

# First CASA Mental Health Classrooms opened in schools in February 2023



CASA Mental Health has partnered with Alberta school divisions, the Government of Alberta and community partners to deliver clinical intervention and individualized programming in local classroom settings to address the need for intensive mental health services closer to students in grades 4 through 12. The first wave introduced CASA Classrooms to two schools in the Sturgeon area in February 2023, and has since expanded throughout Alberta.

“CASA Classrooms will bridge a child’s mental health and academic needs through a comprehensive and coordinated approach by a mental health team and a classroom teacher,” says CASA Mental Health CEO Bonnie Blakley. “The goal is to provide mental health service earlier to more children and youth to prevent treatment in hospitals and empower them to thrive.”

Patients may come from schools in a CASA Classroom’s catchment area, and must be referred by their school. CASA Central Intake will receive the referrals, and the CASA Classrooms team will review the referral to assess eligibility and suitability. Patients admitted to the program will be provided with orientation, assessment and an individualized treatment plan. The classroom team will provide individual therapy, group therapy, psychiatric care and medication support. Patients also receive academic instruction. Caregivers will receive mental health education and connections to community supports and resources to build their knowledge and understanding to support their child/youth. Patients will be supported in the CASA Classroom for approximately half of the school year, followed by another half-year of tapered treatment and caregiver support as students transition back to their home classroom and care team.

CASA also recognizes that the translation of skills to everyday life is important. The classroom team will provide coordinated support to the school where participants will return to after their time in the CASA Classroom.



# ABOUT CASA MENTAL HEALTH

Prior to 1989, northern Alberta families with children facing mental health issues had limited options. While there were services for children in government care, programs for children living with their families were rare, and parents needed new programs to meet their children’s evolving mental health care needs.

A small group of parents, working with a team of psychiatrists, joined forces to provide children with high-quality care in a community setting. CASA Mental Health was born and quickly expanded to meet the mental health needs of children and their families from Edmonton and central and northern Alberta.

True to its roots, CASA Mental Health continues today to focus on wrap-around solutions that incorporate the whole family, striving for child and adolescent services for all.

Child and Adolescent Level of Care/Service Intensity Utilization System						
Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Prevention and Health Management	Recovery Maintenance and Health Management	Low-intensity Community-based Services	High-intensity Community-based Services	Medically Monitored Community-based Services: Intensive Integrated Services Without 24-hour Psychiatric Monitoring	Medically Monitored Intensive Integrated Services: Non-secure, 24-hour Service with Psychiatric Monitoring	Medically Managed Secure, Integrated Intensive Services: Non-Secure, 24-hour Service with Psychiatric Management
Community Partners and Family Resource Networks		Primary Care Networks	Alberta Health Services/Recovery Alberta			Alberta Health Services

## THE MISSING MIDDLE

Hearing from our care providers, partners and families helped CASA Mental Health to better define its core services to determine where CASA provides the most value in the continuum of mental health care. Where mental health prevention and promotion services are already available in the community, and hospitalization is available through the provincial health system when needed, CASA is focused on serving diagnosed children and youth in the missing middle levels of acuity, with the aim of preventing hospitalization down the road and empowering our patients to thrive in their communities during and after treatment.



**CASA** Mental Health

### Serving the Missing Middle

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core</li> <li>• Family Therapy</li> <li>• Indigenous Services - Success Coach Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preschool Day Program</li> <li>• Children's Day Program</li> <li>• Adolescent Day Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CASA House</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trauma Program</li> <li>• Clinics (includes Adult, Neurology, and Developmental)</li> <li>• CASA Classrooms (Level 4 is only step down)</li> </ul>		



## Double the Number of Kids

- Expand our current services within the facilities we currently occupy,
- Build and expand virtual services, and
- Work with partners to bring mental health services closer to kids by offering CASA programming in other organizations facilities/space.

## VISION

A community where all children, youth and their families are provided with timely mental health care and empowered to thrive

## MISSION

To build resilience through holistic, evidence-informed and compassionate care, and to advocate for children, youth and families with mental illness

## VALUES

Community  
Child-centred and family-inclusive care  
Collaboration  
Equity, diversity and inclusion  
Outcomes-based accountability

## WHY CASA CLASSROOMS?

- Tertiary (hospital-based/inpatient) care prevention
- Medically integrated services model
- Comprehensive, coordinated, multi-sectoral approach
- Reduced barriers to access
- Medication assessment, review and support
- Capacity building for caregiver/guardians, school staff and care teams

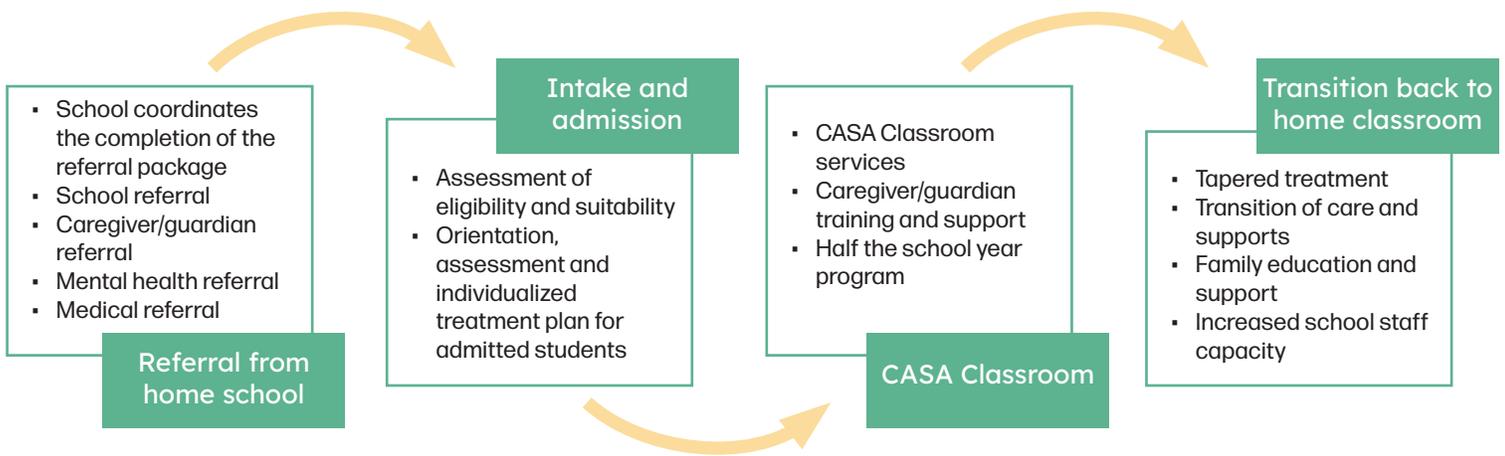
## WHO ARE CASA CLASSROOMS FOR?

CASA Classrooms are designed for students in grades 4 through 12. These students:

- have not responded as expected to previous therapy and continue to have symptoms that impact their home, social and school life;
- are currently under the care of a physician, nurse practitioner or psychiatrist; and
- are willing to participate in individual and group therapy with their family.

Students may come from schools within a CASA Classroom's catchment area.





## REFERRAL AND ADMISSION INFORMATION

CASA Classrooms are delivered in partnership with Alberta school divisions and referrals can therefore be made through the student’s school. With caregiver consent and support, schools will coordinate the collection of all required documentation and submit the completed referral package to CASA Mental Health. Students and their caregivers selected to participate in the pre-admission process will be invited to an orientation session to learn about the CASA Classrooms program where they can choose to continue with the pre-admission meeting. The pre-admission meeting enables further clinical assessment and determination of potential therapeutic benefit while also providing the patient and their caregiver the opportunity to meet the CASA Classrooms team. While the patient may be invited to the pre-admission meeting and meet the criteria for admission, program acceptance is reviewed by the multidisciplinary team and is dependent on the following factors: severity of illness, risk of self harm, and optimal patient mix to allow all patients to be successful in the program. Caregivers of patients accepted to the program will be notified and invited to an admissions intake meeting where they will develop collaborative program goals with the CASA Classrooms team.

## WHERE ARE CASA CLASSROOMS?

Visit [casamentalhealth.org/casa-classrooms](https://casamentalhealth.org/casa-classrooms) for the most up-to-date location information.