

# FASD | WATERLOO REGION

Hon. Indira Naidoo –Harris  
Legislative Building  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

February 5, 2018

Dear Honourable Minister Naidoo-Harris:

The purpose of this letter is to urge you to do everything in your power to ensure Bill 191 makes second and third reading to allow much needed action on this important issue. If passed into law this bill would improve outcomes for students with diagnosed and undiagnosed Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) across the province. Longitudinal studies (by Streissguth et. al, 1996) show that 70% of children who are affected by FASD are unsuccessful in school, face multiple suspensions, expulsions and drop out of school early. As the leading developmental disability in Ontario evidence based knowledge about FASD is imperative for all schools and teachers to be able to address the needs of all their students.

Bill 191 would amend the Education Act to require Ontario School Boards to promote awareness and understanding of FASD including best practices for students impacted by FASD. Awareness of FASD and knowing how to work with students with diagnosed and suspected FASD is slowly improving through the united efforts of many professionals and advocates across the province. However, this has been an uphill battle that could be made much easier if the government of Ontario recognized FASD as a disorder that needs attention in the education system.

Passing of Bill 191 would allow people living with this disorder and their caregivers, experts with knowledge of FASD, and the education system to work together to improve outcomes for those living with FASD. From the government's perspective it would be a wise use of resources that has the potential to save precious resources that are currently being used in ineffective ways. It is a simple bill without budget implications that supports what is currently happening at a grassroots level. Official recognition by the government of Ontario would fast track this action and make our education system more effective throughout the province.

FASD Waterloo Region is a collaborative of caregivers and organizations whose mandate is to seek out and support evidence informed prevention, identification and intervention initiatives. Our goal is to make Waterloo Region a community where FASD is prevented and individuals living with FASD can live to their full potential. Bill 191 would be a huge support to enable us to reach our goal.

Making Bill 191 law would support the vision of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services where all children and youth have the best opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential, including those living with FASD.

Sincerely,

Karen Huber, Chair

The Waterloo Region FASD Action Group

[www.fasdwaterlooregion.ca](http://www.fasdwaterlooregion.ca)