



## FASD-CAN

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder  
Care Action Network

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### **FEBRUARY 2026 NEWS**

#### **Kia ora koutou**

Nau mai, haere mai to 2026!

Here at FASD-CAN we are super-excited about what's on the calendar for this year. We'll be increasing our service support and our training opportunities, and bringing new resources to all our communities across Aotearoa. Our kaupapa hasn't changed: to build understanding of FASD across all sectors, advocate for more access, and support better FASD-informed services at community and government level.

To help us with this, we have some new kaimahi, and we're hiring more! We need a dedicated administrator for our training and events, and a Youth Development Navigator to help with our amazing Tītoki work. See below for more.

Lastly, while some of us managed some relaxation over the holidays, we know others did not. We hope those communities affected by recent appalling weather have managed to get the support they need. Connect with us if juggling these stresses alongside caring for tamariki or rangatahi with FASD has become too much. That's what we're here for – to support you through the hard times.

Noho ora mai rā

**Stephanie**

**FASD-CAN CEO**

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### **Introducing TWO new FASD-CAN Navigators!**

#### **Jacqui Mikkelson – Te Wai Pounamu (Whakatū / Nelson)**



The South Island finally has a new FASD-CAN Navigator! Jacqui Mikkelson will bring her passion, lived experience and extensive professional background in early childhood education and social services to support whānau living with FASD. She's based in Whakatū / Nelson, but will be supporting all of Te Wai Pounamu.

Her work is centred on connection, compassion and the potential to thrive that's within all individuals and whānau when given the right support.

Find out more about Jacqui [here](#), get in touch with her at [jacqui.mikkelson@fasd-can.org.nz](mailto:jacqui.mikkelson@fasd-can.org.nz) or text / call on 028 474 3648.

## Letitia (Teesh) Dowie-Lewis – Centre North (Kirikiriroa / Hamilton)



Teesh is our new Navigator in the Waikato. She has had 30 years as a foster parent working with Barnardos, Open Home Foundation, CYFs and Oranga Tamariki and has changed countless lives in the process. Teesh also supports other caregivers, parents and whānau, and her enormous network of contacts across education, health, disability and Oranga Tamariki systems means she can connect you with the right people and resources for your needs.

Find out more about Teesh [here](#), get in touch with her at [teeshdl@fasd-can.org.nz](mailto:teeshdl@fasd-can.org.nz) or text / call her on 020 4188 2981.

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## Launching our new Legal Resource

If you have a dependent loved one with FASD, we know that their long-term welfare may be a source of worry to you. How will they be cared for, supported and protected if something happens to you, or after you pass?

There are many legal questions around protecting assets and income – should you use a family trust? What about guardianship or powers of attorney?

These are big questions, but after months of mahi, FASD-CAN is proud to launch a comprehensive resource looking at all of these scenarios – for when you're ready to discuss them within your whānau.

We'll be following this up later this year with a deep-dive webinar on some of the more crucial aspects of this resource.

[Click here to go to 'Planning for Adulthood: how the law can help'.](#)

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## Two new roles at FASD-CAN!

**Youth Worker – based in Tāmaki Makaurau  
35 hours a week**

We're seeking an experienced youth worker to join our Tītoki team. You'll work with our project lead, CEO and funding partners to grow and support our cohort of rangatahi all around the motu – including at our weekend camps (Tītoki), other events and online engagement. You'll also be building relationships and promoting self-development, leadership and peer support skills in our core group of young leaders / kaiārahi with FASD. A meaningful and fun role!



*Applications close 17 February.*

### **Training Administrator – remote / online 15 hours a week**

This work-from-home role would be fantastic for a parent or caregiver with the right skills. You'll be supporting Paige, our senior admin, and looking after our training, webinars and courses. You'd need to be super-organised, have lots of initiative, be proficient in the Microsoft Office suite and comfortable with running Zoom meetings.

*Applications close 26 February.*

[Click here to find out more about both of these roles.](#)

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### **Life with FASD 1: Ahuriri / Napier Monday & Tuesday February 23/24, 9.30am-2.30pm**



Our first free, two-day caregiver training for 2026 is in Hawkes Bay!

In association with [Tautoko Aroha / Support with Compassion](#) and [Te Kupenga Hauora - Ahuriri](#), this training is for parents, caregivers, grandparents or whānau caring for someone with FASD (or probable FASD).

The two-day training will:

- increase your knowledge of FASD and its

challenges across the lifespan

- equip you with successful strategies for behavioural symptoms of FASD
- find out more about support systems in health, welfare, education and justice
- build a network with other locals with lived experience of FASD.

The training is free, with kai provided.

[Please click here to find out more and register](#) – but be quick, spaces are now very limited!

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### **Ngā Tupu Rau – Quarterly FASD Webinars for Educators**

#### **From Reaction to Reflection: the Power of a Pause' Tuesday March 17 4pm-5pm**

Join us for an interactive, one-hour webinar designed to equip teachers, learning support coordinators and other support staff with a practical framework for moving beyond immediate reactions to thoughtful, reflective, best-practice responses.

[Click here to find out more and register now.](#)

### **LANSAS – Quarterly FASD Webinars for Social Workers and Support Workers**

## Words Matter: Supporting Neurodivergent Tamariki with Collaboration and Compassion

Tuesday March 10, 4pm

Join us to discuss the power of words and how choosing the right ones can boost collaboration and connection, and enhance the mana of your learners with FASD.

Using Dr Ross Greene's Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (CPS), you'll understand how to reframe neurobehavioural symptoms as valuable communication.

[Click here to find out more and register now.](#)

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## Kete into Practice: Training for Educators and Support Staff



**\* Group discount available for four or more kaimahi.**

Our updated 10-module training for educators, learning support coordinators and other school support staff is starting in a month!

This practical, evidence-based training had rave reviews in 2024, and more Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and trauma-informed practice content has been added since then. Participants said the course was extremely helpful for interacting with ALL learners with neurodisabilities, not only those with FASD.

Our three highly experienced facilitators include Scottish Education Specialist Ailsa Clarke, Educational Psychologist Debbie Kenwright and FASD-CAN Principal Advisor Kim Milne – with Ailsa and Kim both having lived experience of FASD.

Pull a team of four or more together with your colleagues to take advantage of our group discount and tick off your neurodiversity PD in 2026!

[Click here for more info and to register now](#) – and please share the pānui above to your networks!

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## New Resource: Information Sheets

Each month during 2026, we'll be loading up a couple of new resources to our 'Understanding FASD' page. Most have a handy, two-page downloadable / printable info sheet as well as an extended version for those who'd like to do a deeper dive into the subject.

We have now added 'FASD and the Window of Tolerance' and 'FASD and Protective Risk Factors' to the list.

[Check them out here.](#)

## FASD INFORMATION SHEETS

Practical insights for everyday life.



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### Pizza Clubs – Auckland / Christchurch



Our first Tāmaki / Auckland Pizza Club for 2026 meets back at the FASD Centre in Albany –and this time includes Laser Tag! It'll be lots of fun – see you there!

[Click here for all details and to RSVP.](#)

#### ŌTAUTAHI / CHRISTCHURCH

We'd love another pizza event (perhaps with bowling too!), for caregivers and rangatahi in the evening on Friday February 20. We have some

excited people on board, but to make it work, we need at least ten confirmed. It's all free and lots of fun – so if you're keen, please let Gythlian know by **5pm on Monday, 9th Feb** to [gythlian@gmail.com](mailto:gythlian@gmail.com)

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### Online Caregiver Support Group Meetings – upcoming dates

Our first **online** caregiver support groups for 2026! Open to everyone around the motu – whether you attend one of our [in-person support groups](#) in your region or not.

Keen to attend? You'll first need to [join FASD-CAN as a member](#) if you're not with us already (quick and easy), then fill in a short form for your group of choice via the links below. You'll then get a Zoom link and a monthly reminder email.

[Online Caregiver Support Group LUNCHTIME](#) – (monthly) Thursday March 12 (note one week later than usual) at 12:30pm.

[Online Caregiver Support Group EVENING](#) – (monthly) Tuesday March 17, 7:30pm.

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### Kōkiri: The Future Speaks

An important national conference which seeks to transform the care sector in Aotearoa is coming up soon. 'Kōkiri – The Future Speaks' is hosted by VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai in Te Whanganui-a-Tara / Wellington, on February 16 & 17 March.

For the first time, the voices of care-experienced rangatahi will be part of the conversation. FASD-CAN's Tāmaki Makaurau Navigator, Anna Gundersen, will lead a session showcasing the development of our Tītoki mahi (weekend camps for rangatahi with FASD), alongside our kaiārahi / young leaders with FASD.

[Click here to register now](#) – earlybird registration closes on February 10!



**But wait – there's more:** if you are a rangatahi / young person who has been in care; you'd like to attend the Kōkiri conference but cost may be a barrier, there are a limited number of scholarships available. [Click here to apply](#).

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### **Important Justice research request: Remote court appearances for neurodiversity**

FASD-CAN has been working with the Ministry of Justice, the police and judges on a neurodiversity update. For an upcoming meeting we need input for research being done by Te Herenga Waka Centre for Justice Innovation at Victoria University of Wellington about remote participation in courts, particularly criminal courts.

They are particularly interested in the suitability of an audio-visual link for people with a disability. They want to know if it's a help or hindrance, and is it fair or not fair? They want to hear the voices of those who have been directly affected by remote participation so decision-makers can explore how effective accommodations can be made.

If you can help, please contact our Chairperson Dr Leigh Henderson directly by email asap on [leigh.henderson@fasd-can.org.nz](mailto:leigh.henderson@fasd-can.org.nz)

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That's all for February – quite enough to be going on with!

**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.

**JOIN FASD-CAN**



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