

# Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

## WHAT IS FASD?

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is now used as a diagnostic term, when prenatal alcohol exposure is considered to be a significant contributor to physical and neurobehavioural effects in children, youth and adults.

## CANADIAN DIAGNOSTIC STANDARDS

In 2015, *Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder: a guideline for diagnosis across the lifespan*<sup>1</sup> was published, replacing the original Canadian guidelines for diagnosis (2005). This new guideline was developed as a result of emergent evidence, current practice and clinical experience in this field.

## BENEFITS OF DIAGNOSIS

An accurate diagnosis can help to understand the challenges of individuals impacted by FASD:

- ✓ Guide appropriate post-diagnosis interventions and strategies for support
- ✓ Reduce the number of secondary disabilities or mitigate adverse experiences often seen in individuals impacted by FASD (i.e. mental health problems, trouble with the law, homelessness, addictions issues, etc.)<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ Link birth parents with supports and interventions to prevent further affected births
- ✓ Provide information regarding incidence and prevalence rates of FASD in Canada
- ✓ Support applications for disability tax credits, financial supports and other services for the individual and/or their caregivers
- ✓ Provide important information regarding supports for youth transitioning to adulthood, such as guardianship, trusteeship and legal representation agreements

## DIAGNOSTIC PROCEDURE

FASD is a medical diagnosis. The guideline recommends a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach be used to obtain an accurate diagnosis and a comprehensive assessment of the individual's functional abilities.

## CORE CLINIC TEAM MEMBERS

Team membership varies and is dependent on the age of the individual being assessed. A pediatric team should include:

### PHYSICIAN

- background training specific to FASD diagnosis

### PSYCHOLOGIST

- education, expertise and scope of practice relevant to clinical testing

### SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST

### OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

### CLINIC COORDINATOR

Adult and pediatric teams may include additional stakeholders representing health, social services, justice, education, mental health and cultural representation.

## RECOMMENDED SCREENING TOOLS

A reliable, accurate maternal alcohol history is the best screening tool. The Life History Screen<sup>4</sup>, the FASD Screen and Referral Form for Youth Probation Officers<sup>5</sup> and the The Canadian Association of Paediatric Health Centres National FASD Screening Toolkit<sup>6</sup> can also validate a referral for FASD diagnosis. All positive screens should prompt a referral for further assessments, keeping in mind that screening is not a diagnosis.

<sup>1</sup> Cook, JL, et al, Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder: a guideline for diagnosis across the lifespan. CMAJ, December 2015. [www.cmaj.ca/content/early/2015/12/14/cmaj.141593](http://www.cmaj.ca/content/early/2015/12/14/cmaj.141593)

<sup>2</sup> Streissguth A & Kanter J (1997). *The Challenge of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: Overcoming Secondary Disabilities*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

<sup>3</sup> Cook, JL, et al. (2015)

<sup>4</sup> Grant, TM et al, Screening in treatment for fetal alcohol spectrum disorders that could affect therapeutic progress. *International Journal of Alcohol and Drug Research*, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Conry, J & Asante, KO, Youth probation officers' guide to FASD screening and referral, 2010, The Asante Centre for Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: Maple Ridge, BC

<sup>6</sup> [www.caphc.org/fasd/fasd-national-screening-tool-kit](http://www.caphc.org/fasd/fasd-national-screening-tool-kit)

# Ontario Assessment and Diagnostic Clinic Contact List

**C** = Child Clinic **M** = Mother Clinic **A** = Adult Clinic **F** = Family Clinic

## **Mothercraft (Breaking the Cycle) FASD Diagnostic Clinic C|M**

860 Richmond St West, Suite 100  
Toronto, ON M6J 1C9  
P: 416.364.7373  
[www.mothercraft.ca](http://www.mothercraft.ca)

## **KidsInclusive Centre for Child and Youth Development C**

166 Brock St Kingston, ON K7L 5G2  
P: 613.544.3400  
<http://kidsinclusive.ca>

## **Grandview Children's Centre C**

600 Townline Road South  
Oshawa, ON L1H 7K6  
P: 905.728.1673 Toll Free: 1.800.304.6180  
<http://grandviewkids.ca/>

## **Resources for Exceptional Children and Youth C**

865 Westney Road South  
Ajax, ON L1S 3M4  
P: 905.427.8862  
<http://www.rfecydurham.com/>

## **Peel FASD Clinical Service Child Development Resource Connection Peel C**

120 Methson Blvd E., Suite 201  
Mississauga, ON L4Z 1X1  
P: 905.890.9432 Ext. 306  
[www.cdrcp.com](http://www.cdrcp.com)

## **NEO Kids FASD Clinic Health Sciences North C**

41 Ramsay Lake Road  
Sudbury, ON P3E 5J1  
P: 705.523.7120 Ext. 1073  
[www.hsnsudbury.ca](http://www.hsnsudbury.ca)

## **Anishnawbe Health Toronto C|F**

225 Queen St. East  
Toronto, ON M5A 1S4  
P: 416.360.0486 Ext. 252  
<https://www.aht.ca/>

## **St. Michael's Hospital Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Diagnostic Clinic C**

61 Queen Street, 2nd Floor, Pediatric Clinic  
Toronto, ON M5C 2T2  
P: 416.867.3655

## **Northwestern Ontario FASD Diagnostic Clinic C|F**

820 Lakeview Drive  
Kenora, ON P9N 3P7  
P: 807.468.5551  
<http://www.fireflynw.ca/>

## **Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) Eastern Ontario Regional Genetics Program C|A**

401 Smyth Rd  
Ottawa, ON K1H 8L1  
P: 613.737.7600 Ext. 3218  
<http://www.cheo.on.ca/en/genetics>

## **CMHA Guelph-Wellington FASD Team C**

485 Silvercreek Parkway North, Unit 1  
Guelph, ON N1H 7K5  
P: 519.824.5544

## **NorWest Community Health Centres C|A**

525 Simpson St  
Thunder Bay, ON P7C 3J6  
P: 807.626.8485  
[www.norwestchc.org](http://www.norwestchc.org)

## **Waterloo Region FASD Diagnostic Clinic Front Door C**

1770 King St E., Suite 1  
Kitchener, ON N2G 2P1  
P: 519.884.1666 Ext. 2263  
[www.fasdwaterlooregion.ca](http://www.fasdwaterlooregion.ca)

## **Private FASD Diagnostic Team**

Dr. L.A. Scott and Associates  
P.O. Box 21016  
Paris, ON N3L 4A5  
P: 519.442.9994  
[www.drscottassociates.com](http://www.drscottassociates.com)

## **Halton FASD Collaborative**

[www.haltonfasd.ca](http://www.haltonfasd.ca)