

NOVEMBER 2024

Alberta **PCAP** Council

Parent-Child Assistance Program

FALL NEWSLETTER



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Virtual PCAP Core Training!



Are you a new PCAP Mentor? Have you been in your position for a couple of months and would love to learn more strategies to help you succeed? Do you want to connect with other new PCAP Mentors?

Come join us for PCAP Core Training in January!

[Sign up here](#)



[Sign up to the PCAP mailing list](#)



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TRAINING & EVENTS

Alberta **PCAP** Council
Parent-Child Assistance Program

PRESENTS

PCAP CORE TRAINING



When: January 6-7 & April 30, 2025

Where: Virtual via Zoom

Core Training is essential training to introduce new staff to the PCAP Model and provide strategies for challenges faced as a PCAP Mentor.

**Registration closes on
December 6, 2024**

[Register now by clicking here!](#)

Ongoing opportunities



PENELOPE 101 WEBINAR



**MONTHLY PCAP STAFF'S
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

**** There will be no mentor or supervisor call in December. Sessions will resume in January 2025.**



ONLINE PCAP REFRESHER



SHARE YOUR STORIES



PCAP Core Training (Fall 2024)

In **September**, PCAP Council hosted Part 1 of PCAP Core Training at the Star of the North Retreat centre in St. Albert, Alberta. Our trainers Michelle and Pam, were joined by many new mentors from all over the province including *Calgary, Camrose, Cold Lake, Edmonton, Hinton, Lloydminster, Sisika, Stand Off and Wetaskiwin.*

This training provided an opportunity for new mentors to connect with others, to have questions answered and to learn strategies to help them with challenges that may arise in their field of work.

Part 2 was held virtually on December 3rd with a presentations from Jen Willes on the Prevention Conversation and Robert Jagodzinski on Penelope data.



ALBERTA PCAP COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT

Recent Projects & Updates

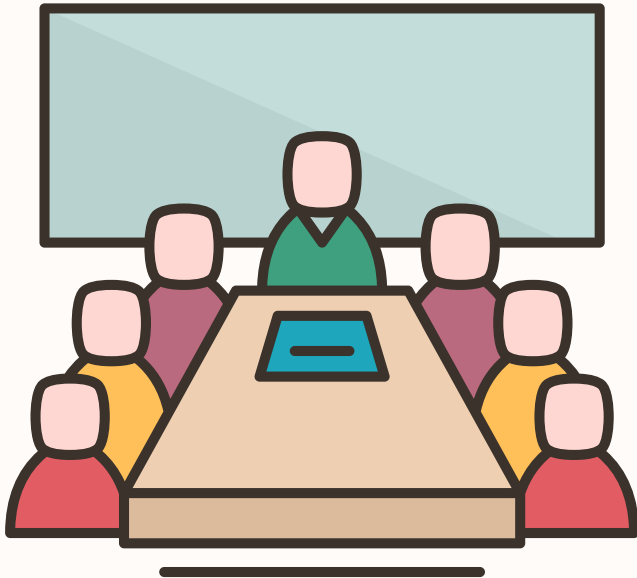
The **Board of Directors** met on August 16 and October 4 to discuss PCAP program updates and challenges. During these meetings, the Board had finalized the Strategic Plan with Janet Giles and was presented the findings from the Indigenous Engagement Project with Emily Vespi. The Board had also appointed two officers into new positions; *Sandra Rorbak* elected as Chair and *Velvet Buhler* elected as Vice-Chair.

The Data Oversight Committee met regularly and had the opportunity to meet with personnel from PCAP in New Brunswick to discuss their data collection processes. For more information, please visit: <https://www.nbsocialpediatrics.com/parent-child-assistance-program>


PCAP Council staff attended the **Beyond the Spectrum Conference** held in Edmonton through the **Lakeland Centre for FASD** on October 24-25, 2024. This conference was open to organizations and families to provide opportunities to learn about emerging research and multidisciplinary approaches, and listen to direct experiences from individuals with FASD and their families. PCAP Council also had set up a table at the conference to help spread more awareness about the PCAP programs. Keep a lookout for their next conference in 2026!





The Alberta PCAP Website



 [RECOMMENDED TRAININGS](#)

 [EVENTS & TRAININGS](#)

 [PENELOPE SUPPORT](#)

 [RESOURCES LIBRARY](#)

The *Alberta PCAP Website* keeps you up to date with **upcoming events, updated resources and Penelope forms/support!**

PCAP DAYS 2024 RECAP

After attending the Beyond the Spectrum Conference, APCAPC hosted **PCAP Days 2024** on October 26-27, for our mentors and supervisors across all PCAP programs in the province. PCAP Days was hosted in Edmonton, Alberta at the Sandman Hotel West Edmonton. We were joined by 70 mentors and supervisors who were engaging, attentive and vulnerable.

It gave our programs a chance to connect with other staff members and an opportunity to share their recent positive and challenging experiences. The 2-day event included seminars from Bonnie Randall who presented on ACE's and Resiliency and from Chelsea Ohlmann (CASA Mental Health) who presented on Child Development and Secure attachments. Other activities included a Paint Night with Creative Art Spark and breakout sessions by role, which included a puzzle competition for the mentors!

We look forward to future PCAP Days and we appreciate all the feedback that was given from the programs.



PCAP Days 2024



Here's What You Had to Say!

👉 Nice to network, make connections and reconnect with old connections.

👉 Thank you for the two days! It helps to be connected once a year with like-minded people and have a safe place to relax and learn

👉 Looking forward to next PCAP conference!



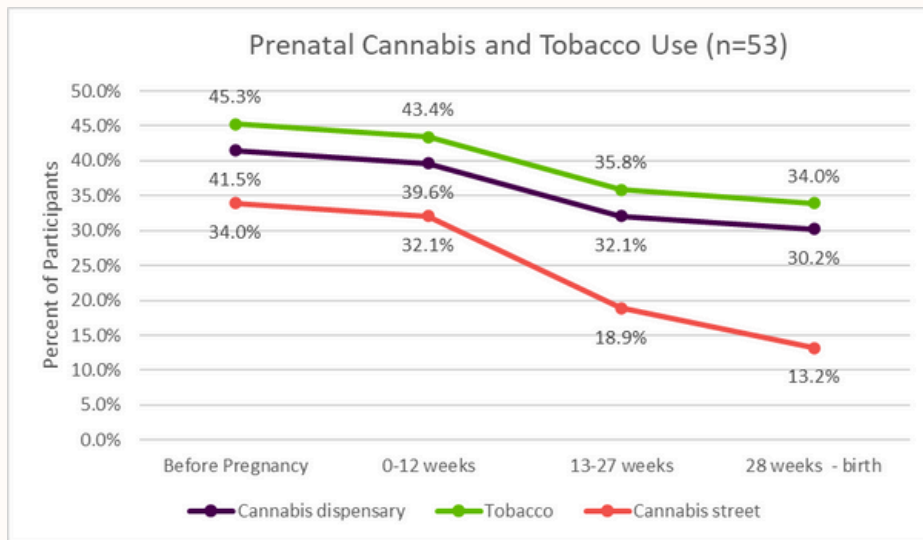
PENELOPE'S CORNER

The Pregnancy Outcomes Form - A Preliminary Analysis

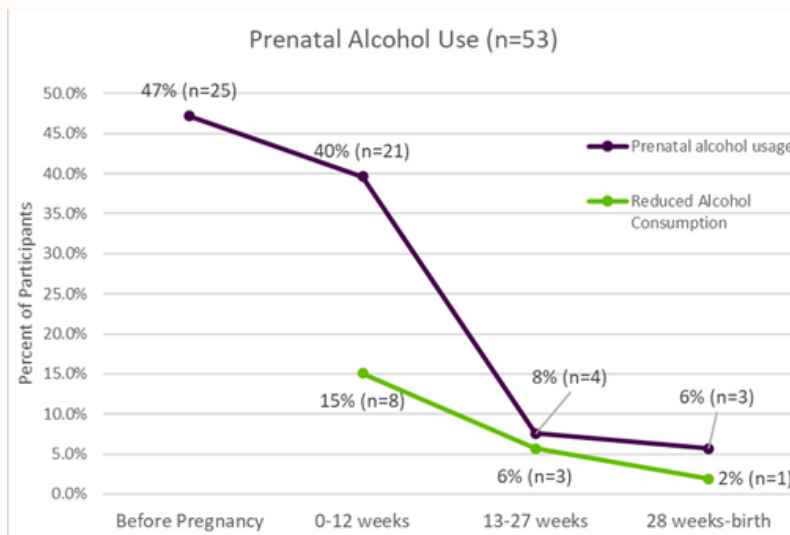
It has been over one year since the Pregnancy Outcomes Form has been online and available through Penelope. The intent of this tool is to better understand participants' challenges during pregnancy. It captures more information than the biannual during this time-sensitive period for participants. While this form is not mandatory it captures critical information about prenatal substance use.

Looking at the period ending September 30, 2024, there were 10 sites using this form. Amongst these sites, 53 pregnancy outcomes forms were completed. When we compare this to the biannual forms for the same period, 88 participants were recorded as giving birth. This shows 60% participation rate for the Pregnancy Outcomes Form. While these numbers aren't fully representative of all participants' pregnancies during this period, it did provide us with some very helpful insights into patterns of prenatal substance use.

Prenatal Cannabis and Tobacco Use



Cannabis and tobacco were the most widely used substances during pregnancy. There were still 34% of participants using tobacco by the third trimester. It begs the question, what is the availability of smoking cessation supports programs through PCAP or other services? Dispensary cannabis use was the next highest with 30% of participants still using by the third trimester. Street cannabis usage was the next lowest with 34% of participants reporting usage before pregnancy. Street cannabis usage declined to 13% of participants by the third trimester.



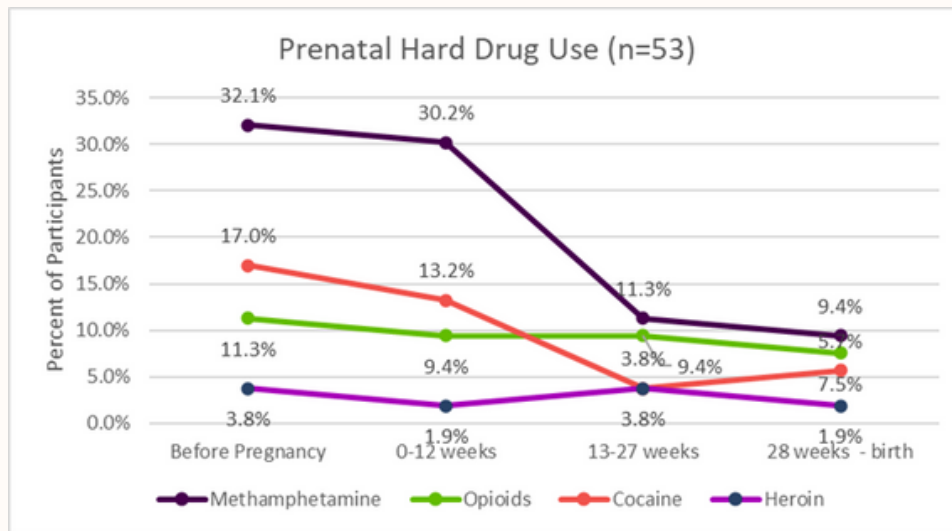
Prenatal Alcohol Use

One of the most encouraging findings from the Pregnancy Outcomes Form was how dramatically alcohol use declines by the second trimester. Prior to pregnancy, 47% of respondents reported alcohol use. This declined to 8% (4 participants) by the second trimester. Amongst those 4 participants still using alcohol, 3 reported reducing their alcohol use.

PENELOPE'S CORNER - con't

Use of Other Substances

There were similar patterns observed in the use of other substances. Methamphetamine usage dropped from 32% of participants using before pregnancy to just 11% using during the second trimester. Cocaine and crack usage declined from 17% to 4%. Opioids had the lowest declines over time with 11% of participants reporting usage before pregnancy and 9% still using at the second trimester. Heroin usage was relatively low (only 2 participants overall) so it was hard to determine any substantive trends in its usage throughout pregnancy.



Further Exploration

This is only a very preliminary look at the Pregnancy Outcomes Form. In the future I will be looking at substance usage prior to PCAP enrollment and after PCAP enrollment. This will provide a better metric for the efficacy of PCAP in supporting participants to avoid prenatal substance use. It has also been proposed to track when participants found out they were pregnant or thought they might be pregnant. While it would be ideal to have no prenatal substance use, the fact that the numbers drop substantively throughout pregnancy is encouraging. This is particularly evident in the decline in alcohol use by the third trimester. It may also be interesting to start a conversation about helping participants decrease or quit smoking.

The Pregnancy Outcomes Form is an optional form. However, if you do have the time to fill out these forms when participants give birth, it provides additional insights into how we can support participants' well-being. If you have any questions about accessing this form please get in touch with Kathleen Hounsell (kathleen.hounsell@alberta-pcap.ca) and she will guide you in the right direction.



Article written by guest contributor:



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Data Analyst

Alberta PCAP Council

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Frequent links for staff:

- [Update on a staff change](#)
- [Add a new Participant to Penelope](#)
- [Submit support or other requests](#)
- [PCAP Forms and Documents](#)
- [Take the Penelope 101 webinar](#)

ALANA PETERS

The Gift of Focus – Choosing to Embrace Glimmers of Joy in the Darkness

The Power of Focus: Finding Glimmers in the Darkness

As the days grow shorter and darkness wraps itself around our evenings, this time of year can feel heavy for many. The dim light and colder air often mirror an inward pull, drawing us into reflection—or sometimes restlessness. Yet, in this physical darkness lies an invitation to discover the profound power of focus, particularly on what many might overlook: the glimmers of **joy, gratitude, and meaning that illuminate our lives in surprising ways.**

The Beauty of Small Glimmers

In the rush of daily life, it's easy to overlook the small, fleeting moments that can bring warmth to the soul—a soft laugh, a kind word, or the way the morning frost sparkles like crushed diamonds. These glimmers, though seemingly insignificant, hold transformative potential. They remind us that light persists even in the deepest shadows.

Focusing on these glimmers requires intention. It's not always our instinct to notice the subtle gifts scattered throughout the day, especially when the noise of the world pulls us toward worry, obligation, or distraction. Yet, by pausing to notice them, we train ourselves to see more clearly what truly matters.

Gratitude as a Lens

Gratitude is one of the most powerful tools we have to sharpen this focus. It's a practice, not just a feeling—an active choice to turn our attention toward the gifts that life offers us. When we focus on gratitude, we're not ignoring the challenges or pains we face. Instead, we're choosing to let the light of appreciation shine on the things that nourish and sustain us, even in hard times.

Science supports this *wisdom*. Studies consistently show that gratitude can improve mental health, deepen relationships, and increase resilience. But beyond the data, gratitude gives us a framework for finding joy in what we already have rather than in what we lack. It shifts our focus from scarcity to abundance, from longing to presence.



What We Focus on Grows

There's a well-known saying: "Energy flows where attention goes." What we focus on becomes magnified in our experience. If we spend our time lamenting the long nights and cold days, they'll feel even heavier. But if we shift our gaze to the tiny miracles around us—maybe the way candlelight dances, the satisfaction of a warm drink in our hands, or the quiet of a winter evening—we'll find ourselves more attuned to life's quiet beauty.

This practice doesn't erase hardship, but it creates space for **light** to coexist with darkness. It reminds us that even in the most challenging seasons, there is something worth cherishing.

ALANA PETERS - cont'

How to See the Gifts

If you're looking for ways to cultivate focus and gratitude during this season, here are a few ideas to try:

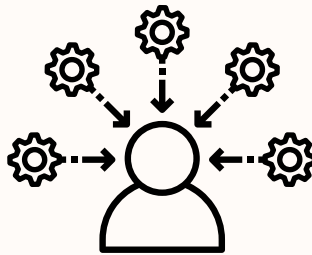


1. Keep a Gratitude Journal
2. Write down three things each day that brought you joy or comfort. Over time, you'll notice how your perspective begins to shift.
3. Pause for Glimmers
4. During your day, take a few moments to **actively look for something beautiful or heartwarming**—a child's laughter, the scent of pine, or even the cozy weight of a blanket.
5. Practice Mindful Presence
6. When you notice a glimmer, don't rush past it. Take a deep breath and let yourself fully savor it.
7. Share Your Gratitude
8. *Tell someone you appreciate them*. Sharing your gratitude amplifies its power, strengthening connections and spreading warmth.

A Time to Refocus

This season of physical darkness isn't just a time to endure; **it's a time to recalibrate**. By choosing to focus on the glimmers, we can train ourselves to see the light in every season. Gratitude helps us remember what truly matters, grounding us in the present and opening our eyes to the beauty of life's small gifts.

So, as the long nights settle in, let's choose to be seekers of light—not by waiting for the sun to return, but by finding the glimmers already around us. They're there, waiting to be noticed, inviting us into a brighter, fuller way of being.



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More by Alana Peters:



Dare to Lead™
Training I In Person
January 17, 18 & 20
in Red Deer, AB.

RESOURCES

CanFASD: Identifying Best Practices for FASD

This course is great for staff who are looking for strategies and resources to help support individuals who have been diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. This course also supports individuals who may be at risk of having a child with FASD or who may already have a child with this diagnosis. For more information, please [click here](#).



National Safe Driving Week

With December arriving, so have slippery roads, busy streets and the hustle of the holidays. It's important to remember to keep safe during your travels for your safety and your families. Remember to allow extra time, cautious driving and follow safe practices while driving. For more information on driving safety, please visit the [OHS Resource Portal](#).



Coaching Families Caregiver Support Group

The Coaching Families Caregiver Support group is a valuable resource open to all caregivers of children with, or possibly with, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). This inclusive community provides a space for individuals to come together and share their expertise, insights, and experiences. For more information or to register, please connect with Miranda at Miranda.Zetsen@cssalberta.ca.

A festive red and white poster for a virtual group. On the left is a Christmas tree with red and white ornaments and a red star on top. On the right, the text reads: 'Coaching Families' in a large white font, followed by 'Are you a caregiver for a child with FASD? Are you looking to connect with others?' in white. Below that, in yellow and white: 'Join us for our virtual group!', 'December 10, 2024', and '6:30pm - 7:30pm'. In white: 'Microsoft Teams link will be emailed out!'. At the bottom, it says 'All attendees will be entered into a draw for a chance to win a gift card!' and 'RSVP to: miranda.zetsen@cssalberta.ca'. There are small snowflake icons and a 'Ho Ho Ho!' banner at the bottom. A Catholic Social Services logo is in the top right corner of the poster.

YOUR CURRENT PCAP COUNCIL DIRECTORS

Executive Officers

Chair Sandra Rorbak, Human Resources Leader in the Public Sector, Calgary

Vice-Chair Velvet Buhler, Program Manager, Healthy Families Healthy Futures, Westlock

Treasurer & Secretary

Directors

Beth van den Elst First Steps Supervisor, Catholic Social Services, Edmonton

Candice Sutterfield PCAP Supervisor, Lakeland Centre for FASD

Hayley Taylor Program Supervisor, McMan Calgary and Area

Maggie Heavy-Head Program Supervisor, Blood Tribe Department of Health

Murielle L'Hirondelle Community Member, East Prairie Metis Settlement

Banker

Brandy Berry Executive Director, Healthy Families Healthy Futures, Westlock

Staff

Kristin Bonot Executive Director


Kathleen Hounsell Administrative Assistant

Robert Jagodzinski Data Analyst



Let's Connect!

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[@albertapcap](https://twitter.com/albertapcap)

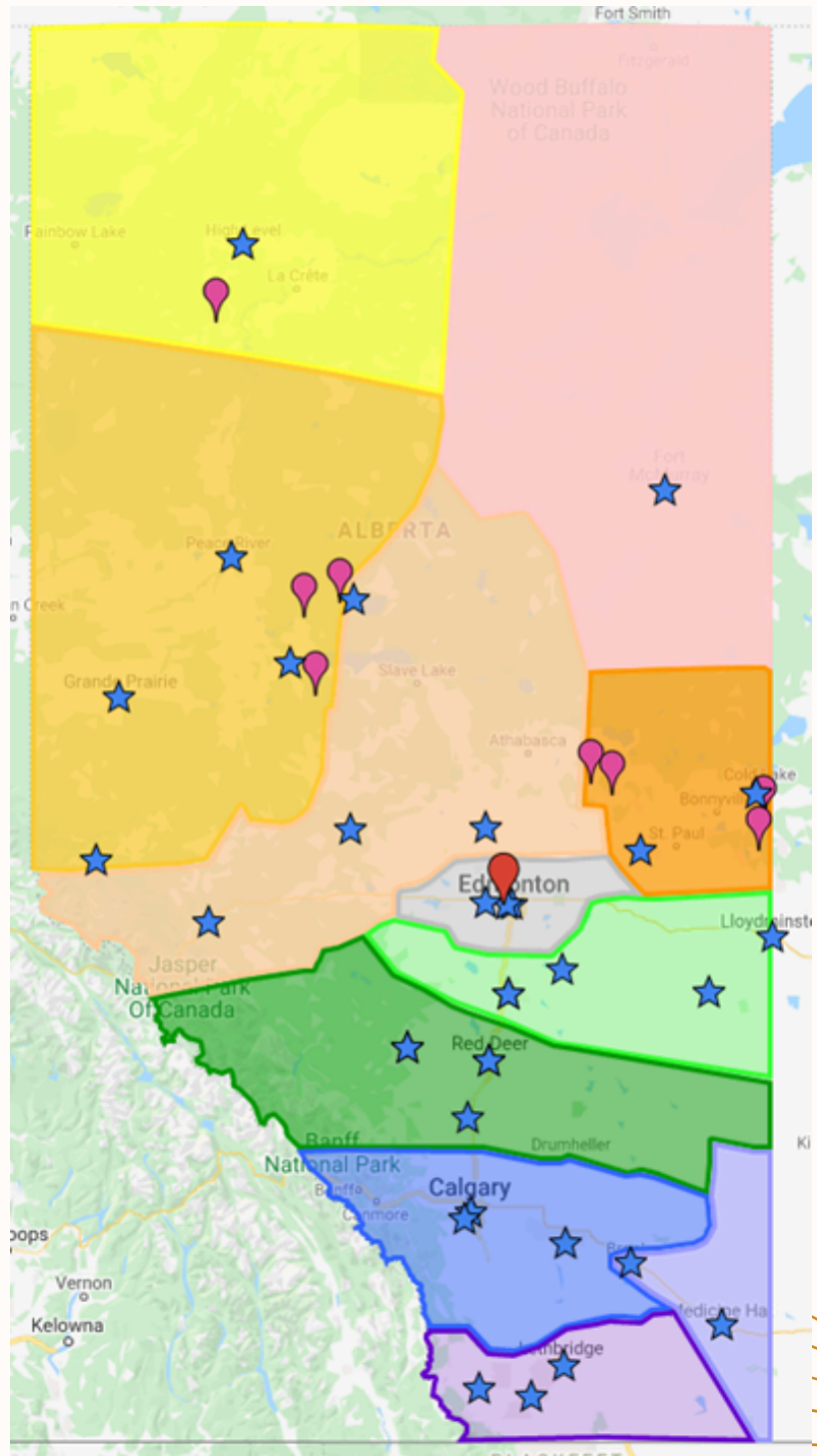


[@albertapcap](https://www.instagram.com/albertapcap)



ALBERTA PCAP NETWORKS & PROGRAM MAP

- Mackenzie Regional FASD Network**
Northwest Regional FASD Society
- Northeast Alberta FASD Network**
McMan Fort McMurray
- Northwest Peace FASD Service Network**
Aseniwuche Winewak Nation
Drift Pile First Nation
East Prairie Métis Settlement
Gift Lake Métis Settlement
Grand Prairie Family Educational Society
Peavine Métis Settlement
Whitefish Lake First Nation
WJS Canada
- Willow Winds Support Network**
Healthy Families Healthy Futures
Hinton Adult Learning Society
WJS Canada
- Lakeland FASD Society**
Lakeland Centre for FASD
Saddle Lake Eagle Healing Lodge*
- Edmonton Fetal Alcohol Network**
Bissell Centre
Catholic Social Services Edmonton
Enoch Health Services*
Metis Settlements General Council Head Office
- Prairie Central FASD Network**
Camrose Association for Community Living
Catholic Social Services Wetaskiwin
Ermineskin Brighter Futures*
Midwest Family Connections
Samson Healthy Families*
- Central Alberta FASD Network**
Family Services of Central Alberta
O'Chiese Health Centre*
- Calgary Fetal Alcohol Network**
McMan Youth, Family and Community Services
Tsuu T'ina Nation Health Centre*
- South East Alberta FASD Network**
Bridges Family Program
The SPEC Association for Children and Families
- South Alberta FASD Network**
Alberta Health Services
Blood Tribe Department of Health*
McMan SCIF



Locations >

**These organizations run the PCAP model and are located in the geographic regions listed but are not FASD Network funded*