FASD-CAN
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
Care Action Network

NOVEMBER 2025 NEWS

Latest updates from FASD-CAN

Kia ora

We are nearly at the end of the year – phew! November and December can be some of the busiest months we navigate, so try to ensure you find time to fill your cup, as I have no doubt you'll be filling others over this time and into the holiday period.

We've been busy too, planning ahead for 2026!

For those in the wider Wellington region, we will have two **He Ara Tika – FASD 101 workshops** for community kaimahi in February, as well as a final online session – links below. If you're a professional, please do encourage whānau you're working with to come, as well as your colleagues who may not know much about FASD.

Next year we'll be launching our new **LEVEL TWO 'Life with FASD' training** for whānau and caregivers, which we've been working on for months. If you've completed Level One and would like to take it up a notch, this is for you. There'll be two kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) trainings in 2026, as well as an online option. The new name is 'He Ara Hononga me Aroha' – 'A Path of Connection with Love'.

We're very excited to have recently become part of a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CanFASD, NOFASD and FASD Hub Australia**. It's a cooperative agreement between ourselves and national FASD organisations (not governments) in Canada and Australia, aiming to advance knowledge, research and collaboration. Find out more here.

Finally, on a sombre note: today, November 12, marks one year since the Prime Minister apologised for the abuse and neglect that occurred in state care across Aotearoa between 1950 and 1999.

Today has been set as the **National Day of Reflection** to honour survivors of abuse who bravely spoke up as part of inquiry. We also remember those who have passed away. These are our people: around 50% of tamariki and rangatahi in care in our country have FASD.

Over this week there are events all around the motu. If you can't attend one, we hope you can pause for a moment at midday today, November 12, to reflect on what occurred, the courage it took those who spoke up, and think of those who are sadly still suffering.

Noho ora mai
Stephanie

FASD-CAN CEO

FASD-CAN wins international film award

Our amazing youth / rangatahi team won an award at the inaugural Canadian FASD Film Festival in October for the short film we submitted about Tītoki / our weekend camps!

In her acceptance speech (via Zoom) our Navigator Anna Gundesen said, "It's a privilege to be the project lead of this initiative. This award is really for the individuals and families featured in the film, for their courage, their confidence and their participation."

Click here for our news article and the link to watch the award-winning film (10 minutes) which documents the deep value our Tītoki camps have for both our rangatahi with FASD and the caregivers / parents / support people they bring with them. We can guarantee you'll be uplifted by our incredible Tītoki whānau.

Join our team!

We're in the final stages of looking for a Youth Navigator / Worker to join our amazing team. You'd be doing very meaningful work supporting rangatahi with FASD at our Tītoki weekends and much more. 30 hours a week.

Click here to find out more and apply.

NEW! Pizza Club Ōtautahi / Christchurch: are you keen?

There has long been interest in a social group for individuals with FASD in Otautahi/Christchurch, like the ones now established in Tāmaki Makaurau and more recently, Pōneke / Wellington. These have been brilliant for both rangatahi and caregivers/parents/whānau to get together with others who 'get it'.

To gauge interest and make connections, a couple of our local caregiver members, along with Teowai (one of our kaiārahi youth leaders) are proposing an initial get together on Friday, 5th December, 6pm at a venue to be advised (based on numbers interested). It's all free.

Please email Carlie carliefromtok@gmail.com or Gythlian - gythlian@gmail.com – **by 14 November** if you're keen to be part of it.

Pizza Club Pōneke / Wellington, 13 December 6pm-8.30pm

We have another Pizza Club coming up in December since the inaugural one was a huge success! This time the rangatahi and their caregiver or support person (if required) will be going to 'Escape Masters' after pizza – a guided, themed, team game, which we are assured will be lots of fun!

Click here for more info and to RSVP.

He Ara Tika FASD 101 Training for Community Kaimahi

Our 'He Ara Tika' training workshops for community kaimahi and whānau have been getting rave reviews around the motu! Our remaining live sessions are now in 2026 – see dates and venues below.

Due to the high ongoing demand for this workshop, we're also hosting a new ONLINE session on February 19, 2026 with Kim, our Principal Advisor and Anna, our Tamaki Makaurau Navigator.

These are free, non-clinical 'FASD 101' style workshops, aimed at community kaimahi / workers (e.g. staff in community and youth organisations, justice, housing, WINZ) – as well as caregivers and whānau. All are four hours long, beginning in the morning. Here's some recent feedback:

- "Great presenters with fantastic knowledge ... this should be offered in schools and every environment that connects with people [with FASD]. I will be raising this learning with the staff in my services."

- "The FASD training was very informative and well structured. It enhanced my understanding of how prenatal alcohol exposure can affect brain development, behaviour, and daily functioning. The facilitators were awesome!"

Click on a workshop below to register now. There are strictly limited places – and they are already filling up!

Porirua – February 12, 2026
Pōneke / Wellington – February 13, 2026
ONLINE – February 19, 2026
Ōtautahi / Christchurch – March 4, 2026.

Kete into Practice: Training for Educators

Book in your professional development for next year now: our 10-module FASD training for educators is back in 2026!

It begins on March 5 and will run fortnightly on Thursdays. Teacher aides, kaiako and learning support staff have told us they want practical, evidence-based strategies for FASD in a real-world setting of limited resources and competing demands – and that's exactly what we'll be delivering.

This course (updated for 2026) was run two years ago to rave reviews:

• "The course challenged my preconceived ideas, understanding and biases regarding FASD students."

• "This learning follows all the UDL principles that also support other neurodiverse learners."

Please share with your colleagues!

Click here for more info and to register.

FASD-CAN Annual General Meeting

Saturday November 15, 4.30pm-4.50pm

Please join us at our AGM – we'd love to see you online and we promise we'll make it speedy: just 20-30 minutes.

Please click here to find out more and register now.

Online Caregiver Support Group Meeting – final date

Our last online caregiver support group for 2025! Open to everyone around the motu – whether you attend one of our in-person support groups near you or not.

Online Caregiver Support Group EVENING – (monthly) Wednesday November 19, 7:30pm

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A couple of our 2025 FASD Advocacy / Submissions

We are constantly advocating for FASD awareness at every level – including policy. Here are a couple more that we've presented this year; there are many more, but we felt these may be particularly relevant for our membership.

• **Community Voices: The FASD Engagement Report**

In 2024, FASD-CAN brought together many of our members – parents, caregivers, whānau, individuals with FASD, and professionals from across Aotearoa, to share your lived experiences and priorities for change. These informed Te Whatu Ora's planning to refresh the FASD Action Plan 2025-2028, and our resulting Community Engagement Report, finalised a year later in September 2025, captures your powerful voices and insights. We would now like to share this back with you, our members, whose honesty, bravery and strength made it possible.
Read it here.

• FASD-CAN Submission to Whaikaha's draft Disability Strategy Refresh

In September 2025, FASD-CAN submitted feedback to this draft strategy, which will guide how government agencies support disabled people in education, health, housing, employment, and justice – all areas that strongly affect people with FASD. We felt the draft required further clarity around actions, deadlines and ways to measure real results. We've made a strong call for specific commitments, mandatory training for professionals, lifelong support, and accountability based on actual improvements in people's lives... not just ticking boxes. Without these changes, we feel the draft has good intentions but will deliver little real impact for our community.
Read it here.

Privacy and Complaints

Just a note: we've updated our privacy statement and as part of our commitment to you, our members, we want to regularly highlight how seriously we take these issues.

Please check it out on our Privacy and Complaints page here.

Do you know about our private Facebook groups? We have one for parents, caregivers and whānau, and one for cross-sector professionals who working with people affected by FASD. Our groups are great for connecting with others who get it – asking advice, comparing stategies, networking or maybe even just venting!

Please note: you MUST be a member of FASD-CAN before joining the Parents and Caregivers group, as our members share personal info – and we also encourage professionals do the same. So please click here if you are not already a member (it's quick and easy with no requirement from you – just a monthly newsletter from us!) then answer the three joining questions. We'd love to have you in our groups!

Mauri ora
Your FASD-CAN Team

Stay in the know about FASD in Aotearoa. If you've been sent this email by someone else, please join us as a member to receive newsletters!

If you would like to donate to FASD-CAN, to help us in our mahi, click here to go to our donation page.

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