

Caregivers and FASD

Meeting the needs of caregivers/parents are a vital part of ensuring the needs of their child.

Caregivers to children or youth with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder are often faced with lack of:

- access to supports and services
- individual strategy plans
- Support groups with other caregivers of children with FASD
- understanding of FASD and
- Respite care

These are key contributors to caregivers and parents developing mental health issues and feeling burnt out, overwhelmed and feeling hopeless.¹

Self-care is integral to family wellness and should be incorporated daily. Top tips for caregivers and parents include:³

1

Educating yourself and others in your "village" on FASD

- What is FASD, the primary and secondary challenges, and strategies for support ([view the Professionals factsheet](#))
- Be aware of training available within the community or online

2

Know your community of supports and services

- Seek out FASD informed the supports and services available in your community
- This can include professionals, organizations/agencies (respite care workers), online resources, caregiver support groups, and natural supports (friends, family community)

3

Work with agencies and professionals

- Assisting the team of professionals supporting your child will assist with ensuring the strategies implemented are the same for all along with consistent and structure

4

Make self-care part of the plan

- The responsibility on the caregivers/parents can be increased and if you are not taking care of yourself than support provided can be affected.

Remember, the wellbeing of a child is dependent on supporting the health of the whole family, and if any member of the family has FASD, this will require a community of supports and acceptance.



What Parents and Caregivers Want YOU to know:

1. Planning for success helps reduce stress for the team
 - Parents want be part of a proactive approach to avoid problems and unwanted behavior
2. Negative behavior is an indication that the environment needs to be adapted to accommodate the needs of the individual
 - Parents are often able to identify triggers or things that may add perspective to behavior
 - Look at patterns of behavior instead of the details of a specific incident
 - No one expects the agencies and professionals to have all the answers
3. Let parents know when a significant issue occurs
 - Talk with parents directly because short term memory can impact ability to link cause and effect, adding details later may mean they can't recall what happened
4. No two children with FASD are alike
 - Working with another individual with FASD does not mean what worked with them will work every child. The more flexible professionals are with strategy plans, the better parents and children respond.
5. Recognize and celebrate successes, no matter how small. These milestones will be important to remember during challenges

Resources in your area:

ENVIROS

FASD Support Program - Provides foster, adoptive, kinship and biological parents with the information and tools they need to effectively parent a child or youth with FASD.

FOOTHILLS FETAL ALCOHOL SOCIETY

FASD Family Response Program - Supports caregivers living with someone with FASD through in-home visitation, advocacy, access of diagnosis and assessment services, and transition supports in the rural surrounding areas of Calgary. Hosts a variety of parent support groups.

FASD MAPS is a partnership program with Renfrew Educational Services, Hull Services, McMan Calgary and Woods Homes. The partnership offers a continuum of services for families with children and youth affected by FASD.

Renfrew Education Services works with children, newborn to 10 years who may be affected by FASD, and their families

Hull Services works with children and youth, 8 to 15 who may be impacted by FASD

McMan Youth, Family and Community Services works with youth and young adults, ages 15-21 who may be affected by FASD

Wood's Homes supports parents and caregivers of children, all ages, who may be affected by FASD

Siksika Health Services - Provides an early intervention program, home visits, a monthly support group, and a day program to provide support for individuals and families impacted by FASD. They also provide FASD education and information sessions for the local community, caregivers and professionals. Siksika Health also offers assessment and diagnostic clinics for residents of the Siksika Nation



Talk to us at ConnectFASD for more information about referral processes.
connectfasd.ca • 1 866 601 3273 (FASD) • info@connectfasd.ca

FOR FURTHER READING:

1. Bobbitt SA, Baugh LA, Andrew GH, Cook JL, Green CR, Pei JR, Rasmussen CR. Caregiver needs and stress in caring for individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. *Res Dev Disabil.* 2016 Aug;55:100-13. doi: 10.1016/j.ridd.2016.03.002. Epub 2016 Apr 6. PMID: 27058320.
2. Calgary Fetal Alcohol Network. (2016). *Best & Emerging Practices for Individuals and Families affected by FASD throughout the Lifespan.* [Best & Emerging Practices for Individuals and Families affected by FASD throughout the Lifespan \(squarespace.com\)](http://squarespace.com)
3. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. (2021). I am a caregiver resource guide. [Parents and Caregivers | Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder \(fasdwatlooregion.ca\)](http://parentsandcaregivers.fasdwaterlooregion.ca)