Thinking about FASD?

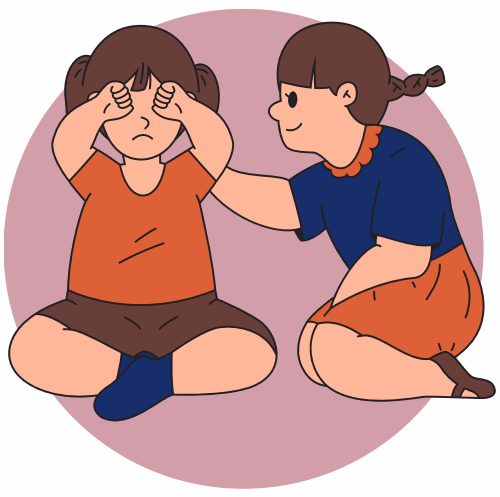
A Guide to FASD Assessments for Caregivers

FASD stands for **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder**. It is a lifelong disability that affects the brain and body of people who were exposed to alcohol in the womb. Each person with FASD has both strengths and challenges and will need special supports to help them succeed with many different parts of their daily lives.

Signs & Symptoms

Toddlers *may*:

- Be very sensitive to lights, sounds, and touch and cover their eyes and ears
- Have feeding and sleeping problems
- Have delays in crawling, walking, or talking



School-kids *may*:

- Have trouble making friends
- Act impulsively
- Not understand danger
- Need frequent reminders
- Struggle to focus or pay attention

Takeaway: Each person with FASD is unique and may exhibit different symptoms

Considering an Assessment?

Deciding whether an assessment is right for your child might feel like a big decision. There are many things you may be considering, and there is no "one-size-fits-all" answer.

Some reasons people may decide to get their child assessed include:

- Validation of caregiver concerns and experiences from healthcare providers
- Wanting a better understanding of the individuals' strengths and support needs
- Guidance on accommodations, strategies, and interventions
- Increased access to resources and programs (e.g., financial assistance for disabilities)

Takeaway: A diagnosis at any age may be beneficial

What does an assessment look like?

The process starts with a referral to an FASD diagnostic service, which can come from a medical provider or as a self-referral. A specialized team of healthcare professionals and support workers conduct assessments and reviews of the client's medical and life history over several sessions. Often, a clinic coordinator will support you. After a few weeks, you'll receive an assessment report with recommendations.

For additional resources on diagnosis, visit:

- CanFASD's clinic directory
- Caregivers' Guide to a FASD Diagnosis
- CanFASD's Identification, Assessment, & Diagnosis Hub about FASD Guide

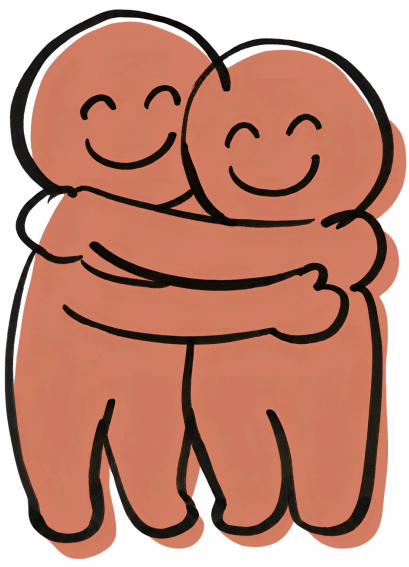
To learn more about FASD, visit:

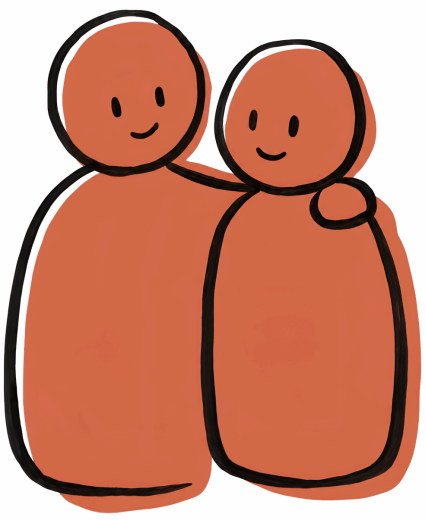
- Asante Centre's Resources for Caregivers
- Healthy Child Manitoba's What Parents and Caregivers Need to Know about FASD Guide

Reaching Our Potential

Strategies and resources for caregivers of individuals with FASD

Children with FASD are exceptional. They're funny, kind, generous, creative, and so much more. Raising a child with FASD is incredibly rewarding. Raising children with FASD is a unique experience that can be challenging and stressful at times. **Caregivers deserve support too!**





Support can take many different forms

1. Self-care activities
2. Peer support groups
3. Professional support

Self-Care Activities

Research finds that caregiver confidence in their ability to practice self-care was associated with lower levels of parenting stress and higher parenting satisfaction

1

Common strategies shared by caregivers of individuals with FASD include physical activities like going for walks, carving out "me time" for yoga, meditation, and prayer, treating themselves to small luxuries like a massage, and engaging in hobbies like gardening.

2

Peer Support Groups

Peer support groups are empathetic, knowledgeable, and non-judgmental spaces where you can connect with individuals who understand your experiences.

Support groups foster sincere connections between people with lived experiences with FASD, with many offering supervision of children during meetings. Sessions may cover strengths, struggles, and talk through potential solutions based on lived experience, research, and available resources.

Professional Support

FASD workers and coordination services can help families navigate different systems (e.g., child welfare, schools), access supports (e.g., respite care, school accommodations), and advocate.

3

Resources

To find FASD services and resources near you, check out **CanFASD's interactive map**