



# Together we are stronger

## Building Manitoba's FASD Strategy

Awareness, prevention and support for individuals, families and communities affected by fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD)



Healthy Child Manitoba  
Putting children and families first



**Manitoba** 



*Using a co-ordinated approach for the development of FASD prevention and support services, Manitoba formed an interdepartmental committee to create a provincial strategy. Reporting to the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, the committee includes representatives from the following provincial departments:*

- Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors
- Education
- Health
- Justice
- Family Services and Consumer Affairs
- Aboriginal and Northern Affairs
- Housing and Community Development
- Healthy Child Manitoba Office





## We understand:

- People living with FASD need lifelong support.
- Preventing FASD is about more than alcohol use alone. Understanding and addressing the basic reasons why some women may drink alcohol during pregnancy is important to finding long-term solutions.
- Policies and programs must be based on evidence so we can invest in what works.
- We all need to work together to make this strategy a success.
- Important work is already happening in Manitoba and we will continue to build on our successes.

# About FASD

*Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) refers to the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol while pregnant. The effects can include lifelong physical, mental, cognitive and behavioural disabilities.*

FASD is an umbrella term that can include:

- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)
- partial Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (pFAS)
- Alcohol Related Neuro-developmental Disorder (ARND)

FASD is often called a “hidden” or “invisible” disability because most people affected do not have noticeable physical features. Prenatal exposure to alcohol is a leading cause of preventable birth defects and developmental delay in children.

Individuals with FASD are more likely to have trouble with:

- memory
- understanding cause and effect (consequences)
- getting used to changes in routines
- sensory stimulation - handling a lot of different sensations or feelings at one time
- learning life skills
- forming and keeping healthy relationships





Current research shows that about 15 per cent of Manitoban women consume alcohol while pregnant.

Currently, about one per cent of all babies born in Canada are born with FASD. This means that Manitoba has about 130 FASD related births each year.

There is no known safe amount of alcohol that can be used while pregnant.



## Community Involvement

Manitoba is committed to ongoing partnerships to address FASD. Provincial staff meet regularly with community members, non-profit agencies, and other government departments to learn about the needs and strengths of communities as we look into future planning.

# FASD Strategy Goals

**Goal 1:** Manitobans understand that alcohol use during pregnancy can cause FASD, that FASD is a lifelong disability, and that FASD prevention is a shared responsibility.

**Goal 2:** All girls and women of childbearing age are provided with information, support and services related to alcohol use prior to conception, during pregnancy and postpartum.

**Goal 3:** People of all ages suspected of, or living with, FASD are provided with assessment and diagnosis and, along with their caregivers, have access to support and other necessary services to meet their needs.

**Goal 4:** Strong research, evaluation and community input are the basis for FASD supports and services.

**Goal 5:** Service providers understand the impact of FASD on the lives of the clients they serve and use best practice approaches in their work.

## Next Steps

The province will provide information regularly to inform Manitobans of progress on the Manitoba FASD Strategy. Updates will appear on the Healthy Child Manitoba website as new initiatives are developed. Visit: [manitoba.ca/healthychild/fasd/index.html](http://manitoba.ca/healthychild/fasd/index.html).





# Progress To-Date

*Manitoba's FASD strategy builds on work done in Manitoba over many years. Manitoba currently invests more than \$10.5 million annually in FASD and the following are examples of investments made in the community:*

## **Manitoba's FASD Centre and FASD Network**

The Manitoba FASD Centre provides wide-ranging assessment, diagnostic and follow-up services for children and youth prenatally exposed to alcohol. It also provides leadership and training for the Manitoba FASD Network which supports families to access diagnostic services in northern and rural Manitoba. For more information call: 204-235-8866 or go to the website at: [fasdmanitoba.com](http://fasdmanitoba.com).

## Spectrum Connections

Spectrum Connections provides services to Winnipeg youth and adults living with FASD whose needs may not be met by other Manitoba programs. The program helps youth with FASD move into adulthood, supports youth and adults with FASD to live and work in the community and helps improve their quality of life. For more information call: 204-772-1591.



## InSight Mentoring Program

Formerly called Stop FASD, InSight provides a unique, three-year, intensive service to women 18 and over. Women who are pregnant or have recently given birth and used alcohol or drugs during pregnancy are welcome to enroll. This program uses an approach to reduce the harm associated with alcohol and other drugs and substances. It supports and empowers women to achieve their goals. There are seven sites across the province which can support up to 240 women. Locations include Winnipeg, The Pas, Thompson, Flin Flon, Portage la Prairie and Dauphin. For more information call: 204-945-2143.

## Project CHOICES

Project CHOICES provides information and four counselling sessions for women who are at risk of having an alcohol exposed pregnancy. Using motivational interviewing, the program encourages women to reduce their drinking and/or use effective birth control. For more information call: Klinik Community Health Centre at 204-784-4015 or Nor'West Co-op Community Health Centre at 204-940-8611.



## Youth Justice Program

Offered in Winnipeg and The Pas, this program helps youth who are involved in the justice system and may have FASD but have not been diagnosed. The program provides support for diagnosis and takes FASD into account when sentencing youth and in supporting them after they have been sentenced. For more information call: 204-928-7170.

## S.O.S. Manitoba

S.O.S. is a respite day camp for children aged three to 12 who are affected by FASD. Offering a high staff-to-child ratio, the camp provides a full day of respite for children with FASD and their families in four communities: Winnipeg, Little Grand Rapids, Brandon and Thompson. For more information call: 204-235-8874 or toll free at 1-866-314-0501.

## Research Scientist Award

This award builds research capacity and supports ongoing FASD research in Manitoba.

## FASD Specialists

Child and Family Services specialists provide policy, program, and case management support on the issue of FASD to staff of their Authority and its agencies. For more information call: The General Child and Family Services Authority: 204-984-9360, Métis Child and Family Services Authority: 204-949-0220, Southern First Nations Network of Care: 204-783-9190 or First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority: 204-942-1842.

Look for updates on the FASD strategy at [manitoba.ca/healthychild/fasd/index.html](http://manitoba.ca/healthychild/fasd/index.html)



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