CanFASD
CANADA FASD RESEARCH NETWORK

2024 - 2025

IMPACT REPORT

> After being diagnosed with FASD as an adult later in life I have embraced my uniqueness and artistic abilities. This painting was inspired by my wife and her unwavering love and belief in my artistic abilities. The scenery of this painting is a place that she loves and I added the northern lights to capture its meaningfulness and beauty.
>
> *Wilfred Joey Klein*
> *CanFASD 2024 Art Contest Winner*

COVER ART

Each year, CanFASD hosts an art contest for Canadians with FASD to celebrate and encourage the creative strengths and talents of individuals with FASD. This year's winner was Wilfred Joey Klein, an artist based in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. His paintings capture the beauty of the Aurora Borealis in a unique and mesmerizing way.

Since 2004, Wilfred has developed his skills as a self-taught artist into creating beautiful artwork. He finds contentment in creating unique pieces and sharing them with others. Each piece he creates is a reflection of his journey and helps to council him when life gets him down.

WHO WE ARE

The Canada Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Research Network (CanFASD) is a network of interest-holders from across Canada focused on addressing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). We are a national and charitable organization that supports research and knowledge exchange initiatives to inform evidence-based policies and practices.

CanFASD's unique partnership brings together researchers, students, practitioners, policymakers, families, and communities across Canada and internationally to address the complexities of FASD. Our research teams currently lead over 50 major projects in the areas of prevention, diagnosis, intervention, justice, and child welfare.

VISION

All Canadians are engaged and united with awareness, evidence and knowledge and are effectively addressing the complexities of FASD.

MISSION

CanFASD supports Canada's leadership, across all sectors and at all levels, in addressing the extraordinary complexities of FASD.

The Network does this through producing and sustaining national collaborative research, shared with all Canadians, focusing primarily on the critical areas of prevention, intervention and diagnosis.

The work of the Network leads to increasingly effective prevention strategies and practice and improved support for people affected by FASD.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As a national research network, CanFASD acknowledges the harms done to Indigenous Peoples and are committed to learning from the past. We pledge to promote healing and resilience as we move forward in allyship with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples in pursuit of reconciliation. We acknowledge the lands that we live and work on as the traditional territories of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.

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TOGETHER

> "... I am excited to see how we, as an organization, will continue to advance our mission, advocate for those affected by FASD, and build stronger partnerships both within Canada and globally.
>
> *Olecia Walker*
> *Board Chair, CanFASD*

Message from the

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Olecia Walker, Board Chair (2022-2024)

As I reflect on our work in 2024, I am filled with gratitude for the immense strides we've made. This year has been one of transformation and progress, marked by significant initiatives such as the launch of *What is Your Superpower?* and our continued work on Bill S-253, which seeks to establish a National Framework for FASD. These milestones represent just a fraction of the impact we are making together, and I am so proud of what we have accomplished.

However, as my time as Board Chair ends, I must share that while I am saddened to conclude this chapter, I am excited to welcome Darren Joslin as the incoming Chair of the Board. Darren's personal and professional commitment to CanFASD is unparalleled, and I have no doubt that his leadership will continue to guide this organization to new heights. His deep understanding of our mission and his passion for driving change will bring fresh perspectives and renewed energy to our work.

Change, though often challenging, opens the door to new possibilities, and I firmly believe that these transitions both within our leadership and across our organization are a vital part of our continued success. Change brings new ideas, new solutions, and new opportunities for innovation. I am confident that under Darren's leadership, CanFASD will continue to grow, evolve, and make an even greater impact on the lives of those affected by FASD.

As I look toward the future, I am filled with optimism for what's to come. We are entering a year of positive change, and I am excited to see how we, as an organization, will continue to advance our mission, advocate for those affected by FASD, and build stronger partnerships both within Canada and globally.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to CanFASD. Together, we are turning evidence into action, and creating a better future for individuals, families, and communities impacted by FASD. Here's to a year of transformation, growth, and positivity.

Sincerely
Olecia Walker

Darren Joslin onstage at the 2023 Canada FASD Conference

MEET THE BOARD

Olecia Walker

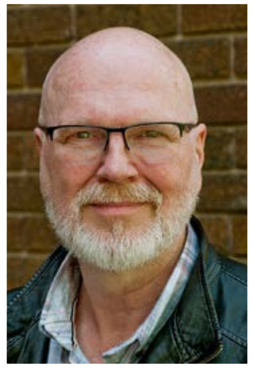
Darren Joslin

Alan Bocking

Wenda Bradley

Carol Anne Cheechoo

Howard Sapers



David Brown

Christian Whalen

Shana Mohr

Message from the

SENIOR RESEARCH LEAD

Dr. Jocelynn Cook

The 2024–2025 fiscal year has been an engaging and active period for the CanFASD Research Leads, marked by continued collaboration, efforts at policy engagement, capacity-building and research dissemination. It has truly been another year of transforming evidence to action!

Over the past year, our network has grown stronger through partnerships and shared advocacy. Our Research Leads have continued to work collaboratively across domains to drive evidence-based initiatives forward—while also trying to improve the visibility and utility of our research outputs and provide meaningful information for clinicians, service providers, researchers, individuals with FASD and their families.

Research and Evaluation
Our research and evaluation initiatives have contributed significantly to the evidence-based progress in diagnostics, intervention studies, and prevention. In Manitoba, the successful completion of the Young Adult FASD Diagnostic pilot project has showed expanded capacity to assess and diagnose adults aged 18 to 25, particularly those referred through the justice system. The evaluation results have not only informed provincial funders but have also led to a call for proposals to establish a permanent adult diagnostic stream.

Screening and diagnosis advancements were driven by the ongoing expansion and application of Canada's national FASD database, which now houses approximately 5,000 entries. Analysis of these data has yielded vital findings and helped to develop new resources and tools, such as a new framework for FASD screening and identification.

In the prevention arena, Canada continues to navigate complex public health challenges including the opioid crisis, rising mental health needs, and persistent alcohol use during pregnancy. In response, the prevention team has contributed substantially through evaluations, knowledge production, and innovative programming. A key accomplishment includes the publication of the annual annotated bibliography on FASD prevention literature, which is foundational for both practitioners and researchers.

Policy and Advocacy
Policy and advocacy efforts were particularly prominent this year, especially in support of Bill S-253 regarding a National FASD Framework. Several Research Leads submitted evidence briefs to the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. These submissions highlighted key areas of consideration, such as the implications of Canada's National FASD Database (Cook), the intersection of child welfare and FASD (Badry), the complexities of diagnosis (Hanlon-Dearman), and the importance of FASD prevention in women's health (Poole).

Engagement at the federal level included meetings with Minister Ya'ara Saks, Chief Medical Officers from Ontario and Nova Scotia, and senior executives at the Public Health Agency of Canada. Discussions emphasized the need for increased data, sustained funding, and expanded service delivery for individuals with FASD and their families.

Knowledge Translation and Outreach
Knowledge translation and educational outreach remained a cornerstone of our efforts. Dr. Poole developed and launched an online course to enhance the effectiveness of acute care social workers in their engagement with pregnant women and new mothers. I led national surveys focused on virtual care and substance use support for pregnant individuals to inform the development of new clinical practice guidelines for health care. Dr. Mela and Dr. Hanlon-Dearman have further contributed by refining medication algorithms and advocating for pediatric-focused diagnostic standards. Additionally, Dr. Tremblay's work in cultural safety and awareness continues to influence how diagnostic services are adapted across regions.

Conferences served as important venues for sharing research and enhancing our profile across disciplines. Abstracts were accepted on topics such as suicidality in individuals with FASD, comparative risks of prenatal substance exposure, and neurodevelopmental impacts of prenatal nicotine and cannabis use. Our researchers presented at venues such as the Canadian Psychological Association, the Canadian Paediatric Society, the FIGO World Congress on Gynecology and Obstetrics, and the 7th European FASD Alliance Conference. Notably, CanFASD's presence at the international FASD research conference in Seattle facilitated deep strategic reflections on the future direction of the field.

Finally, a remarkable aspect of this year was the sense of camaraderie and renewed cohesion among the Research Leads and the FASD community both in Canada and abroad. The publication of the now infamous article in the Lancet *Asking difficult questions about fetal alcohol spectrum disorder in the context of the child, the mother, and the systems in which they live* sparked a lot of discussion in the field, although we didn't agree with most of the original article. Canada was proud to lead an international response, which was published in the Lancet and written by CanFASD researchers and families together with many of our colleagues from around the world.

In our many meetings—both virtual and in-person—we continue to maintain (and to protect) our powerful collective identity and commitment to mutual support. As we look to the year ahead, our momentum continues to build, with a strong foundation in collaborative leadership, scientific rigour and shared purpose.

We are all so thankful for CanFASD and proud to be a part of it together!

Sincerely,
Dr. Jocelynn Cook


Jocelynn Cook onstage at the 2023 Canada FASD Conference

(Left) Audrey McFarlane speaks at the Together for FASD Conference in 2022. (Middle left) CanFASD staff engage with exhibitors at the Canada FASD Conference in 2023. (Middle right) Board Member Howard Sapers introduces himself at the Canada FASD Conference. (Right) Dr. Kelly Harding speaks at the 2023 Canada FASD Conference.

> **The 2024–2025 fiscal year has been an engaging and active period for the CanFASD Research Leads, marked by continued collaboration, efforts at policy engagement, capacity-building and research dissemination. It has truly been another year of transforming evidence to action!**
>
> *Dr. Jocelynn Cook*
> *Senior Research Lead, CanFASD*

MANAGEMENT & RESEARCH Team

Dr. Jacqueline Pei
Intervention Research Lead

Dr. Jocelynn Cook
Senior Research Lead & Database Lead

Dr. Kaitlyn McLachlan
Justice Research Lead

Dr. Nancy Poole
Prevention Research Lead

Dr. Dorothy Badry
Child Welfare Research Lead

Dr. Ana Hanlon-Dearman
Diagnostics Research Co-Lead

Dr. Mansfield Mela
Diagnostics Research Co-Lead

Dr. Melissa Tremblay
Indigenous Advisor

Audrey McFarlane
Executive Director

Kathy Unsworth
Managing Director

Dr. Kelly Harding
Director of Research Administration

Dr. Katherine Flannigan
Research Associate

Dr. Celisse Bibr
Research Assistant

Kirsten Morrison
Research Assistant

Edward Swatschek
Manager of Corporate Services & Administration

Victoria Bailey
Communications Manager

Fiona Binns
Communications Coordinator

Update from the
FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Over the past year, the Family Advisory Committee (FAC) of the CanFASD Research Network has engaged in numerous activities to advise on family research priorities and ensure research findings are accessible to families. We have shared our experiences and expertise by presenting at webinars, developing resources, collaborating on research projects, and engaging with our communities.

This year, the FAC has been honoured to collaborate with CanFASD Research Leads and other FASD researchers on projects including an international response to asking difficult FASD questions, published in the Lancet; the Caregiver Approaches, Resiliencies, and Experiences (CARE study); and more.

FAC members also represent the voice of caregivers on various committees, such as the Canada FASD Conference planning committee, the Prevention Network Action Team, grant application support and more. To improve knowledge translation, FAC supported the development of resources, including a brochure on FASD and aggression and a Canadian guide for travelling with individuals with FASD.

Part of our role is to better understand and represent the full spectrum of caregivers' experiences. We invited speakers from across Canada who support those with living experience to our monthly meetings to learn about the work that is happening across the country. This included presentations from the Métis Nation FASD support program in Alberta, Assante Centre in British Columbia, and 4FASD program in Manitoba.

The FAC includes members from across Canada: Alicia Munn (New Brunswick), Lee O'Keefe (Northwest Territories), Melissa Dobson (co-chair, Alberta), Joyce Fast (co-chair, Manitoba), Dorothy Reid (British Columbia), Danette Wright (Alberta), Lara Frederick (British Columbia), and Pam Belanger (Saskatchewan).

We acknowledge Wanda Beland and Marsha Wilson, who retired in 2024, for their dedication to this committee and all the successes they've accomplished as part of it. And we will be lost without Dorothy Reid, who is retiring in 2025. Her passion, perseverance, and contributions were a cornerstone for our group. Her leadership and devotion will be missed, but we remain hopeful for the future of this committee and its role in bridging the gap between research and improved support.

As caregivers, we advocate for services and supports to help our loved ones thrive and hope each day is better than the last. While applied FASD research is growing, and platforms like CanFASD's learning portal, webinars and resources provide a wealth of knowledge, we still await consistent translation of knowledge into improved policies and practices and services.

We deeply value the support from CanFASD. We invite everyone reading this to join us in working toward better outcomes for those impacted by FASD.

FAC member Dorothy Reid with Research Lead Dr. Jacqueline Pei presenting at the 2023 Canada FASD Conference keynote

> **"While applied FASD research is growing... we still await consistent translation of knowledge into improved policies and practices and services.**
>
> *Family Advisory Committee*
> *CanFASD*

Sincerely,
The Family Advisory Committee

From left to right: Melissa Dobson (Alberta), Alicia Munn (New Brunswick), Marsha Wilson (former member), Tammy Roberts (former member), Dorothy Reid (British Columbia) and Joyce Fast (Manitoba). Absent are Lara Frederick (British Columbia) , Danette Wright (Alberta), Lee O'Keefe (Northwest Territories) and Pam Belanger (Saskatchewan).

Update from the

ADULT FASD EXPERT COLLABORATION TEAM

It is my pleasure to write this report on behalf of the members of the Adult FASD Expert Collaboration Team (AFECT). These adults have worked collaboratively as a committee with the researchers and leadership team at CanFASD to share their knowledge, wisdom and valuable lived experience. They have also worked individually in their various jurisdictions to help achieve better outcomes for people with FASD and their loved ones.

Here are some highlights from 2024:

- Contributed to CanFASD Researchers' work in studies about cannabis use, housing and the strengths of individuals with FASD.
- Provided input to the Common Messages Guidelines for talking and writing about FASD
- Continued to learn about being a committee member, including goal setting, creating a work plan, evaluating progress-to-date and working on subcommittees
- Expanded the committee with the addition of Chris Fillion, our representative from Manitoba.

In the fall of the year, we welcomed our first international guest, Demi Forsyth from the Fife area of Scotland. Demi is a self-advocate who is employed with ScotRail as a ticket taker. She shared her story with the group, showed us some instruments she had made, and even performed a song. Demi taught us about how music helps her to regulate, saying it "helps me understand and clear things when it gets too much in my head". This year, AFECT members talked regularly about the role of a strengths-based approach with people with FASD. Demi's perspective strengthened all of us. It is the hope of all the committee members that other self-advocates from different parts of the country or the global community can be invited to join future meetings to further this collaborative experience.

At the end of the year, the AFECT members voted unanimously to embark on a co-chair model of leadership, whereby a FAC member and an AFECT member would jointly run our monthly meetings. Jessica Fulmer volunteered to take the helm first, alongside myself. The position will be rotated every three months so that all the members who wanted to could get an opportunity to learn and lead.

As I conclude this update, AFECT members are already looking forward to the Canada FASD Conference in Toronto in the fall of 2025. They are eager to see each other again, submit abstracts, give presentations, and greet self-advocates from across the country!

Lauren, Niall, Sandra, Chris, Maria, Joseph, and Jessica, you are wonderful ambassadors in the world of FASD. Thank you for your valuable contributions to CanFASD and the work we do! A big thanks to Audrey McFarlane for her continued leadership and guidance and to CanFASD staff who help AFECT be a successful team.

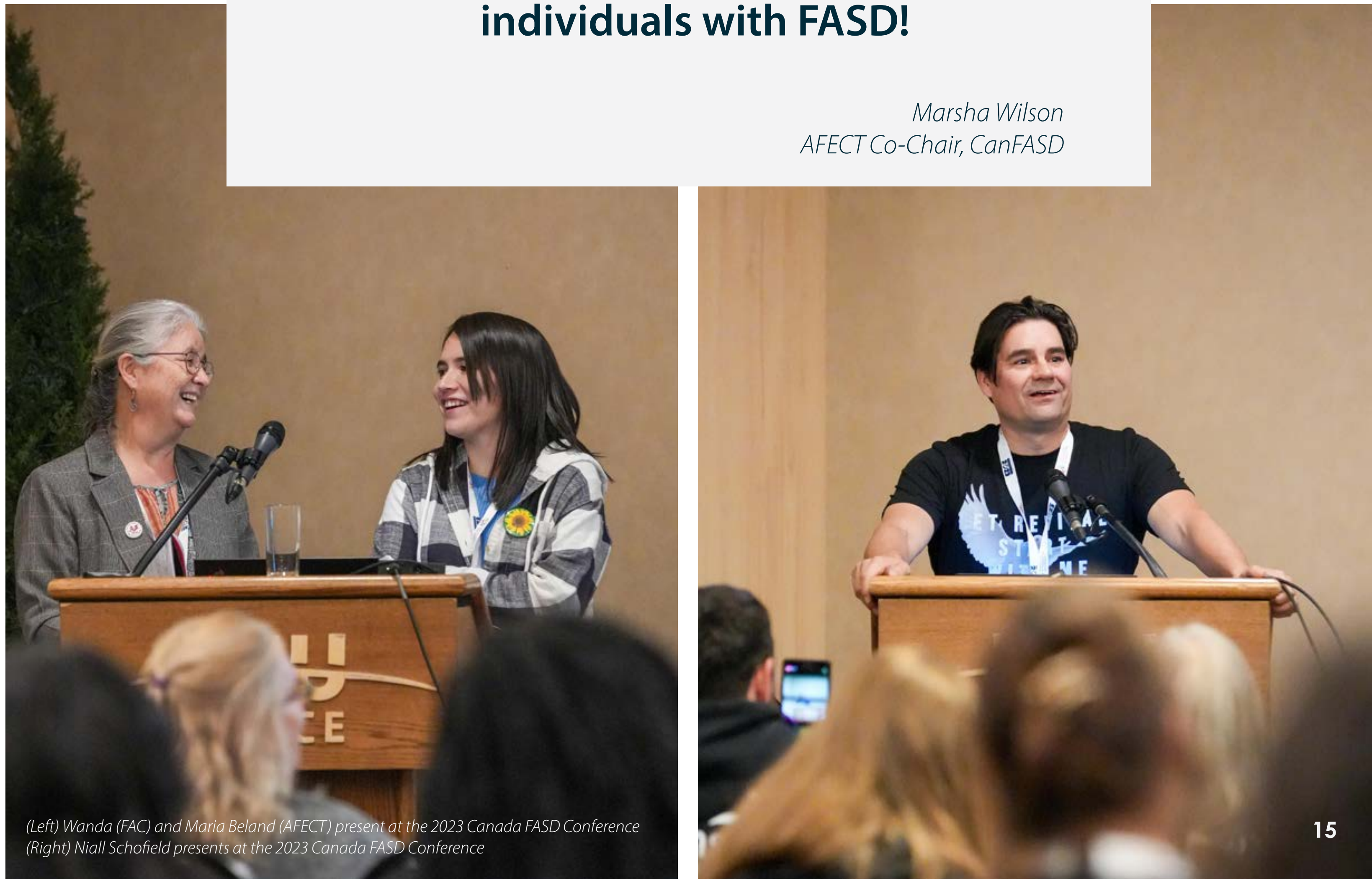
Here's to 2025 and another great year of working together to change both the present and the future for individuals with FASD!

Respectfully,

Marsha Wilson
AFECT Co-Chair

From left to right: Alicia Munn (FAC), Lauren Richardson (AFECT), Katy Flannigan (CanFASD), Joseph Munn (AFECT), Jessica Fulmer (AFECT), Niall Schofield (AFECT), Sandra Noel (AFECT), Maria Beland (AFECT), Marsha Wilson (FAC)

> **Here's to 2025 and another great year of working together to change both the present and the future for individuals with FASD!**
>
> *Marsha Wilson*
> *AFECT Co-Chair, CanFASD*



(Left) Wanda (FAC) and Maria Beland (AFECT) present at the 2023 Canada FASD Conference
(Right) Niall Schofield presents at the 2023 Canada FASD Conference

LIVED EXPERIENCE
Leadership Fund

The voices of people with lived experience should be included in FASD research, policy, and practice. However, the lack of financial support is often a barrier to attending events where people with lived experience can share their stories and experiences. In recognition, we launched a new initiative known as the Lived Experience Leadership Fund (LELF) in March 2024. This is a donation-based fund that helps support those with lived and living experience to participate in events that aim to advance FASD research.

Our donors responded to this launch with unparalleled enthusiasm! With your generous support, we were able to send Chris Fillion, an advocate with FASD, from Manitoba to Seattle in April to participate in an international conference on FASD.

Meet Chris

Chris received a diagnosis of FASD and ADHD at age 9. Navigating his youth within the child and family services system fueled Chris' passion for advocacy. In advocacy, he ensures that powerful and personal narratives challenge existing stigmas and promote a more profound understanding of FASD. Chris balances his professional responsibilities with his roles as a loving husband and a dedicated foster parent.

Chris had a great time at the conference and learned a lot. He was especially excited about the presentations on memory, justice, education, and learning about FASD events happening around the world. Chris said about the conference, *"It was fantastic! I'm so grateful to have this opportunity. Thank you so much to everyone who donated and helped me attend."*

54
donations

30
donors

> **Be yourself. We're all making a difference in the world just by being who we are.**
>
> *Chris Fillion*
> *AFECT Member, CanFASD*

MEMBERSHIP

225
active members

94
new members

Individual Membership

Our membership brings people together from across the country and internationally that are invested in creating change for FASD. Members get benefits like updates on recent news and research, invitations to member-only events with researchers, and the ability to share their vision for the direction of future FASD research. Last year we hosted three member events where our community had the opportunity to connect with researchers about ongoing projects.

> **Over the last 43 years our knowledge of FASD in Canada has grown almost exponentially... it feels good but we still have a long, long way to go.**
>
> *CanFASD Member*

> **The more I understand about FASD the better caregiver I am and the better I can choose supports for my family member**
>
> *CanFASD Member*

CanFASD Jurisdictional Members

5
provinces

3
territories

■ Members: Alberta, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Yukon, Nunavut, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and New Brunswick

▨ Non-Members: Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia

FINDING ANSWERS

> As we look to the year ahead, our momentum continues to build, with a strong foundation in collaborative leadership, scientific rigour and shared purpose.
>
> *Dr. Jocelynn Cook*
> *Senior Research Lead, CanFASD*

RESEARCH in Action

from 2024-2025 CanFASD completed

34 published articles

16 technical reports

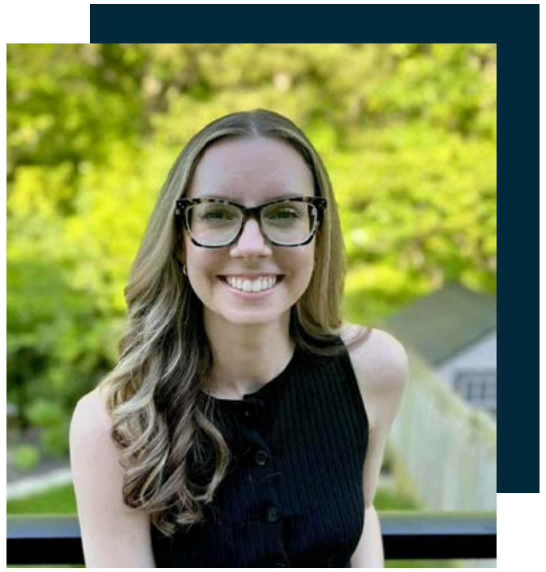
107 presentations & interviews

54 research projects

4 book chapters

(Top left) Audience claps at conference sessions. (Top right) Audrey McFarlane presents a keynote at the 2023 Canada FASD Conference.
(Bottom left) CanFASD researchers and staff at the 2023 Canada FASD Conference. (Bottom right) Jocelynn Cook and Nicole LeBlanc present at the 2023 Canada FASD Conference.

FASD Research Award


Katelyn Mullally

Dr. Katelyn Mullally is the recipient of the 2024 Dr. Sterling Clarren FASD Research Award! This award is named in honour of Dr. Sterling Clarren to recognize his pioneering contribution and leadership in the field of FASD. The award is presented annually to an individual in recognition of a completed study that has made a substantial contribution to understanding the complexities of FASD.

A psychologist, graduated from the University of Guelph, Katelyn's research explored individuals' with FASD understanding of plea decisions in the criminal legal system. Her project showed that many youth and young adults with FASD had substantial difficulties understanding plea information. In addition, some people with FASD had difficulty making plea decisions altogether, and others seemed less likely to consider critical factors, such as risks, benefits, and long-term consequences. Katelyn is one of 12 recipients of this award, which was established in 2015.


CanFASD Trainees and staff together in 2023

Trainee Program

The CanFASD Trainee program was developed in 2021-2022 to bring together new and early-career researchers and professionals (e.g., students, learners, research assistants, or junior research staff) across the country working on projects related to our priority areas of FASD. The overall objective of this program is to facilitate connection, community building, and collaboration among up-and-coming FASD researchers in Canada.

Over the past four years, we have had 38 trainees participate in the program from six provinces. The projects that they are working on are diverse in scope and geographic region, highlighting the collaborative nature of this program, which seeks to profile talent from across Canada.

MAJOR PROJECT Updates

Increasing Capacity to Identify and Support People with FASD in British Columbia

The aim of the project is to improve services and supports for individuals with FASD who are involved in the criminal legal system in British Columbia, to ultimately improve their trajectories and outcomes. Two main products have been developed:

1. an informal legal and clinical **community of practice for professionals**, agencies, and service providers who support and engage with individuals with FASD in British Columbia.
2. a **FASD Screening Toolkit** with accompanying resources that reflect unfolding understanding and research.

The Screening Toolkit aims to provide evidence-based guidance to increase awareness, recognition, and support for individuals with FASD involved in the criminal legal system. This Toolkit was developed in collaboration with researchers, professionals, and community partners across Canada. Advisory committees comprised of criminal legal system professionals, caregivers, and individuals with living experience of FASD provided important input, consultation, and feedback. Various research steps and knowledge gathering activities were also completed to inform the development of this Toolkit.

Currently, we are in the final stages of the project and are working to finalize the Toolkit. In addition, we are in the final stages of developing a beta-version of an FASD decision guide/ screening tool. Soon, we will be in a pilot implementation stage of the project allowing us to gather feedback from local organizations in BC who will use the Toolkit.

Co-creating Housing Solutions: Enacting Opportunities for Individuals with FASD (CHOoSE)

Project Impact

CHOoSE website stats from January 2022 to March 2025

1,731
visitors

2,647
pageviews

Housing is a fundamental human right for individuals with disabilities. However, many individuals with FASD are not having this fundamental human right met. Alongside the housing crisis, housing is often expensive, limited, and not FASD-informed. Individuals with FASD can benefit greatly from their housing service providers understanding their range of needs, functional limitations, vulnerabilities, and strengths. All over Canada, service providers have expressed their desire to learn and do what they can.

The goal of the CHOoSE project was to bring together different interest groups to understand the challenges and opportunities for housing options for individuals with FASD. Our researchers completed 47 semi-structured interviews over eight different regions of Canada to understand the big picture. They found that:

- Access is an enabler to safe and secure housing.
- Individuals with FASD are unique; housing, policies and supports need to mirror that.
- Collaboration with caregivers, housing service providers, people with FASD, and interdepartmental committees is necessary to develop responsive and adaptable policy.
- Understanding is the fundamental foundation on which everything else can be built.

Based on the research findings, the project team developed four resources to build understanding of FASD into the different levels of the housing process, including: the housing level, the individual level, the program level, and the system level.

Prevention keynote at the 2023 Canada FASD Conference

Addressing Prevention and Women's Health Through Connection and Collaboration

Founded in 2009, the Prevention Network Action Team (pNAT) is a pan-Canadian network of researchers, service providers, health planners, and community partners working on issues related to FASD prevention and the health of women and children.

Our pNAT has over 100 active members from a broad range of organizations and institutions all across Canada. The team works on various projects related to research and evaluation, policy and practice, and knowledge translation. Last year was filled with several accomplishments, including:

- Creating an online course for social workers, case workers, and practice leaders to share best practices for working with pregnant women and new mothers with substance use concerns;
- Published a report sharing research and evidence on women's substance use treatment and recovery, including information about pregnant women and new mothers;
- Collaborated with Sheway Pregnancy Outreach Program to evaluate the impact of the Indigenous Cultural Support Program, a pilot created to improve cultural and spiritual wellness among Indigenous clients and reduce the harms of substance use among women accessing services at Sheway; and
- Presented on women and alcohol at the virtual "Truth about Alcohol" Symposium on World Cancer Day, hosted by Senator Patrick Brazeau.

The pNAT has been incredibly successful at bringing people from different backgrounds together to improve policy and practice related to alcohol and women's health.

Project Impact

Girls, Women, and Alcohol Blog stats for April 2024 - March 2025

11
blog posts

5,730
visitors

7,804
pageviews

Elder Judy Pelly's closing remarks at the 2023 Canada FASD Conference

INDIGENOUS

Relations

Establishing a National FASD Indigenous Framework in Canada

What is the Framework?

Western health care has generally failed to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and culture, which is a missed opportunity to holistically balance physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health. Unique etiological factors, rooted in historical and ongoing colonization, deeply impact FASD prevalence and management for Indigenous children and families. As such, there is a need for a culturally sensitive, community-driven approach to FASD assessment, diagnosis, and support: a national FASD Indigenous framework in Canada.

Drawing inspiration from the recently developed Australian FASD Indigenous Framework, the purpose of this community-based participatory research project is to co-create a strengths-based framework for FASD assessment, diagnosis, and support that is grounded in Indigenous knowledges and cultures. Partners from the University of Alberta and CanFASD, together with additional community partners, will establish a community advisory circle, conduct a realist literature review, survey FASD clinics across Canada, and conduct sharing sessions with clinicians and people with lived experience.

Progress through Partnership

This project began with a $200,000 grant from the One Child Every Child initiative through the University of Calgary. Over the past year, investigators have done a lot to raise awareness of the project, including meeting with government representatives, presenting to community members in the Yukon, and presenting at events like the 2025 International Meeting on Indigenous Child Health. Recently, the Yukon Government committed matching funds to ensure Yukon First Nation voices are integrated into the framework.

Dr. Melissa Tremblay speaking during a conference workshop

In addition to raising awareness about the project, we have taken steps towards research and data collection. We are in the process of searching for and screening relevant articles for a realist review of the literature. Our team has also applied for University of Alberta Research Ethics Board approval to begin collecting data for this project.

Our next step is to convene a meeting of our Community Advisory Committee to obtain guidance on moving forward with our realist review. Once our ethics application is approved, we will work towards surveying clinics across Canada to understand service provider perspectives on providing culturally safe services to Indigenous children and families. In addition, we will hire a Research Assistant in the Yukon to establish a local presence for the project in the Territory.

Emerging Insights and Key Reflections

Our knowledge mobilization efforts and conversations about this project have shed light on several tensions that remind us of the need to move with intention and sensitivity. For example, although our framework is intended to be national, we intend to avoid pan-Indigenization. We are aiming to balance recognition that Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing are rooted in their individual contexts, histories, locations and experiences with acknowledgment of potential synchronies and opportunities for co-learning and collaboration across geographical and cultural distinctions. In addition, we aim to resist contributing to the inaccurate and harmful conception of FASD as an "Indigenous issue." It is our intent that the process of navigating these tensions will allow for co-creating actionable conversations and learnings to address the layered racism and colonialism that undergird the health care experiences of Indigenous peoples.

Myles Himmelreich is the Master of Ceremonies at the 2023 Canada FASD

IMPROVING OUTCOMES

> We invite everyone reading this to join us in working toward better outcomes for those impacted by FASD.
>
> *Family Advisory Committee*
> *CanFASD*

POLICY & PRACTICE

Alcohol Policy and FASD

Over the past few years, there has been increasing interest on how alcohol policy can be used to improve health, including maternal and fetal health. Alcohol policies are crucial tools for prevention because they determine the availability of alcohol and they shape the environment in which decisions about drinking are made, an important consideration in the preconception and perinatal periods. Canada's four-part model of FASD prevention recognizes the role alcohol policy plays, placing supportive alcohol policy at the center of the four mutually reinforcing levels of prevention.

This year we co-hosted a three-part webinar series with the Centre of Excellence for Women's Health to explore alcohol policy and its role in FASD and reducing alcohol use in pregnancy. The series brought together speakers to talk about the state of alcohol policies in Canada, how Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health was developed, and opportunities for collaborative alcohol policies.

Each of the webinars took different approaches to share the importance of policy in our work on FASD and supporting healthy beginnings. Presenters helped attendees explore potential opportunities to address the normalization of alcohol in our society.

It was one of our most popular series over the last year, with the registration and attendee numbers showing high rates of interest in the intersection of FASD and alcohol policy, in addition to the post-event views on YouTube.

513
webinar registrations

269
webinar attendees

502
webinar views

Claudette Bradshaw FASD Innovation Award

The Claudette Bradshaw FASD Innovation Award recognizes the work of individuals and organizations who are using innovative approaches to improve the lives of individuals with FASD. The award is named in honour of the late Mme. Claudette Bradshaw to recognize her dedication and impact to the fields of FASD, early childhood education, and homelessness. It is intended to encourage innovation in the development of FASD programs and practices.

2024 Recipient

The team at the Eastern Door Centre is this year's recipient of the Claudette Bradshaw Innovation Award. An Indigenous centre for assessment, intervention and prevention, they provide long-term support and advocacy for youth and young adults up to the age of 21. Eastern Door has a unique Two-Eyed Seeing approach that integrates Western health practice with the healing traditions of the community. They are located in the Elsipogtog First Nation in New Brunswick.

The team at Eastern Door has woven FASD service delivery into the fabric of their community, forging connections with other agencies, building capacity in other professionals, and piggy-backing on existing solutions. Their approach considers the transgenerational impacts of FASD and understands that healing the youth involves healing the family.

Their work has shown to have made a significant impact. Now, twenty years after working in the community, the youth suicide rate has significantly decreased, the graduation rate for youth in high school increased from 30% to 80%, and youth interaction with the criminal legal system decreased. There is now FASD training provided for professionals, specialists available in the school, and early interventions available for youth at school and at home.

We are pleased to recognize the Eastern Door Centre with this award in celebration of all they are doing to support youth with FASD, their families, and their community.

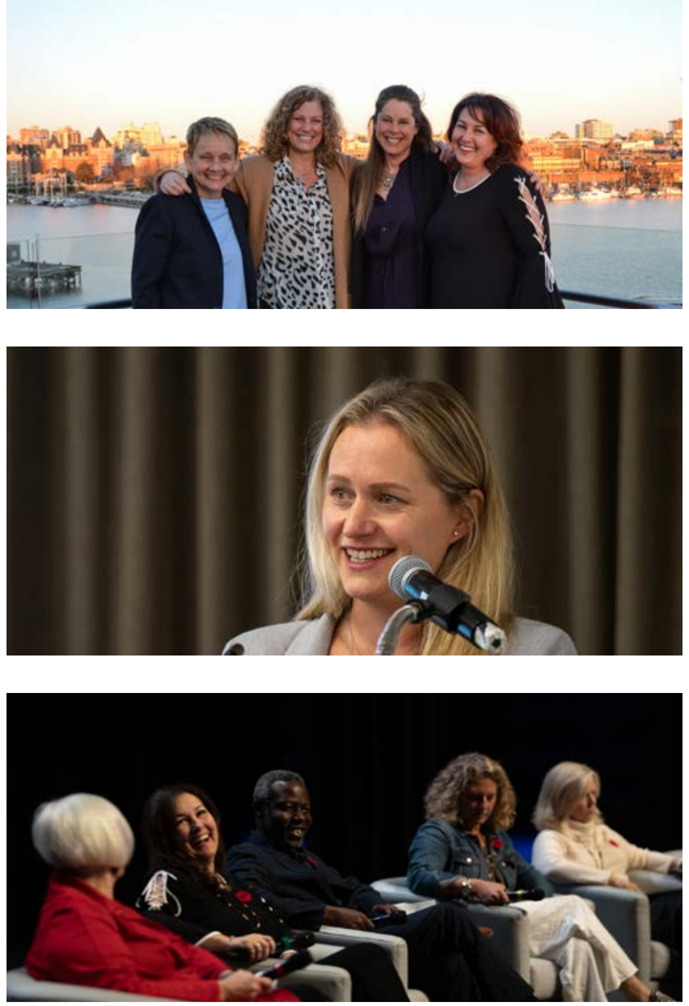
Members of the Eastern Door Centre

OUTREACH

& Communications

Creating effective and engaging communication and outreach initiatives is a priority for CanFASD. Accurate, timely, and consistent information is essential to increasing awareness of and support for FASD across Canada. We want to make sure our audience has the evidence and information they need in a format they can best understand.

Our most popular tools for public engagement include our online webinar series where we share relevant information; our blog to keep our network updated; our website where we host tools, research, and resources; and our social media accounts where we engage and connect with our community.



(Top) Research Leads in Victoria in 2022. (Middle) Olecia Walker speaks at the Together for FASD Conference. (Bottom) Speakers onstage at the 2023 Canada FASD Conference keynote.

SOCIAL MEDIA

From April 2024 to March 2025, CanFASD had:

15,143 followers

348K impressions

WEBINARS

From April 2024 to March 2025, CanFASD had:

11 webinars

1,382 registrations

BLOG

From April 2024 to March 2025, CanFASD had:

81
blog posts

8,290
visitors

11,009
views

WEBSITE

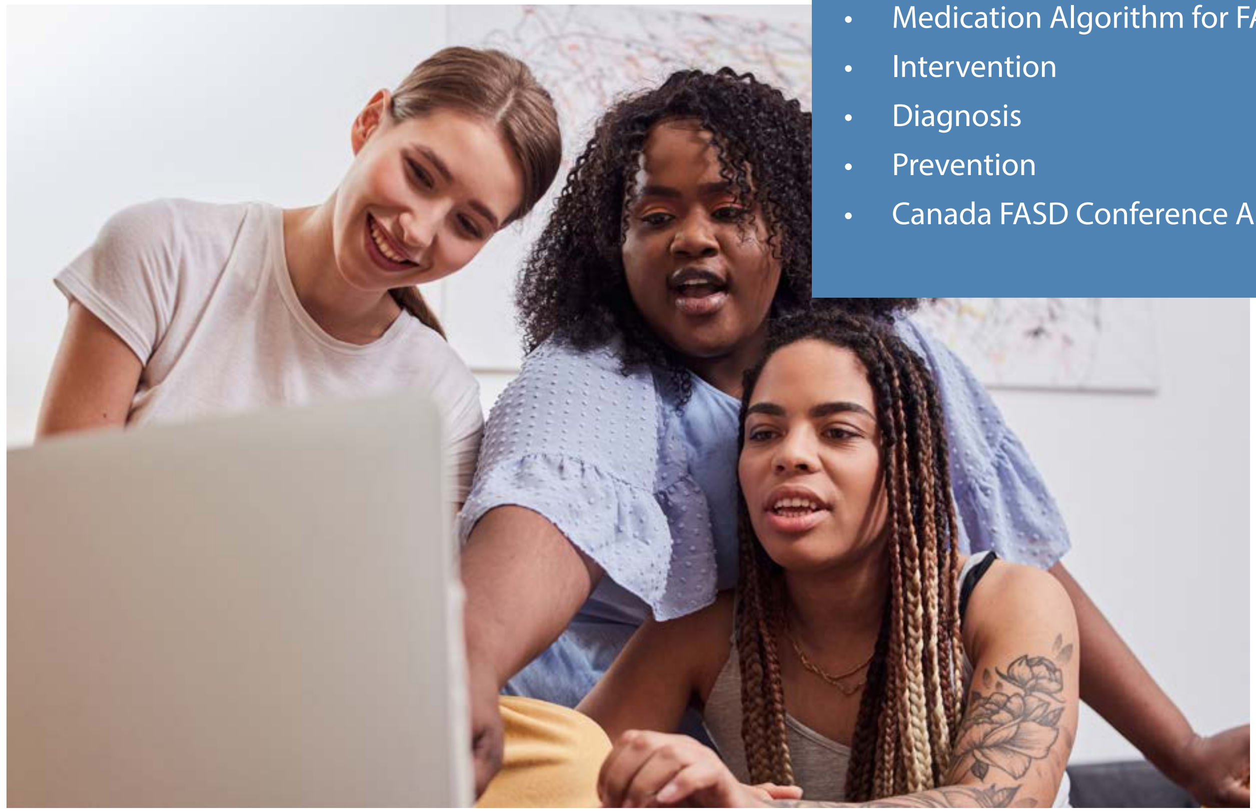
From April 2024 to March 2025, CanFASD had:

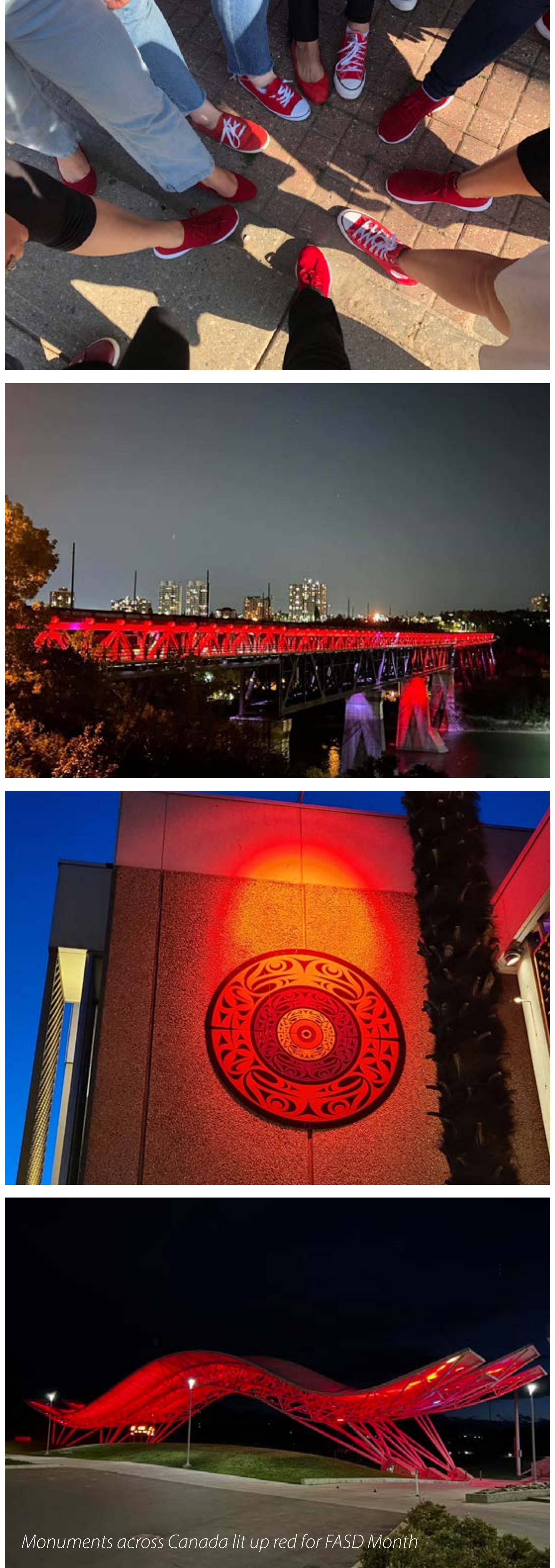
69,851
visitors

209K
pageviews

Most Viewed Webpages:

- Homepage
- Online Learners
- Canada FASD Conference
- FASD Awareness Month
- What is FASD?
- Medication Algorithm for FASD
- Intervention
- Diagnosis
- Prevention
- Canada FASD Conference Abstracts





Monuments across Canada lit up red for FASD Month

FASD MONTH

Every year during the month of September, organizations and communities across Canada and around the globe celebrate FASD Awareness Month. The goal of this event is to improve awareness and understanding of FASD and to celebrate the strengths and successes of individuals with FASD.

This year, we continued our Canada Rocks Red campaign, where monuments and landmarks across Canada lit their buildings up red to help us raise awareness of FASD. We had participation from every province and territory, with 59 locations across Canada lit up red, including the Calgary Tower in Alberta, the Sails of Light in Vancouver, the CN Tower in Toronto, and Halifax City Hall in Nova Scotia.

The 2024 theme for FASD Awareness Month was *Everyone Plays a Part*. This theme goes beyond framing FASD as an individual issue, as the impacts of FASD matter to the whole community. Every single person can make a change to create a society that is both supportive of people with FASD and supportive of healthy pregnancies. Our themes are grounded in research in evidence with the goal of reducing the stigma around FASD.

59
locations

13
provinces & territories

1,325
resource downloads

WORKFORCE & REGULATORY

Development

We offer several online learning courses to improve professional and community understanding of FASD. Our courses are categorized by level of experience, where Level 1 courses provide a basic overview, Level 2 courses provide sector-specific training, and Level 3 courses provide expert training to FASD professionals.

We are proud to say we are now offering nine different courses on various topics related to FASD. Two thirds of our courses are available in both English and French. These courses are evidence-based and reflect current research and data in the field.

OUR IMPACT

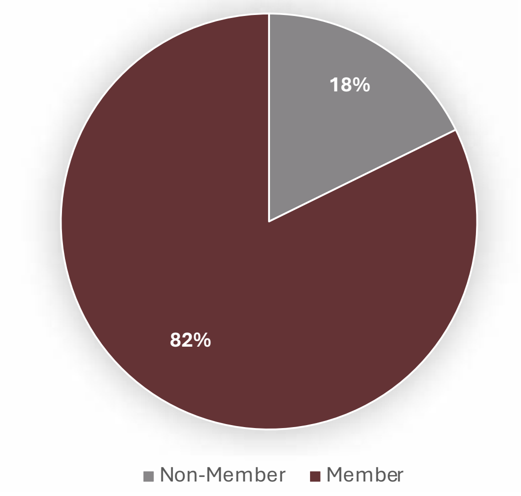
8,428
total learners

7,953
new course enrollments

Provinces and territories that are jurisdictional members of CanFASD are further along in addressing FASD in their regions. As jurisdicational members, everyone resident of that province or territory receives discounted rates to CanFASD online courses. This has a major impact on education and outreach.

Member jurisdictions (BC, AB, SK, MB, NB, NT, NU, YT) have a significantly higher percentage of course enrollments, despite having half of the combined population of non-member jurisdictions (i.e. 14.5 million vs 27 million).

Course Enrollment by Jurisdictional Membership



OUR COURSES

LEVEL I

5373 new learners

Foundations in FASD

Our introductory course is designed to improve public understanding of FASD through an evidence-informed and strengths-based lens.

LEVEL II

93 new learners

The Prevention Conversation

Provides front-line health and social services professionals with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to engage their clients in a supportive and non-judgemental conversations about alcohol use during pregnancy.

287 new learners

Identifying Best Practices for FASD Prevention, Diagnosis, and Support

Designed for use by professionals working in service delivery fields to implement brief, effective approaches to improve outcomes in preventing FASD, screening for FASD, and supporting success among individuals with FASD.

77 new learners

FASD for Solicitor General Professional

Intended for professionals working in the Solicitor General systems. It presents evidence-based and practice-informed information that can be easily and effectively integrated into your practice and approach to working with individuals with FASD.

102 new learners

FASD for Judicial and Legal Professionals

Intended for professionals working in the criminal justice and legal systems. It presents evidence-based and practice-informed information that can be easily and effectively integrated into your practice and approach to working with individuals with FASD.

820 new learners

FASD for School Staff: Practical Strategies for the School Environment

Intended for all educators including administrators, teachers, educational assistants, early childhood educators, office admin, board personnel and bus drivers to support students with FASD to succeed in schools.

166 new learners

Substance Use and Treatment in FASD

Intended for frontline workers that work in substance use and addictions, however, this course is valuable for anyone who is supporting an individual with FASD who uses substances.

880 new learners

FASD for Community and Social Service Professionals

A course intended for frontline workers that work directly with individuals with FASD and their families, including those that work in financial and disability services, FASD networks, housing, shelter and crisis supports, and employment programs.

LEVEL III

155 new learners

Multidisciplinary Training for Diagnosis of FASD

Designed to assist professionals in developing the skills needed to be an effective member of a multidisciplinary diagnostic team for FASD.

FINANCIAL
Snapshot

CANADA FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER RESEARCH NETWORK
Balance Sheet
March 31, 2025 with comparative figures for March 31, 2024

	2024	2025
Assets		
Current assets:		
Cash	$ 246,344.18	$ 206,597.07
Investments	162,831.78	167,072.92
Accounts receivable	232,049.27	56,630.14
HST/GST receivable	36,546.67	12,331.16
Prepaid expenses	15,690.36	27,805.93
	693,462.26	**470,437.22**
Capital assets	7,311.07	669.98
Intangible assets	118,688.75	103,444.87
	819,462.08	**574,552.07**
Liabilities and Net Assets:		
Current Liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	$ 59,103.85	$ 56,363.87
Deferred capital contributions	122,251.98	105,967.75
Deferred contributions	207,330.86	198,466.78
	388,686.69	**360,798.40**
Net assets	**430,755.39**	**213,753.67**
	$ 819,462.08	**$ 574,552.07**

SUPPORT Our Work

The achievements in this report were made possible thanks to the generosity of our donors. This year, through the collective efforts of our supporters, we've expanded our impact and contributed new evidence and resources to advance the field of FASD. Your support has been invaluable in our journey towards creating a brighter future for those affected by FASD. And with your ongoing support, we can continue to do so.

Despite the progress we've made, FASD remains under-recognized and under-supported. What we know about FASD today is due to research. Research and evidence help decision-makers make choices that will have the most impact. Sound data provides a compass to guide those decisions.

CanFASD is Canada's only national research network focused on FASD. As a registered charity, we unite voices from lived experience, research, advocacy, and service to deepen understanding and drive meaningful action. Your support is vital to helping us develop and share the evidence needed to inform the policies and programs for people with FASD, their families, and those who are pregnant and parenting. Together we can transform evidence into action.

We have only scratched the surface in terms of the knowledge, resources, and support that we can provide. Imagine how much further we can go with your support. Join our incredible community of generous donors to ensure the knowledge developed at CanFASD reaches the interest holders who need it most.

We've made great strides to move FASD forward in Canada. Imagine how much further we could go with your support.

CanFASD

CANADA FASD RESEARCH NETWORK

info@canfasd.ca • www.canfasd.ca