



News Release

For Immediate Release

Sept. 9, 2022

RCY releases *Hands, not Hurdles* to mark International FASD Awareness Day

Representative Jennifer Charlesworth is marking International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day with the release of a new resource aimed to inform and assist practitioners working with B.C. children and youth who have the disability and their families.

Hands, not Hurdles: Helping Children with FASD and their Families is a condensed and easily digestible version of a more in-depth report on FASD released by the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) in 2021. In addition to continuing to increase awareness and understanding about FASD, *Hands, not Hurdles* also provides tips and other suggested resources for community practitioners including teachers, counsellors, recreational workers and clinicians.

"FASD is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disabilities in the Western world and yet it remains a highly misunderstood, multi-faceted brain and body disability that affects many people in our communities," Charlesworth said. "We all need to be more informed, understanding and supportive of children and youth with FASD and their families."

Today's report release is also a reminder that children and youth with FASD and their families in B.C. continue to receive extremely limited services and are too often left feeling isolated and desperate for support. Despite continued work from parents and advocacy groups, there has been little progress to date by government on the recommendations from RCY's 2021 report *Excluded, Increasing Understanding, Support and Inclusion for Children with FASD and their Families*.

"It can be alarming and discouraging to learn about the negative experiences that people with FASD continue to have in school, recreation, work and community,"

Charlesworth said. "But there is a lot that can be done to improve things right now. I hope this report helps to foster understanding and advocate for the support that is so greatly needed."

As with the previous RCY report on FASD, this publication was co-led by Myles Himmelreich, an adult with FASD with more than 16 years experience working in the field, who helped bring forward a clear understanding of these children and families, their strengths and challenges. Also helping to communicate those challenges – as well as the supports that can help children, youth and their families – was artist Sam Bradd, who provided the illustrations for *Hands, not Hurdles*.

"Included in this shorter report are suggestions on how you can take meaningful action to inform yourself about FASD and to better help children and families," Charlesworth said. "People with FASD are resilient, have many strengths and can thrive when understood and supported well."

You can find a link to the latest report [here](#).

International FASD Awareness Day, Sept. 9, was first celebrated in 1999. September is also FASD Awareness Month, which the Canadian government began recognizing in 2020.

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