The FASD Network of Saskatchewan is a provincial organization that works with families, children, and adults affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. A group of dedicated parents came together in the early 1990s seeking support and understanding. They had common concerns about the challenges related to parenting children affected by prenatal exposure to alcohol.

Now, over 20 years later, the Network is a community-based, provincial organization with offices in Saskatoon and Regina. The organization continues to work towards the mission laid out by its founders “to enhance the lives of individuals and families living with FASD”. Through support, training, and events the Network provides services to individuals and families living with FASD and provides education across the province.



# UNDERSTANDING FASD

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Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a disability that can occur in children, youth, and adults when alcohol is consumed during pregnancy.

Alcohol is a harmful substance called a teratogen that causes damage to a growing fetus. Alcohol is the most commonly used teratogen and the most dangerous because alcohol molecules cross freely through the placenta and affect the central nervous system.

In Saskatchewan, it is believed that 4% of people may be affected by FASD. However, it is difficult to know just how many families are affected by FASD as a lot of individuals go undiagnosed their entire lifetime. The signs and symptoms of FASD often go unnoticed and are masked by other factors in the individual's life or are attributed to other causes.

FASD) is a diagnostic term used to describe impacts on the brain and body of individuals prenatally exposed to alcohol. It is a life-long neurodevelopmental disorder that occurs in all cultures and levels of society causing mild to severe impairments.

The diagnoses are:

- FASD with sentinel facial findings
- FASD without sentinel facial findings
- At Risk for Neurodevelopmental disorder and FASD

Primary disabilities are those disabilities that are the direct results of prenatal alcohol exposure. The common primary disabilities are categorized by physical (body and health), behavioural (actions and reactions), cognitive (thinking and learning), and sensory (information from senses) disabilities.

Secondary challenges are not caused directly by prenatal exposure to alcohol but they develop later in life due to a poor fit between an individual with FASD and his or her environment. The poor fit is due to gaps in services, supports, and understanding of the disability.

We need to keep in mind the various factors surrounding the choice to drink during a pregnancy when we talk about prevention. The public requires clear and accurate information about the harmful effects of alcohol on a fetus. There is no known safe amount of alcohol or a known safe time during pregnancy to consume alcohol. For these reasons, it is best for women to abstain from alcohol throughout the entire pregnancy.



A background image of a park scene. On the left, a large tree with green leaves partially obscures a playground structure with yellow and red slides. Two children, a boy in a blue shirt and a girl in a blue shirt, are walking on a path. The right side of the image is dominated by a solid blue rectangular area containing white text.

# SUPPORT PROGRAM

Through our Support Program, we provide services to give individuals and families direct support in their daily lives. Using their in-depth understanding of FASD, our Support Workers provide individualized support and one-on-one assistance to meet the unique needs of our clients.

Our Support Workers work with the individual or family to create short-term goals and determine a plan to reach these goals. The program aims to work with families and circles of support to gain positive outcomes for those living with FASD so they recognize themselves as safe, supported, and contributing members of the community.

There is no cost to access support services from the FASD Network. The program is voluntary and a diagnosis is not required.

## Services Offered

- Case management
- Education on FASD
- Strategies for living with FASD
- Referrals to community services
- Advocacy services
- Development of life skills
- Access to peer support
- Assistance with diagnosis
- Assistance with navigating systems such as school, health, justice, etc.

## Saskatoon and Regina Services

The Network now has offices in Saskatoon and Regina with our Support Program operating in both communities. We offer full-time Support Workers at each location who are available to open client files for anyone in need of FASD support and services.



## Provincial Services

To meet the needs of individuals and families across the province we created our Provincial Support Program to provide support to anyone who needs it in Saskatchewan. When possible our Provincial Support Worker will travel directly to our clients' communities to provide support. We also utilize technology such as teleconferences and video calls to stay connected with clients. This program aims to support people by utilizing different communication methods.

## Justice Support Services

The FASD Network's support services now include services for individuals with FASD who have involvement in the justice system. When possible, our worker will attend all court proceedings and legal appointments. The Network will also advocate on the client's behalf, continue support during incarceration, assist with development of release plans, and provide wraparound

supports including referrals to community organizations to help clients reduce or eliminate criminal behaviour and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Justice services are available at the Saskatoon and Regina offices.

## Intensive Support Services

The Network offers intensive support services to families impacted by FASD who are in need of assistance navigating the child welfare/protection systems. The main objective of this service is to empower families by giving them the knowledge to manage the behaviours and struggles relating to FASD and to be able to implement strategies with a greater understanding of the approaches and accommodations necessary to increase the capacity of the individual affected by FASD.

To access these services, speak to your Child & Family Program worker for a referral to the Network.

# SUPPORT MEETINGS

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## Caregiver Support Meetings

Every third Wednesday of the month from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, the Network hosts a Caregiver Support Meeting in Saskatoon for caregivers supporting individuals living with FASD. These meetings are an informative and engaging space for parents and family members to connect with each other for ongoing support. Caregiver Support Meetings provide a safe environment for open and supportive discussion.

Together participants will explore how prenatal exposure impacts individuals across their lifespan and learn support techniques to help their children be successful.

We invite caregivers supporting individuals living with FASD in Saskatoon and area to join us. These meetings are open to parents or caregivers from any family structure, no mat-

ter how old the individuals living with FASD are.

## Meetings in your community

If you are interested in organizing a group in your community, the Network can help. We provide workshops on learning how to facilitate a support group, your role as a facilitator, navigating difficult topics, and much more. We can also provide assistance with building and promoting the group.

## Peer Support Meetings

The Network also hosts a monthly meeting for individuals living with FASD.

Peer Support is often an effective strategy to help individuals cope with a disability and the effects it may have on their everyday activities. Participating in peer support with someone else living with FASD can teach you

different strategies and coping techniques you may not think of on your own.

Peer Support meetings are scheduled every second Wednesday of the month from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm. Join us for a peer support meeting and discover how it could help you.

## FASDiversity Meetings

The Network has started an additional peer support meeting for youth with FASD. This group is for queer or questioning youth and allies with FASD to meet new friends and have fun while discussing topics such as safer sex, gender identities, healthy relationships, sexuality and more!

FASDiversity meetings are scheduled every fourth Tuesday of the month from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm at OUTSaskatoon.



A photograph of two women in an office setting. One woman with dark hair is seen from the back, looking towards the other woman. The second woman has blonde hair tied in a ponytail and is smiling. They appear to be in a professional conversation.

# ACCESSING SERVICES

## Who can access services?

The Support Program works with:

- Individuals living with FASD
- Family members
- Caregivers
- Support teams  
(with an individual's consent)

Support services are voluntary. Support cannot be mandated; individuals and families can choose whether they would like supports.

A diagnosis on the spectrum of FASD is not required to access services.

## What supports are provided?

Goals and supports can include:

- Education and resources
- Identifying and supporting behaviours related to FASD
- School and employment
- Family relationships
- Life skills development
- Access to funding
- Accessing health care
- Working with Child and Family Services
- Working with the Justice System
- Healthy pregnancies
- FASD assessment and diagnosis

## How are services accessed?

Individuals or families looking for services can contact us directly or be referred by another organization or support person

To contact the Network:

call: 1-866-673-3276

email: [manager.sp@fasdnetwork.ca](mailto:manager.sp@fasdnetwork.ca)

# ONLINE SUPPORT GROUP

The Network recognizes that sometimes caregivers may not have access to support meetings or groups in their communities. To help connect caregivers across the province, the Network has created an online support group.

The FASD Caregiver Support Facebook group is a closed group for caregivers, parents, spouses, foster parents, and family members who are supporting someone who is impacted by FASD. The group is designed to give caregivers an opportunity to connect with other caregivers to discuss strategies and offer support.

It is a closed group ensuring that all information posted is only shared with the approved members.

Request to join the group by visiting:  
[www.facebook.com/groups/fasdcaregivers](https://www.facebook.com/groups/fasdcaregivers)





# ADVOCACY SERVICES

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Because FASD is an invisible disability and there is a lack of education within the general public, advocating for access to supports and services is often a part of life with this disability. Advocating on behalf of individuals and families impacted by FASD is one of the many support services offered by the FASD Network, it is an important part of the organization's mission.

The Network can provide assistance navigating complex systems such as:

- The school system
- Health services
- Income support
- Social services
- The justice system
- Addiction services
- Community programs
- Mental health services
- Employment supports
- Housing agencies
- Family members and peers
- And more

Educating others about FASD and teaching them to put the person before their disability is the first step in advocacy. This can include providing resources, involving support workers in meetings, or explaining the specific struggles and strengths than an individual has. When possible, a Support Worker can attend meetings and appointments to provide information about FASD and help explain the needs of individuals who are impacted by the disability. When working with other services provides who could use more information on FASD, you can also refer them to the training and resources offered by the FASD Network.

You do not need to be accessing our other support services to receive assistance with advocating. If you have questions or would like to speak to a Support Worker about assistance with advocacy please contact the FASD Network.

call:1-866-643-3276

email: [manager.sp@fasdnetwork.ca](mailto:manager.sp@fasdnetwork.ca)

# COGNITIVE DISABILITY STRATEGY

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The Cognitive Disability Strategy (CDS) is a provincial plan offered through each health region in Saskatchewan for citizens with cognitive disabilities such as FASD. The strategy helps individuals with needs that are not met through other service providers. When unmet needs are addressed through services and supports, individuals of all ages have a greater opportunity to be safe, healthy, and successful.

An individual or a family member can fill out the CDS application form. If assistance is required, a current support worker to the individual can help, or they can contact CDS and a consultant can provide assistance.

Every person with FASD is unique and will have different strengths and struggles. The CDS is a individualized program so it might look different for each person.

The Cognitive Disability Strategy is meant to:

- Improve the availability of services for assessment and diagnosis
- Provide services and supports to address the unmet needs of people with FASD
- Enhance the knowledge and skills of people who provide services to individuals with FASD

- Enhance FASD prevention and intervention

For families and individuals living with FASD this strategy means:

- Children and youth may be eligible to access funding for services that they do not currently receive such as mentors or tutors.
- Families may be eligible to access respite care or additional therapy services for children.
- Adults may be eligible to access mentors who can help with the activities of daily living, such as keeping appointments, taking medications, or shopping.

## Mentors

Individuals with FASD require guidance more often and a level of guidance that is more structured and long term due to their disability. A mentor can be a perfect resource to provide extra support. The relationship between a trusted mentor and an individual with a disability, such as FASD, can result in a variety of positive outcomes. CDS funding is often used to access the services of mentors. In Saskatchewan, each region has a CDS consultant that can help individuals and families identify needs, set goals, and seek out a mentor.



# RESOURCES

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The FASD Network has a variety of resources that can be found on our website, [www.saskfasdnetwork.ca](http://www.saskfasdnetwork.ca). To order resources please contact the Network at 1-866-673-3276 or [communications@fasdnetwork.ca](mailto:communications@fasdnetwork.ca)

## Printed publications:

- A Guide to Awareness and Understanding
- The FASD Network's Supports & Services
- The FASD Network's Training & Events
- Tips for Caregivers
- Tips for Employers
- Tips for Justice Workers
- Tips for Support Workers
- Tips for Teachers
- Tips for Individuals
- Healthy Living Series



# FASD NETWORK OF SASKATCHEWAN

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