

AUGUST 2025

# Alberta PCAP Council

Parent-Child Assistance Program

## SUMMER NEWSLETTER

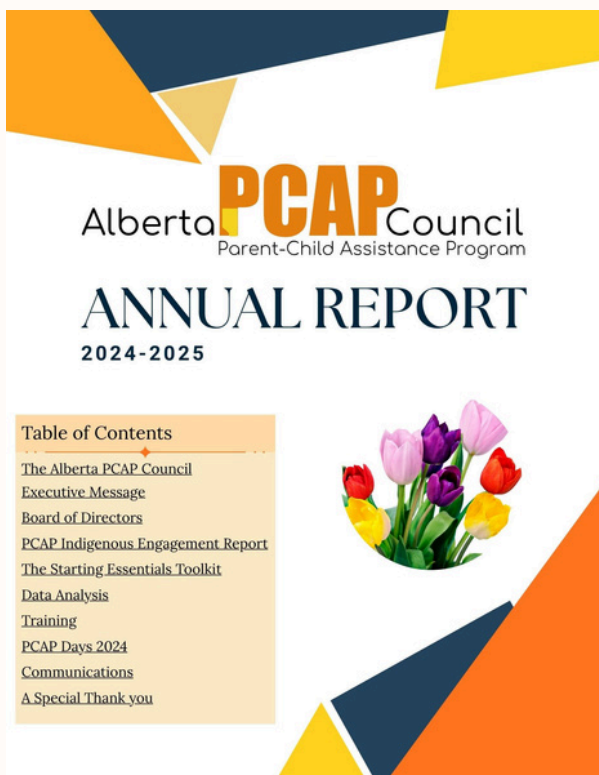
 **BIANNUALS DEADLINE:**  
**September 30th**



*Please ensure all biannuals prior to September 30<sup>th</sup> are complete! Contact [qa@alberta-pcap.ca](mailto:qa@alberta-pcap.ca) for assistance.*

### *Read the Annual Report!*

Alberta PCAP Council is proud to present the annual report for 2024-2025. This report details Council events, PCAP success and much more!



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October 15 8:30AM-4PM  
October 16 8:30AM-3PM



Sandman Hotel West Edmonton

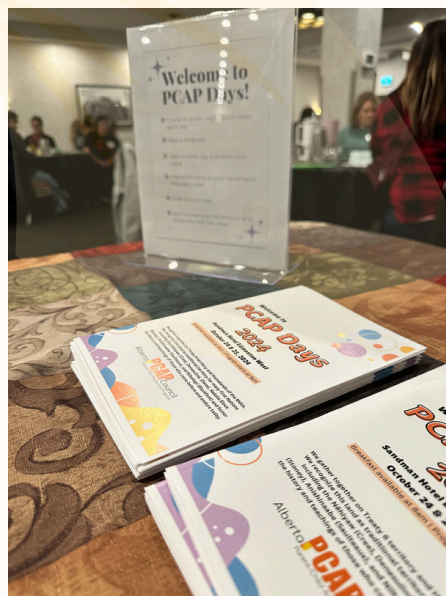
# PCAP DAYS 2025

[Register here!](#)

The Alberta PCAP Council is excited to announce **PCAP Days 2025** — a free 1.5-day event dedicated to PCAP staff across Alberta! This event offers a valuable opportunity to **connect, network, and learn** alongside colleagues from programs throughout the province.

Join us for engaging discussions, knowledge sharing, and community-building as we celebrate the important work being done across the PCAP network.

***Event details and a full schedule will be shared soon — stay tuned!***





# ALBERTA PCAP COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

## Recent Updates

The **Alberta PCAP Council** continues to collaborate with the Board to strategize and implement ways to support PCAP programs and their participants across the province. Through ongoing discussions, our focus remains on strengthening services and addressing the evolving needs of the community.

On June 20th, we held a virtual *Annual General Meeting* via Zoom, bringing together five PCAP programs which included Board members, Supervisors, and Mentors. The meeting showcased the Annual Report, celebrating the achievements of PCAP and highlighting key moments from our trainings, events, and the Indigenous Engagement Project.

Following the meeting, we were privileged to hear from Connie Calliou of **Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA)**. Connie shared valuable resources and information about NCSA's services, as well as insights into BearPaw Media's role in supporting Indigenous communities. The meeting concluded with a thought-provoking roundtable discussion on the ongoing housing crisis and its significant impact on participants and their families.

On July 3rd, the *Data Oversight Committee* convened to review important data-related topics. The committee's reviewed policies on participants of the age of minority and their data, transfer clients, and extended services. They are also currently reviewing the Penelope Governance Agreement based on recommendations from the Indigenous Engagement report: Alberta PCAP Indigenous Data Pathways.


## VIRTUAL PCAP CORE TRAINING

**New!**


Are you a new staff member to PCAP? Have you been looking for a new way to connect with other new mentors? Look no further! PCAP Core training is an essential training to introduce new staff to the PCAP model and provide strategies for challenges faced as a PCAP mentor. This session will be offered on November 25-26 with Day 3 on February 25, 2026. Hurry and register here until October 20<sup>th</sup>!

## Events Calendar


### PENELOPE 101

 September 3

### PCAP DAYS 2025


 October 15 & 16

### PCAP CORE TRAINING


 November 25-26 & February 25

\*Registration closes on October 20<sup>th</sup>

### COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE - SUPERVISORS

 September 16/October 20/November 18

### COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE - MENTORS

 September 30/ October 28/November 25

# UPCOMING EVENTS IN SEPTEMBER

## Truth and Reconciliation Day

September 30th marks **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**, a day to remember the children who were lost, those who never returned home, and the survivors of Indigenous Residential Schools. Established in 2021, this day acknowledges the intergenerational trauma inflicted on Indigenous communities and encourages reflection on the ongoing path to healing and reconciliation.

Canadians are encouraged to **wear orange shirts** as a symbol of the loss and resilience experienced by survivors. The tradition stems from the story of *Phyllis Webstad*, whose orange shirt was taken away on her first day at a residential school. This simple gesture raises awareness about the profound impacts of residential schools and honors the strength of Indigenous communities.

### Did you know?

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation is hosting a week long event which includes in person and virtual youth empowering gatherings (Halifax, NS), and a live broadcast from Parliament Hill (Ottawa, ON). To learn more information, please visit <https://trw-svr.nctr.ca/>



National Centre for  
Truth and Reconciliation  
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA



Truth and Reconciliation  
Commission



Indigenous Education  
Sessions

## FASD Awareness Month

September 9<sup>th</sup> is **International FASD Day!** The theme for 2025 is “*Everyone Plays a Part: Take Action!*”. In 2020, the Government of Canada officially recognized September as FASD Awareness Month as one day of recognition is not enough. Throughout the month of September, events are held all across Canada to raise awareness to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and to improve prevention efforts of FASD.

We'd love to hear about your FASD Awareness Month activities, so make sure to share your story below!



SHARE YOUR STORIES



**Red Shoes Rock** is a global awareness campaign giving voice and support to those affected by prenatal alcohol exposure.



# PENELOPE'S CORNER

## Fostering Mentor-Participant Relationships

As part of **FASD awareness month** (this September!) the PCAP Council has been exploring FASD prevention from participants' perspectives. We had recently reviewed an article on a fundamental components of FASD prevention ([Consensus Statement – Fundamental Components of FASD Prevention](#)). This statement focused on principles to promote a respectful, relation-based approach to women's health determinants within FASD prevention settings. This includes having a strong focus on self-determination and honouring the relationship between mothers and their children. There is also a focus on trauma-informed, culturally sensitive practices. *Naturally, this led to the question of how Alberta PCAP addresses these principles.*

As much of PCAP's biannual data focuses on concrete outcomes it only provides us a limited view of its relational aspects. However, the PCAP manual recommends the using **client-mentor relationship inventory** to measure these more relational aspects of their interaction. This inventory is built on the following principles:

- **Caring** – *mentor is emotionally involved and providing hope.*
- **Coaching** – *being supportive and helping participants reach their potential.*
- **Ongoing developmental** – *assisting clients in learning and growing as a mother.*
- **Harmony** – *promoting harmony between the participant, family, and mentor.*

Prior to 2020 there was a small sample of responses (58 surveys) that were collected with this inventory. While the overall sample was much smaller than our biannual data there was still enough data to provide some insights. The relationship inventory uses a 5-point scale with participant responses ranging from Agree Strongly to Disagree Strongly. The following provides some brief analyses of these data.

*(continued on next page)*



### **Helpful Q&A: Our agency has a few minor participants - do we enter them into Penelope?**

The Data Oversight Committee recently reviewed policies on collecting data from participants under 18 years old: It is up to agency policies whether minors are provided PCAP services. If agencies serve minors, Penelope data is only entered if the minor's guardian signs the informed consent form if the guardian cannot be located or is nonconsenting, PCAP services may still be provided at agency's discretion, but no Penelope data will be collected. In general, all participants require a signed informed consent form to be entered into Penelope.

# PENELOPE'S CORNER

## Fostering Mentor-Participant Relationships (con't)

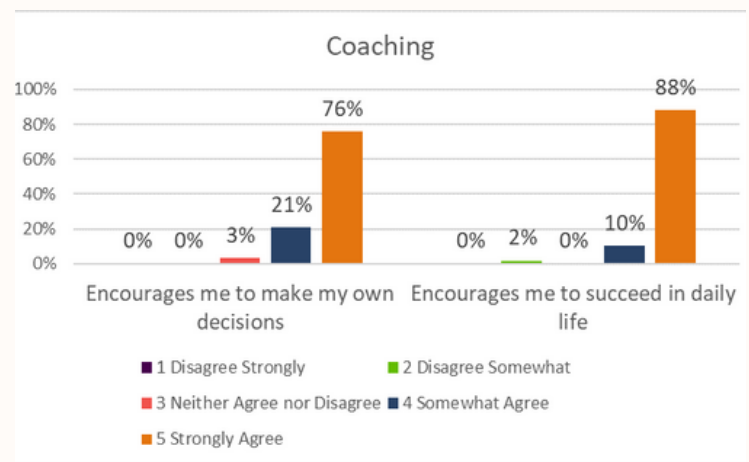
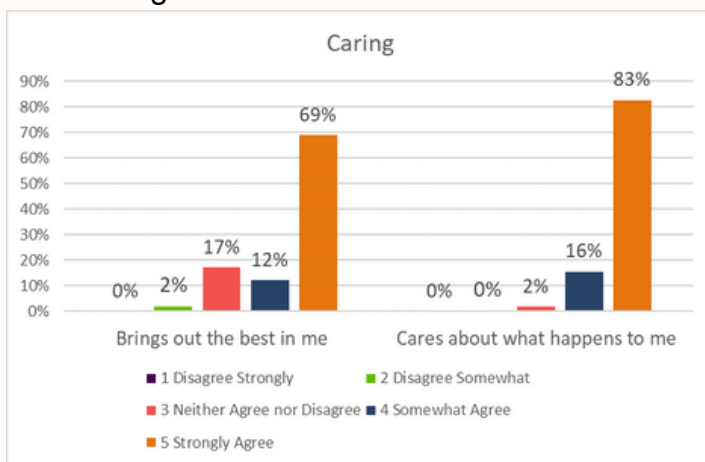
### Caring

Two examples of questions which address caring are:

The mentor/advocate:

- Brings out the best in me (81% of participants agreed strongly or agreed somewhat)
- Cares about what happens to me (98% of participants agreed strongly or agreed somewhat)

Mentors on the whole are perceived as bringing out the best in participants although 19% did not agree with the statement (17% were neutral, 2% disagreed somewhat). This is not surprising as the mentor would challenge the participants' patterns or assumptions. Despite being challenged in this way 98% of the participants do believe the mentor truly cares about them.



### Coaching

Participants perceive mentors as *positive coaches*. There wasn't full agreement (21% somewhat agree, 3% neutral) on encouraging them to make their own decisions. That said, this might be expected. Again, participants might be challenged on their reasoning, especially if they are trying to break old patterns. Despite this the mentor is overwhelmingly perceived as supporting the participants to succeed.

- 97% of participants believed the mentor encouraged them to make their own decisions (76% agreed strongly or 21% agreed somewhat)
- 98% of participants believed the mentor encouraged the participant to succeed in daily life (88% agreed strongly or 10% agreed somewhat)

### Ongoing Development

Some examples of questions that address the developmental needs of their babies:

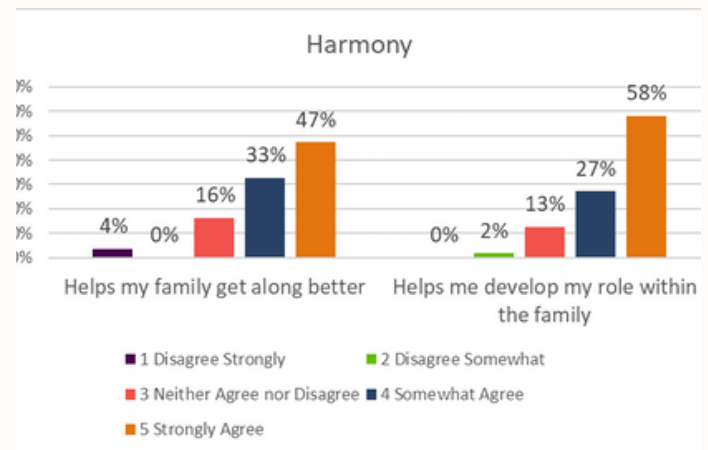
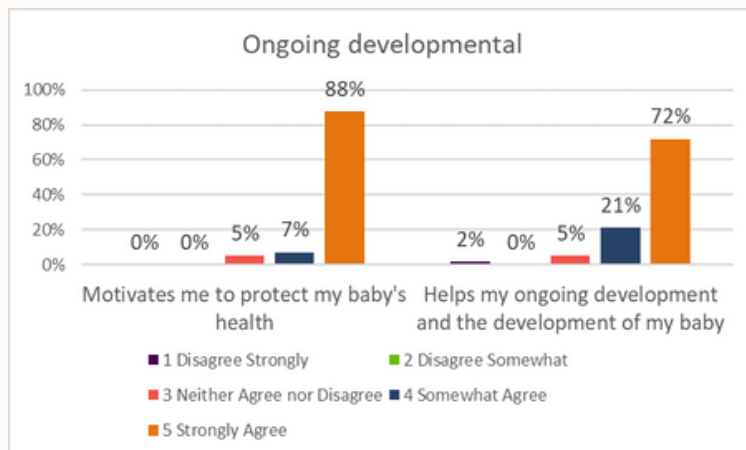
- Motivates me to protect my baby's health (95% agreed strongly or agreed somewhat).
- Helps my ongoing development and the development of my baby (93% agreed strongly or agreed somewhat)

Mentors are perceived as **strong allies** in the health of the participants' children. On the whole they are motivating the participants to protect their babies' health. In that sense there is a positive perception when they are giving the participant some autonomy when it comes to their children. There is decline in that perception when participants are asked about their direct involvement in helping their or their babies' development.



# PENELOPE'S CORNER

## Fostering Mentor-Participant Relationships (con't)



### Harmony

2 questions which address a participant's role in the family:

- Helps my family get along better (80% agreed strongly or agreed somewhat)
- Helps me develop my role within the family (85% agreed strongly or agreed somewhat)



There were about 20% of 'non-agreement' responses when it came to the mentor helping the family get along better. This might be expected since families are complex with multiple people involved with potentially conflicting beliefs and values- the mentor might be perceived as an outsider. Additional factors such as *child custody, substance use, and housing or financial insecurity* can further create complicated family dynamics. Despite this there was a higher agree response when the participant was asked about helping them develop their role within the family. It seems in these matters the mentor would be encouraging participants to exercise more agency which can only be beneficial from the participants' perspectives.

### Summary

This is just a sampling of the client-mentor relationship inventory results. It provides some insights on participants' perceptions of their mentors and the overall program. Maybe your program is already utilizing an evaluation tool to better understand practices. If not, the PCAP manual does offer further guidance on evaluating the mentor-participant relationship.

If you would like further guidance in evaluating participants' perceptions of the program feel free to get in touch. We can provide copies of the relationship inventory. We can also refer you to other programs that use different tools for evaluating satisfaction with the program.

As always please get in touch if you have any questions: [robert.jagodzenski@alberta-pcap.ca](mailto:robert.jagodzenski@alberta-pcap.ca).



Article written by guest contributor:

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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 Brilliance of Micro Steps

It feels like life has been particularly heavy for so many people this summer. There are so many hard stories of loss and displacement at a time when many of us anticipate a degree of summertime reprieve.

A number of years ago I faced a challenging, uphill season that began, you guessed it, at the beginning of summer. I was newly single mom, suffering with a chronic, painful injury who arrived in a new community with grief-stricken children. I know that many of you can relate to this level of challenge.

*I'd love to share a few thoughts with you from that season to help you navigate your thoughts as you walk through your valley and support others through their valleys.*

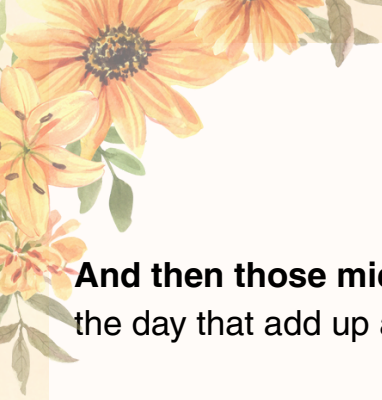
**Pain is real.** Some people would have you believe that it is an illusion. It is not. It is part of life. Resisting this truth doesn't make pain go away. Denying pain is like sweeping dirt under a carpet. It doesn't go away....

**Focusing on pain doesn't make it go away.** Sometimes it's tough to not feel sorry for ourselves. This is often a sign to me that I need to spend time with a friend or something else that might help lift my spirits and my perspective. It's helpful to create meaningful distractions for ourselves when things are tough.

**Focusing on the direction we want to go is where our time, attention and resources need to go.** One useful strategy I used to shake off particularly tough days was to come back to a quote, verse or mantra that helped me focus on what matters. "I will be Phoenix!" was one easy, memorable phrase that would help me live into the most courageous of my values so that I could follow through with action.







ALANA PETERS

## The Brilliance of Micro Steps

**And then those micro-steps!** What's a micro-step? These are the small choices you make in the day that add up and then compound.

There are numerous examples of the compound effect in my life since that challenging summer. The most visible example is my garden.

When I purchased my home, it was a “fixer-upper”. Yikes. The front yard was a menagerie of gravel, junipers, dead cedars and quack grass. **Each year I found a way to subtract an unwanted element and to add one or two desired elements.** Each of these elements often required many, many micro-steps. One day that I remember now with fondness was the day that my new neighbors came over with their fun equipment to pull the dead cedars out of my “flower beds”. We turned what was an impossible job for me into an afternoon of good-hearted fun. We made memories and began friendships.

*Today my garden attracts a different kind of attention.* From my office I watch people walk by and smell, point or marvel at what has taken shape. It's a gift for my soul and I nurtured it with innumerable micro-steps, all made possible because they were small and added up over time.

You may explore how this is possible with a relationship, a job, a life. **The pain may be intense right now; you can find ways to shape it.**

But please don't think that this is a solo venture. There were so many people who helped me along my path when things were messy and painful. Brené Brown's research is clear; **we are all wired for connection and connection is where we find hope and repair those painful parts.**

*If you'd like to explore how you could incorporate creative, practical micro-steps in the direction you want to grow, please reach out. This fall I have several opportunities for you to engage with transformational workshops. “Rising Strong™ Through VUCA” and Dare to Lead™ are available through my website. As always, if you'd like to explore one on one coaching, I'm happy to chat.*



**Article written by guest contributor:**

**Alana Peters**

Leadership &

Executive Coach

Dare to Lead Facilitator

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# RESOURCES

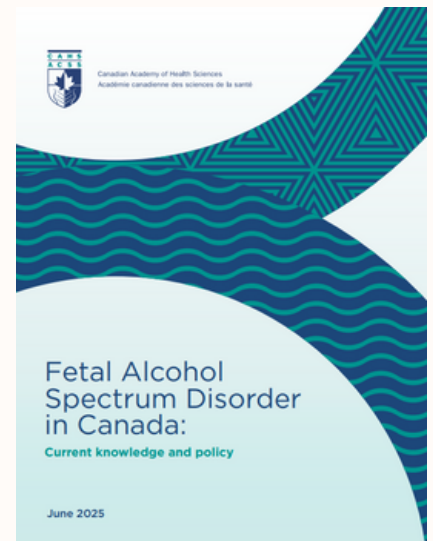
## Canadian Academy of Health Sciences

The Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS) has released a comprehensive new report on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) in Canada. The report emphasizes the critical importance of early diagnosis, accessible assessment tools, and the expansion of prevention-focused supports and services.

We're proud to share that the Alberta Parent-Child Assistance Program (PCAP) is recognized in Chapters 3 and 5 of the report. PCAP is highlighted as a leading example of a successful prevention program, with specific mention of our data-driven outcomes and community-based approach to supporting families impacted by FASD.

To read the full report or explore key highlights, visit the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences website by clicking the picture or the link below:

<https://cahs-acss.ca/new-report-fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-fasd-in-canada-nouveau-rapport-trouble-de-l'alcoolisation-foetale-au-canada/>



## Alberta Disability Assistance Program Engagement Survey.

The Government of Alberta has introduced the upcoming Alberta Disability Assistance Program. This program is scheduled to launch in 2026 and it will be offered to Albertans with disabilities to pursue job opportunities while continuing to receive financial, medical and personal supports.

Please visit the website (<https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-disability-assistance-program-engagement>) to learn more about this program and to get involved by taking an engagement survey. Surveys will be available from August 13-September 12.

## Ben Calf Robe Society (Indigenous Wellness Parenting Program).



Did you know that the Ben Calf Robe Society offers a free 6-week Indigenous Wellness Parenting Program? It provides support in a positive way to parents while honoring the Indigenous Ways of Knowing. The program is offered in person or online. Please visit: <https://www.bcrsociety.ab.ca/traditional-indigenous-wellness-parenting-programd64230fc> to learn more and register!



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

## Directors

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

**Candice Sutterfield** PCAP Supervisor, Lakeland Centre for FASD

## Banker

**Brandy Berry** Executive Director, Healthy Families Healthy Futures, Westlock

## Staff

**Kristin Bonot** Executive Director

**Kathleen Hounsell** Administrative Assistant

**Robert Jagodzinski** Data Analyst

# JOIN US

[Are you interested in joining our Board of Directors?](#)

[Click here to learn more!](#)



## Let's Connect!



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[/albertapcapcouncil](https://albertapcapcouncil)



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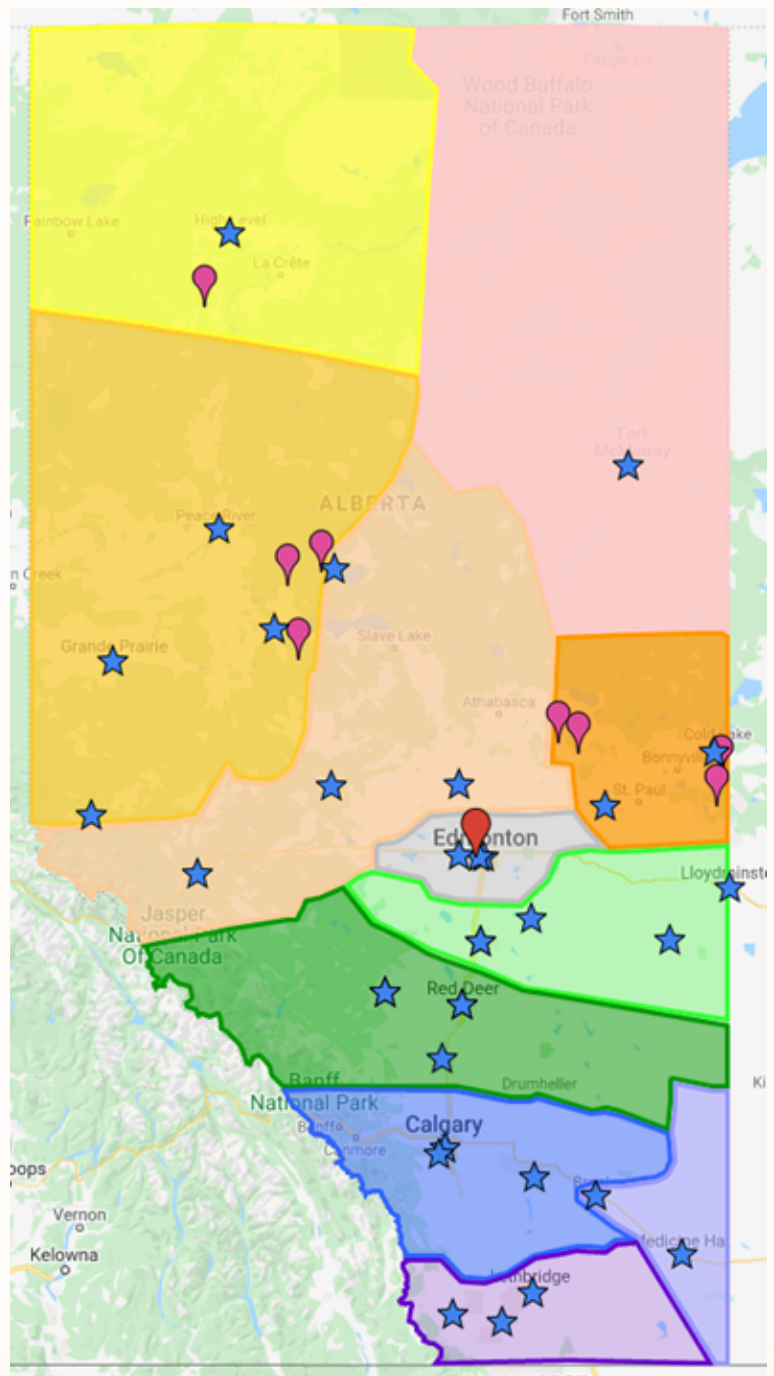


[@albertapcap](https://www.instagram.com/albertapcap)

# 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
  - Taproot Community Support Services
- Willow Winds Support Network**
  - Healthy Families Healthy Futures
  - Hinton Adult Learning Society
  - Taproot Community Support Services
- Lakeland FASD Society**
  - Lakeland Centre for FASD
  - Saddle Lake Eagle Healing Lodge\*
- Edmonton Fetal Alcohol Network**
  - Bissell Centre
  - Catholic Social Services Edmonton
  - 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**
  - Central Alberta FASD Network
  - Family Services of Central Alberta
  - O'Chiese Health Centre\*
- Calgary Fetal Alcohol Network**
  - Calgary Fetal Alcohol Network
- 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

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



Locations >