



# Network News Winter 2006

## *A Note to Readers*

by Beverly Palibroda

With the New Year here, I suspect most of us are looking forward to the coming months. As we hang a new calendar on the wall, we cannot help but think about our goals for the coming year. The New Year is truly a time of dreams, goals and hopes for the future.

In order for all of us to achieve our goals, we need tools and resources. I once heard this analogy: If the only tool you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. I think of this often. It is a reminder to me to continue to gather new tools and to look carefully to ensure that I see more in life than just nails. Life is complex and amazing; we need many resources to make our way. Let the Network be one of your tools. We are here to support those of you affected by FASD.

Enjoy the tools within this newsletter. You will find upcoming events, the wisdom of parents, tips for developing routines in your home and contact information for the Network office. Feel free to give us a call.

## *Did You Know???*

### **Parent Support Groups in Regina and Saskatoon**

New Sessions beginning in January 2006. There is still time to sign up.

### **Supported Housing Project: FASD Workshop Series January and February 2006:**

**FASD and Justice** January 16-17th Saskatoon Residents, January 18-19th other Saskatchewan Residents

**Mental Health and Addictions** January 19-20th

**Education and Employment** February 6 All Saskatchewan Residents, February 7-8th Saskatoon Residents

**Social Services for Persons with FASD** February 7-8th Saskatchewan Residents, February 9-10th Saskatoon Residents

Call 975-0896 for more information or to register.

### **Canada Northwest Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Partnership Conference**

May 17-19, 2006 Queensbury Convention Centre  
Regina, Saskatchewan

### **Concrete Language Workshops with Speaker, Marilyn Macdonald**

Interactive workshops for caregivers and professionals

February 16, 2006 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM for caregivers

February 17, 2006 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM for professionals

RSVP by February 13th to Cheryl at 543-7880 ext 268, or email

[fasd@reginacommunityclinic.ca](mailto:fasd@reginacommunityclinic.ca)

Call the Network for more information about the events.

Saskatchewan Fetal Alcohol Support Network

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Saskatoon, SK S7L 7K7

975-0884 Toll free number 1-866-673-FASN (3276)

[fasdnetwork@sasktel.net](mailto:fasdnetwork@sasktel.net)

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## Parents Sharing Their Wisdom: FASD and Acceptance

Acceptance is a mental attitude that something is to be believed or thought to be the truth. With acceptance there is a sense that we have come to terms with whatever it is that we are accepting. (*WordNet* ® 2.0, © 2003 Princeton University). When we accept situations in our lives, we take what is offered as it is. For example, we may come to accept our own unique skills and abilities as well as our shortcomings. We are willing to understand that this is who we are.

For many parents and caregivers of persons with FASD, acceptance of what life offers can be a difficult and long journey. It is difficult to let go of the past, change our thinking, and take on new ideas. Parents and caregivers need to accept certain things about their own lives, their children, and FASD. A group of parents who attend a parent support

group in Tucson Arizona found that after meeting as a group for a time, they had each experienced personal and family successes. Their discussion turned to what they thought was most important in bringing about the successes. The parents concluded that one factor was more important than all the others; the key to their success was their own **ACCEPTANCE**. A healthy acceptance of their child and FASD allowed the parents to find the strength to consistently use the tips and strategies that they had learned through the support group. (source: fasdlane.com)

The idea of acceptance seems important in facing the challenges of life. Board members of the Network shared some of the things they have learned about FASD and have come to accept in their journey of living with FASD.

FASD is a cognitive impairment/brain damage and not willful poor behaviour or a moral impairment.

Although there can be great suffering with FASD there can also be great joy.

Judgmental attitudes are not helpful to persons with FASD and their families; acceptance, respect and inclusion are.

FASD is not a woman's issue, but a societal one.

With proper supports, persons with FASD can lead full and successful lives. Consult parent support groups for advice on "what works" with FASD.

Families and individuals may tend to deny FASD unless there are helpful resources and strategies that work.

Grief is part of living with FASD but we have to get beyond the grief. We need to adjust our dreams so that they are in line with what our child can achieve.

My grief is not so much a loss of my dream for my son, but the difficulty in finding and keeping the supports so necessary if he is to be able to hold his head high in the society in which we live.

Structure, support, and supervision are important. We have to look at each individual, their unique strengths and weaknesses and their environment in order to provide the necessary supports.

We need to change the environment not the person.

FASD is a global condition, not a racial one. It thrives especially where inequity and poverty exist.

Everyone has problems. Persons with FASD are more like their peers than they are different from them.

Diagnosis is important. It points the way to resources and supports.

People with FASD will need lifelong supports. The support they need will change throughout their lives.



Sometimes we accept the rain and puddles...





# Routines for Children and Teens with FASD

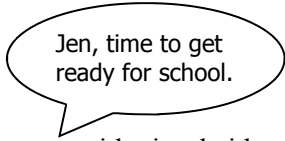
## Based on FASD Tip #15 How to Help Children and Teens with FASD Develop Routines

Routines are important in everyone's life. Understanding that we do specific things, in the same way, at certain times, everyday helps to keep us organized and feeling secure. Knowing what time the school bus comes on school mornings or what time we go to bed helps us to feel prepared and secure because we know what to do and when to do it.



Children and Teens with FASD have a hard time being organized. This disorganization can quickly lead to chaos in a home. Parents or caregivers can help children and teens by creating daily routines. Routines will help a child learn good habits. A child with FASD may never fully understand why it's important to brush and floss their teeth everyday, but what is important, is that they develop the good routine of brushing and flossing their teeth everyday.

Visual aids that show routines are very helpful. A chart with pictures of what a child needs to do can help the child see the steps needed to complete an activity. For example, a visual chart in the bathroom could include pictures of washing their face and hands, brushing and flossing their teeth, combing their hair, and putting on deodorant.



Verbal prompts, when used along with visual aids, can really help children and teens understand the routines of their day.

1. Decide what parts of your day need routines. Some ideas are wake up and bedtime routines, mealtime routines, when to watch TV, play, or do chores. Simple routines like always sitting in the same seat at the table or in the car are very important.
2. It is important for parents and caregivers to have routines in their own lives if they want to help children with FASD develop routines. Adults who have routines have more energy to teach children to develop good routines and habits.

3. Keep routines simple. Develop routines that build on your child's strengths and stick to them. Do not remove the reminders, charts, and prompts when the child is successful, this is what is helping them to be successful.
4. Think and plan ahead. Think about what could go wrong and make changes to the environment.
5. When asking your child or teen to do something, use the same plain and simple phrase each time, "Sandra, time to get ready for bed."
8. Routines help children and teens with FASD to succeed and feel good about their life.



### Some Tools to help you create routines:

- Labels for baskets, drawers, and coat hooks. Labels help to ensure that things go the same place every time.
- A white board and coloured markers for family schedules or notices.
- Photographs of your child or teen completing an activity. For example of picture of Cody playing soccer to post when there is a soccer game.
- A day planner is especially good for teens to write reminders or use stickers to remind themselves about events.
- Wall charts to post the steps of routines, you can use words, pictures, colours, whatever works best for your child or teen.
- Magnets on the fridge to post reminders of special events or school notices.
- Large calendar pages that can be written on or pictures can be posted on important dates.
- Colour coded items such as towels, toothbrush, cups, or placemats.
- Organizational baskets or boxes for personal items.



### FASD Tips for Parents and Caregivers

16 FASD Tip Sheets written by parents of children, youth, and adults affected by FASD. Downloadable from our website at [www.skfasnetwork.ca](http://www.skfasnetwork.ca) or call the office at 975-0884 or 1-866-673-FASN (3276)



## Materials and Resources Available from the Network

The Network is pleased to provide information about FASD to families, caregivers, support personnel, persons with FASD, professionals and community organizations. We have a range of materials and resources available by contacting our office, see contact information on page 1.

**Resource Packages**-for general information about FASD or when you have a particular need or area of interest.

**Diagnosis Information Kits for Families**-packages of informative and useful materials provided to families following a diagnosis.

**Parent Support Group Manual**-a manual outlining the steps to start and run a support group for parents and caregivers of children, youth, or adults with FASD.

**Database**- provincial services for persons with FASD, their families, caregivers and professionals. The database is updated and expanded as services arise.

**FASD Tips For Parents and Caregivers**-handy information sheets with examples, tips and support strategies useful in everyday situations. Available on our website.

**Pictorial FASD Tips**-the same great information as the text version of the FASD Tips for Parents and Caregivers, but in easy to understand and eye catching pictures.

**Network News**-a quarterly newsletter available to everyone through email and mailed out to members who do not have email.

**Living with FASD**-a 12 page publication distributed to members twice a year. The publication includes local, regional, national and international news and research information.

**Network Membership**-annual membership with the Saskatchewan Fetal Alcohol Support Network is \$15.00. Membership includes the quarterly newsletter, biannual publication, copies of all FASD Tips in text and pictorial versions, and new materials as they come available.

**Website**-visit our website at [www.skfasnetwork.ca](http://www.skfasnetwork.ca). You will find our FASD Tips available for download and samples of Network information.

**Toll Free Warm Line**-call 1-866-673-FASN (3276) or in Saskatoon 975-0884, for information, materials or support. Callers can be linked with a parent for support and parenting ideas.

## Important Reminder: Parents and Caregivers of Persons with FASD May Benefit from Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Citizens with Cognitive Disabilities

In the fall of 2005, the Saskatchewan Government released information concerning a new initiative committed to providing better support for children and youth with cognitive disabilities, such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Families and individuals affected by FASD may be eligible for services offered through this project. The vision of the Action Plan for Citizens with Cognitive Disabilities is a community that supports persons with cognitive disabilities so that each individual is able to participate and contribute as a full citizen in the economic and social life in Saskatchewan.

The Action Plan is a step in the right direction for persons with FASD and their families. Consultants have been hired in 4 regions of the province: Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and La Ronge. The consultants will be available to help families, individuals, and organizations to determine how to best support persons with cognitive disabilities. The plan will build on existing services and has indicated a desire to partner with the Saskatchewan Fetal Alcohol Support Network, the regional FASD committees, as well as the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute.

**Call the Network for more information or for the contact information for the consultant in your area. Toll Free 1-866-673- FASN (3276) in Saskatoon 975-0884.**

[http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/fs\\_cognitive\\_disabilities.pdf](http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/fs_cognitive_disabilities.pdf)

Communities Working Together: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Citizens with Cognitive Disabilities  
Accessed October 6, 2005.

**You are not alone with FASD, there is help from those who have gone that path.**