

**Key Worker Support Services provide support to children and youth with complex neurobehavioural conditions and their families.**

FALL! BACK TO SCHOOL .... In this newsletter we'll focus on topics often associated with the Fall and back to school. Advocating for your child in the school system, reducing back-to-school stress, and understanding behavioural responses.

## Advocating for Your Child in the School System

### **Be a part of the team.**

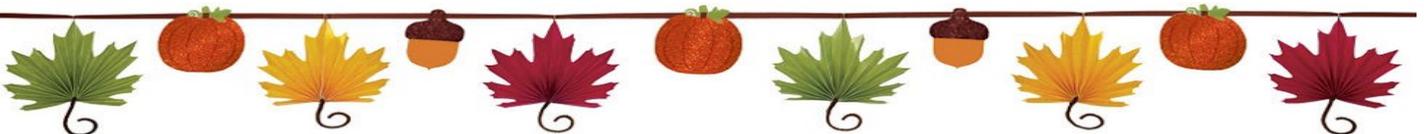
As a parent/caregiver you know your child best. Sharing information helps the school staff do their job and meet your child's needs. Respect the communication process in the school. When advocating for your child the first contact is usually with the teacher and support staff. Principals, Teachers, Educational Assistants, Support staff and School Counsellors all want the best for your child.

### **Preparing for an Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting.**

Take time prior to the meeting to list your child's strengths and interests. Make a few notes of any concerns and/or thoughts on goals for the year. Gather any assessments that the school may not have received that might be helpful to the planning process. Think about how you support your child at home to be independent in tasks and where they need help, so you can share with the school.

### **Honour your own feelings.**

It can take a lot of energy to support your child at home and advocate for them at school. At times you may feel frustrated, confused, proud and joyful. All feelings are okay. If your emotions overwhelm you—take a break. Some days it takes a lot of courage to engage with the school system in a positive way. Be brave.



# Upcoming Groups, Workshops & Events

Our Program offers many ways for you to be actively involved with us. Check below for a sneak preview of some of the groups and events that we are offering. Detailed flyers about each of these will be sent out to you. Please contact us with any questions and/or suggestions of programs you would like to see.

We appreciate your input and look forward to hearing your ideas!

## Girls Group Holiday Party

**Details:** A holiday party to reconnect with Girls Group peers and celebrate the winter holiday season.

The Key Worker Support Services and the Stepping Stones program have joined together to facilitate the Girls group. This is a group that gives pre-teen girls the opportunity to meet peers while enhancing their social emotional development by participating in fun, interactive activities.

**Dates:** Friday, December 1, 2017

**Time:** 5:00pm-8:00pm

**Location:** BC Centre for Ability office located at 2805 Kingsway in Vancouver.

## Boys Holiday Social

**Details:** A holiday party to connect with peers and celebrate the winter holiday season while enhancing their social emotional development by participating in fun, interactive activities.

**Dates:** Wednesday, December 20, 2017

**Time:** 5:30pm-8:00pm

**Location:** BC Centre for Ability office located at 2805 Kingsway in Vancouver.

## Family-Together Nights

**Details:** Fun evenings for the whole family that involve food, games, crafts, connections and more.

**Upcoming Events:**

**Winter Celebration Family-Together Night—**  
Thursday, December 14 from 6:00-7:30pm.

**Location:** BC Centre for Ability office located at 2805 Kingsway in Vancouver.

## Mother's Nurture Nights Series

**Details:** A relaxing, informal evening with time to connect with other mothers and engage in various self-care activities.

**Dates:** Friday, November 24, 2017

\*Additional dates to follow in January 2018.

**Time:** 7:00pm-9:00pm

**Location:** BC Centre for Ability office located at 2805 Kingsway in Vancouver.

## HOT CHOCOLATE RUN

**Details:** **BC Center for Ability – Hot Chocolate Run on Saturday March 3, 2018** - Join us or sponsor a runner. Go to BCCFA website at <http://bc-cfa.org/>



## Transitioning into the fall & winter

Back to school and the fall and winter season can be an exciting time, but can also be stressful for children and their families. Changes in behaviour may be the first clue that children are experiencing stress. For many of our young people this time of year means transition, loss, upheaval, and a step into the unknown which can be quite difficult and complicated.

### Here are some ways to reduce stress...

- ◆ Make sure your child is getting enough sleep (10 to 12 hours per night) and has a good sleep routine. Read a book, listen to music, practice mindful breathing.
- ◆ Physical activity can help reduce feelings of stress—go for a walk, to the playground or for a bike ride.
- ◆ Make opportunities for sensory experience—enjoy a warm bath, play in the sand, cook together.
- ◆ Provide time for unstructured play. Play together with favourite toys or games. Laugh together.
- ◆ Limit screen time and TV time. Listen to audio books instead.
- ◆ Give children choices about what clothes they wear, what they want for a snack. Choice helps give some control and reduces stress.
- ◆ When stress is too much. Visit [Anxietybc.com](http://Anxietybc.com) or [Friendsparentprogram.com](http://Friendsparentprogram.com).



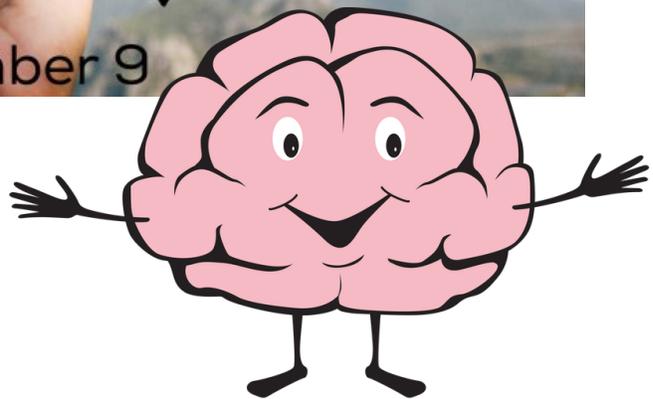
## Program Staff Updates

This past summer, Andree-Anne Morin left the BC Centre for Ability to pursue her studies at UBC. We would like to thank Andree-Anne for her great contributions to the Key Worker Program and wish her all the best in her future endeavours!



Taking over for Andree-Anne will be social worker, Michelle Perri, who will be assisting Lena with Key Worker Support Services. Michelle's name may sound familiar as she has been involved with the Centre's Stepping Stones Program, where some of you would have met her at Family Nights, groups, and other special events. We are very pleased to have Michelle on board. She is also looking forward to meeting and connecting with families and may be contacting you to "check-in" soon!

**Welcome Michelle!**



**EVERY BRAIN IS DIFFERENT**

## FASD DAY—September 9

In light of FASD Awareness DAY (September 9 every year), we would like to acknowledge and be mindful that some children have brains that function differently than most and so any outward presentation of behaviour may be a response to this very difficult time of newness and unrest. Children who have been prenatally exposed to alcohol have a more difficult time processing information, planning and organizing, expressing themselves according to social norms, and responding to things in their environment.

### What is FASDay – you ask?

In October 1998, Bonnie Buxton and Brian Philcox escaped the brisk chill of autumn in Toronto, Canada, and traveled to sunny and warm Tucson, Arizona, where they met with Teresa Kellerman, director of the FAS Community Resource Center. Bonnie asked Teresa, “What if the three of us started an international organization to raise awareness about fetal alcohol issues around the world?”

They thought it would be impossible but they worked together and made it happen! And that was the beginning of FASworld, which in turn gave birth to FASDAY. Bonnie chose 9/9/99 to remind everyone that a woman can remain alcohol free for all nine months of pregnancy, and chose 9:09 for a moment of silence. Teresa spread the word on the Internet, and the first International FAS Awareness Day was celebrated on 9/9/99 at 9:09 all around the world.

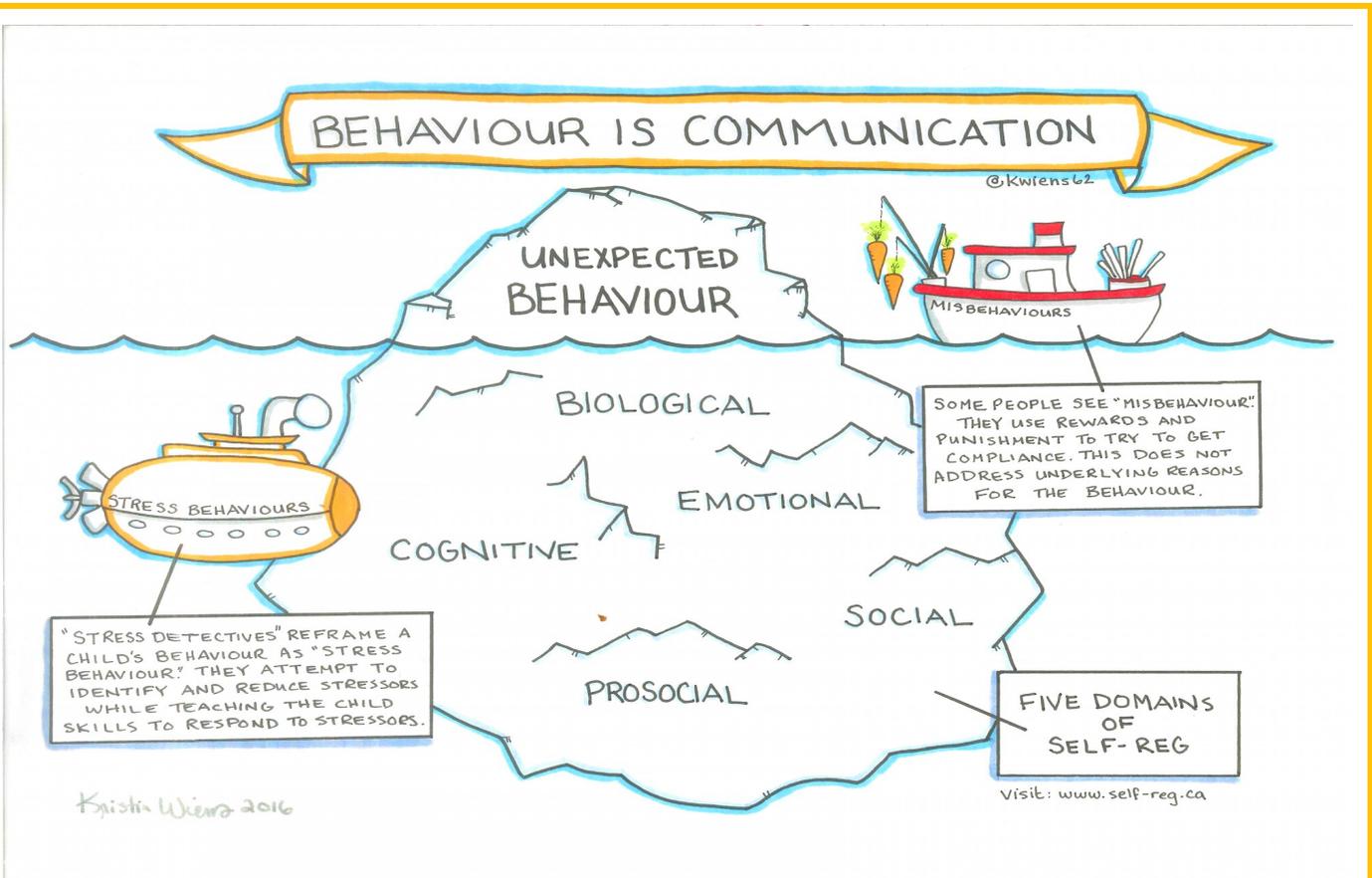
So in light of that—we would like to share with you three simple facts:

**FACT #1** – The majority of ALL WOMEN IN CANADA who are of childbearing age drink alcohol.

**FACT #2** – The safest choice for a woman who is pregnant or planning to become pregnant is not to drink alcohol.

**FACT#3** – No two brains who have been exposed prenatally to alcohol will be the exact same.

# Stress & behaviour



**Signs of stress— It's usually pretty obvious when your home thermostat breaks down, the house is too cold or too hot. It's also pretty straight forward for your child. Here are some simple signs that a child's stress system is overworking:**

Trouble falling asleep or staying asleep

Crabby mood in the morning

Easily upset—even over little things, trouble calming down when this happens

Volatile mood

Trouble paying attention, or even hearing your voice

Frequent anger, or signs of sadness, fear or anxiety

**GOAL for parents and teachers—identify causes of stress and help reduce the stress**

**for the child or youth!**

## Child and Youth Representative

### A Voice for Kids in British Columbia

The Representative for Children and Youth has been supporting children, youth and families who need help in dealing with the child-serving system since 2007. The Representative also provides oversight to this system and makes recommendations to improve it.

In 2006, **Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond** was appointed as B.C.'s first Representative for Children and Youth. Ms. Turpel-Lafond served two 5 year terms and completed her time as the Child and Youth Representative in November 2016.

The new Child and Youth Representative is **Bernard Richard** who was appointed in February, 2017. Mr. Richard is the province's second Representative for Children and Youth.

### So what do they do?

- Monitor government services being provided to Children and Youth
- Support Children and Youth with challenging situations and help them find options
- Key: they are an independent office of the legislature advocating, monitoring and investigating on behalf of children and youth
- Youth Social Media Team—check out the “Welcome to My World” podcast (<http://www.rcybc.ca/louis-world-podcast>)

### For more information:

<https://www.rcybc.ca/>

Or call an RCY advocate at 1-800-476-3933



REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

### We want to hear from you...

We are always looking for feedback and welcome your input. If you have any comments or suggestions about any aspect of our Program's services, please call us.

### Program staff can be reached as follows:

**Lena Gilbert, Key Worker, 604.630.3030 or [Lena.Gilbert@bc-cfa.org](mailto:Lena.Gilbert@bc-cfa.org)**

**Michelle Perri, Social Worker, 604.451.5511 ext 1257 or**

**[Michelle.Perri@bc-cfa.org](mailto:Michelle.Perri@bc-cfa.org)**