

# FASD Frontline

NEWSLETTER

September  
2019



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PG. 2

Why assess for FASD?

PG. 3

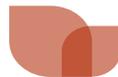
Elves FASD Respite Program, the  
Edmonton and area Fetal Alcohol  
Network Society

PG. 4

Tips and Tricks: Environment

### FASD TIP

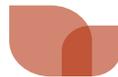
Be wary of making assumptions  
about exceptional skills and  
translating them into  
independence and self-  
reliance. Remember to  
encourage the development of  
abilities to other settings.



The **FASD Frontline Newsletter** contains information regarding resources, services, articles, research and other material that can inform and provide support to frontline staff, parents and caregivers.

If you wish to share information or are looking for a free presentation on FASD please email Lisa at:

[lrogozinsky@bissellcentre.org](mailto:lrogozinsky@bissellcentre.org)

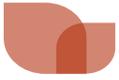


The **FASD Frontline Meetings** are for staff who are looking for the opportunity to expand their professional network, gain knowledge, and support one another to better serve people with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Meetings are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month, 9:00 am – 11:00 am at Parkdale School (Bent Arrow: Rm 6, 11648 85 Street, Edmonton AB). For more information please email Trish at:

[pellisontraverse@bissellcentre.org](mailto:pellisontraverse@bissellcentre.org)

#### Upcoming FASD Frontline Meeting dates:

- Tuesday, September 10, 2019
- Tuesday, October 8, 2019
- Tuesday, November 12, 2019
- Tuesday, December 10, 2019



## WHY ASSESS FOR FASD?

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Why assess for FASD? The purpose of an FASD assessment and diagnosis is to:

**Create a shared understanding** among individuals suspected of having FASD, caregivers and clinicians of the person's strengths, challenges and needs.

Secondly, assessments help **direct the right resources and support** to the individual being assessed. It provides a pathway to treatment and care, similar to all medical conditions.

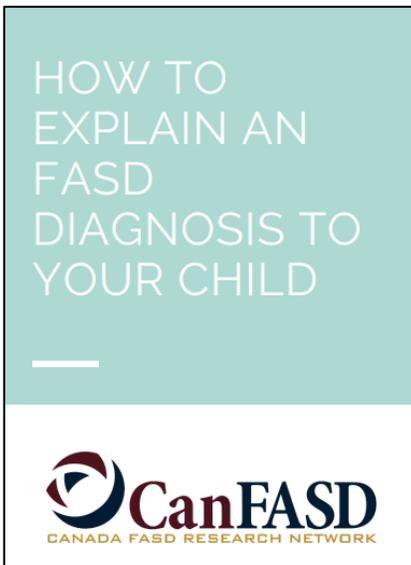
Third, some people worry that receiving a diagnosis will give them a "label" or will cause them to be discriminated against. However, many others seek a diagnosis and are relieved to hear that the difficulties they have experienced are brain-based. The person with FASD may have been wondering for years why they have specific strengths and challenges, and a diagnosis can help **validate** their questions.

And, assessment for FASD can also **help women at risk of having a child with FASD, and people with FASD get the help they need**. Ultimately, the goal of assessing and diagnosing is to make sure a person has the tools they need to be successful in life, focussing on the positives with the right supports in place to help with the challenges.

[CanFASD](#) notes, "receiving a diagnosis of FASD can cause a number of feelings in the caregiver and the individual with FASD. Depending on [the person's] age, they may feel relief from having an explanation for their behavior, but many may be confused by what the diagnosis means".

For tips on how to explain a diagnosis of FASD to a child, teen or adult in a way that they can understand and feel empowered by their disorder download CanFASD's '[How To Explain An FASD Diagnosis To Your Child](#)'. In this resource you will find tips such as:

- Begin talking about FASD as early as possible and take advantage of teaching moments that come up.
- If the child feels angry about their diagnosis, remind them that everyone deals with challenges, but they also have many unique strengths and talents as well.



You can find this as well as other informative resources here:

<https://canfasd.ca/caregivers/information-for-caregivers/>

**Remember:** Your attitude will reflect in your child. The more accepting and open you are discussing FASD, they will feel the same.

If you are looking for FASD assessment and diagnostic services and are living in the Edmonton and surrounding area, the clinics are located at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital.

The Pediatric FASD outpatient service provides assessment and diagnosis of children, 8-17 years of age, who have been prenatally exposed to alcohol. The Adult FASD Assessment Clinic is for adults who are experiencing significant difficulties suspected to be the result of prenatal alcohol exposure.

For more information on the FASD Clinics please visit:

<https://edmontonfetalalcoholnetwork.org/supports-and-services/assessments-diagnosis-services/>



## ELVES FASD RESPITE PROGRAM

Providing specialized programming to strengthen the abilities of our learners, and their families, doesn't stop at the end of a school day.

At the FASD Respite Program, learners spend Saturdays participating in therapeutic recreational activities designed for individuals with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Parents/caregivers are given a day of respite which provides them time they need to take care of themselves, and their family unit as a whole.

### Admission Criteria:

The FASD Respite Program is for learners who are:

- Diagnosed or have a query of FASD.
- Between the ages of 3 and 8.
- Not able to access other supports (ex: FSCD, Supports for Permanency, etc.)
- In need of respite services

To learn more, discuss enrollment, or to set up a tour, please contact us as follows:

- **Phone:** [780.454.5310](tel:780.454.5310)
- **E-mail:** [inquiries@elves-society.com](mailto:inquiries@elves-society.com)



## GET CONNECTED!

The **Edmonton and area Fetal Alcohol Network Society (EFAN)** is a collaborative venture made up of individuals from community agencies, governmental departments and concerned citizens, who recognize the significant opportunity to achieve valuable social impacts through a grassroots partnership.

EFAN works to enhance the capacity of our community to prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and support those impacted by an FASD through education, service delivery and collaboration.

### Our Vision

Communities are supported with a comprehensive and coordinated response to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

### Our Mission

To provide community-driven services across the lifespan for FASD prevention, assessment and intervention, and supports for individuals and caregivers.

Are you connected EFAN via social media? If not, check us out:

**Twitter:** @EdmontonEFAN

**Facebook:** @EFANSociety

**Blog:** [www.edmontonfetalalcoholnetwork.org](http://www.edmontonfetalalcoholnetwork.org)

**EFAN** gets together each month to plan, execute, support, encourage and create.

If you are interested in attending, please feel free to join us the first Tuesday of each month at 10320 – 146 Street, Edmonton, Alberta. Meetings are held 10 am – 12 pm. For more information please email [lisa@rogozinsky.org](mailto:lisa@rogozinsky.org)

### Upcoming meeting dates:

- Tuesday, October 1, 2019
- Tuesday, November 5, 2019
- Tuesday, December 3, 2019

# Tips and Tricks

## ENVIRONMENT

Individuals with FASD may become easily overwhelmed in everyday situations, which can result in frustration and unpredictable behaviours. It is important to support individuals with FASD to cope in their everyday environments and as a caregiver (friend, family member, frontline staff), this can begin in the physical spaces we are able to control, such as the home or office.

To understand how an individual with FASD processes their environment, take a piece of paper and ask them to describe everything they smell right now. With another piece of paper, do the same thing with what they see, then with what they hear, touch and taste. These lists will give you a better idea of how the individual experiences all that is around them while also identifying those potential distractions that may need to be reduced.

When considering locations such as the home, office, and classroom, **think 'less is more'**. This means less noise, people, stuff, activity, etc. It also means order and keeping things in the same place. It is much easier to begin with blank spaces (limited sensory input) and gradually add items to the location then it is to start with a room full of objects and the individual, from the get-go, is unable to pay attention, concentrate and/or regulate.

Reduce the number of items mounted on the wall and hanging from the ceiling. Store everything that you don't use regularly out of sight such as in cupboards or behind sheets and curtains.

You also may want to consider:

- Have only one item out at a time (for example toys, games, etc.) and make it a concrete and simple rule that an item must be put away before another comes out.
- Store all things together by type, not size or space. For example, all reading books together, all colouring books together, all socks together, all shirts together.
- To indicate where each item goes, tape in that spot a symbol, word, or visual label to indicate 'this is where it goes' and the contents of that space. For example, use an individual's own drawings on the outside of drawers and cupboards.



- Use full spectrum lighting or natural light instead of fluorescent light. Lava lamps can also be engaging and soothing to look at.
- Vanilla and lavender extracts may have a calming effect; therefore, a light wash of water and the extract for the garbage pails, for instance, can reduce agitation. Dryer sheets or a Kleenex with a drop of essential oil placed under a pillow at bedtime may help with relaxation.