

CASA Mental Health to Embed Services into Northern Alberta Schools

CASA Mental Health is bringing mental health services directly to kids where they live and learn.

CASA Classrooms are a new model of school-based mental health service, in conjunction with the Government of Alberta Ministry of Mental Health and Addiction, Ministry of Education and Alberta school divisions.

This September, CASA Classrooms will launch within H.E. Bourgoin School in Bonnyville, and St. Gabriel School in Fort McMurray.

These northern Alberta classrooms are two of nine opening across the province in September. Eight CASA Classrooms are already serving kids and families throughout Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Sturgeon County and Wetaskiwin. With these new classrooms up and running, the CASA Classrooms program can provide up to 408 Alberta children and youth with much-needed services annually.

"We are excited to host the first CASA Classroom in the Lakeland region and provide critically-important mental health services for our students. This innovative model will allow us to address students' mental health needs within the school environment, and allow them to stay in their communities while they and their families get the support they need. These services reflect our commitment to ensuring all of our students have the opportunity to thrive, both academically and emotionally. We believe this addition will make a significant difference in the lives of our students and their families."

-Rick Cusson, Superintendent, Northern Lights Public Schools

"Fort McMurray Catholic Schools is committed to safe and caring environments for all of our students. We are excited to see the impact this partnership with CASA Mental Health will have on our students. This is part of our aim of having a supportive atmosphere for students to thrive emotionally, socially and academically."

-Natasha MacArthur-Poole, Superintendent, Fort McMurray Catholic School Division

"At Fort McMurray Public School Division (FMPSD), we are committed to supporting the holistic well-being of our students. Introducing the CASA Classroom for FMPSD and Fort McMurray Catholic School Division marks a significant step forward in providing accessible, school-based mental health services. By bringing expert care directly into our schools, we ensure our students have the support they need to thrive academically and emotionally, without additional burdens on their families. This initiative reflects our dedication to fostering a safe and nurturing environment where every child can succeed. We are thankful to the province for providing the ability to have a CASA Classroom locally."

-Annalee Nutter, Superintendent, Fort McMurray Public School Division

CASA Classrooms address the need for services closer to students by bridging a child's mental health and school needs, through a coordinated approach by a mental health team and a teacher. By providing mental health services directly in the school, there is no need for caregivers to schedule appointments and take time off work. Youth receive the support they need in a location already built in to their lives.

News Release CASA Mental Health

“In CASA Classrooms, students receive individual and group therapy, medical care and school programming to support their individual needs. We’re also preparing parents to support them at home. Caregivers receive mental health education and connections to community supports. School staff receive similar support to ensure the child’s success in the classroom after the program ends.”

-Dena Pedersen, Director, Clinical Operations, CASA Mental Health

CASA Classrooms serve children and teens with mental health challenges. These youth have not responded as expected to previous therapy, and experience symptoms that impact their home, social and school lives. The Bonnyville classroom will serve students in grades five through eight. The Fort McMurray classroom will serve students in grades eight through 10.

“I am excited to see more children and families able to access CASA Mental Health through CASA Classrooms. After many years as a principal, I saw firsthand the benefits of mental health classrooms. I also experienced the impact CASA makes on kids and families. CASA saves lives. School-based supports decrease the risk of treatment in hospitals by providing services in the setting where children and teens learn, grow and thrive.”

-Janet Hancock, Board Chair, CASA Mental Health

“Services like this are important to the long-term success and well-being of children and youth who are right now facing some very difficult challenges with their mental health. Every kid deserves to know that help is available, and that they can recover and live fulfilling lives. Our government is going to continue with investments like this that change the lives of children, youth and their families.”

-Dan Williams, Minister of Mental Health and Addiction

CASA plans to continue expanding the program throughout the province in the next two years as part of its five-year roadmap to improve the future of mental health service for children, youth and families in Alberta.

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact:

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About CASA Mental Health

CASA Mental Health is a non-profit, accredited provider of clinical mental health services, delivering holistic, culturally-safe wrap-around services to Albertans aged three to 18 and their families. CASA provides mental health service to the “missing middle” - therapeutic and medical treatment for children and youth, in between prevention and promotion in primary and community care, and acute treatment in hospital.

CASA’s team of mental health professionals are trauma experts committed to delivering service in collaboration with community partners. This includes assessment and treatment for thousands of children, youth and families each year, from community outreach settings to intensive treatment programs.



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For more information about CASA Mental Health, including getting help or giving help, please visit www.casamentalhealth.org.

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