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**Sept. 9, 2019**  
**For Immediate Release**

Today, on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Prevention and Support Day, I want to acknowledge the voices and experiences of children and youth with FASD.

FASD is a diverse neurological condition that affects each person differently. Those with FASD face some incredible challenges, but each child and youth also has individual strengths, talents and abilities.

Too often, a lack of community services and supports creates inequities and barriers that prevent young people with FASD from achieving their full potential. I am committed to seeking change in the systems that serve these children and youth, and to supporting a society that fosters their growth.

We are currently engaging with a number of children, youth and their families on the lived experience of FASD, and will be facilitating a forum next month to talk about the issues that arise for these families. This forum will include children and youth with FASD and their families, who will share their experience with officials from several government ministries and provincial Indigenous leadership organizations. It will be an incredible opportunity to hear and acknowledge the voices of these youth, their stories and vision for what support should look like, as well as to hear input and ideas that come from the expertise of participating policy influencers. It is exciting to imagine what we can do together as we examine how communities and systems understand FASD, and how well that understanding is working to support young people.

In addition to the upcoming forum, in the coming months we will also engage with a number of communities to learn how they view and respond to FASD and what is needed to wrap around children, youth, young adults and their families.

Next spring, we will release a public report centred on youth and families living with FASD – the true experts in what supports and services are needed in their lives. Our report will also speak to the needs of communities. One thing we know is that a positive future for those with FASD will depend on a combination of commitments and strategies with multiple partners.

My Office, alongside those children, youth and their families, will be actively advocating and monitoring for impactful and positive change.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Charlesworth  
Representative for Children and Youth