

Best Start is planning a launch event to kick-off its provincial alcohol and pregnancy awareness campaign. The event is planned for Tuesday, May 11, 2004 and will be hosted in Toronto. We encourage all participating communities across Ontario to do the same.

Consider hosting or taking part in an alcohol-free community event – one of many that will take place in communities across the province in support of expectant mothers everywhere.

Please review the attached Community Launch Event Planning Guide and let us know if you plan to host an alcohol-free event in your community. Be sure to complete and fax back the attached form by March 29, 2004 to confirm your participation in this exciting province-wide initiative.

Below is an outline of the activities that are planned for Best Start's provincial launch event. Feel free to use any or all of the following suggestions.

**Theme: Be Safe. Have an alcohol-free pregnancy**

In Canada, May represents the long awaited start to summer and in Ontario that means people head to the beach, the nearest park or patio, or to their backyard. Often these activities are accompanied with partying and drinking alcohol. We want families, particularly women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, to celebrate summer – with alcohol-free fun.

Best Start will use the launch event as an opportunity to reinforce the two primary campaign messages "There is no safe time to drink during pregnancy" and "There is no safe amount of alcohol to drink during pregnancy".

**Guests:**

Best Start will be inviting its partners, Toronto public health representatives, Ontario Ministry of Health reps, Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ministry of Children's Services, MPPs, and some expectant parents from a local prenatal class. We also plan to have FASD experts and families personally affected by the disorder on hand to talk about the lifelong effects of prenatal exposure to alcohol. Toronto area media will also be invited to the event.

**Activities:**

*Below is a brief outline of activities Best Start has planned for the provincial launch event.*

- Opening remarks – Welcome guests to the launch of the Alcohol & Pregnancy Campaign, give them details about what we hope to achieve, and unveil the agenda for the day. During the opening remarks, one or two parents who care for children affected by FASD will share their own personal experiences.
- Photo Op – a couple of expectant moms will toast with champagne flutes of milk to officially kick-off the campaign.
- Mocktail competition – Best Start is inviting students from a local bartending school to participate in a mocktail making contest that will be judged by a panel of pregnant women. Each contestant will be provided with the exact same ingredients with which to create their mocktail. Pregnant women will be invited to taste-test the drinks and will vote for their favourite mocktail. Each participant will receive a thank you gift. There will be a grand prize for the winning bartender.
- Lunch – a 'pregnancy-friendly', alcohol-free BBQ lunch will be served.

- ❑ Prizes - Attendees will be able to enter a draw for a complete mocktail making package – variety of juices, fun stir sticks, glasses, etc. by completing a FASD quiz.
- ❑ Other prenatal activities, such as a cooking demo and prenatal yoga demonstrations may be included in the event activities.

### Handouts and Signage:

- ❑ Campaign Resources - Best Start will be posting the campaign posters and handing out the campaign pamphlets and static clings.
- ❑ FASD Facts - Best Start is planning to decorate the area with FASD facts printed and placed on large easel signs.
- ❑ Recipe Books - Best Start may be distributing mocktail recipe books.

### Proposed Agenda:

11:40 – 11:50 a.m.: Welcome statement by VIPs and Picnic Host (TBD)

11:50 – 12:05 p.m.: Speeches by parents of children affected by FAS

12:05 – 12:10 p.m.: Photo op – toast

12:10 – 12:30 p.m.: Mocktail competition

12:30 – 1:30 p.m.: buffet lunch is served

*Yoga and cooking demonstrations can be going on during lunch and while people are mingling.*

1:15 p.m.: Announcement of mocktail winner

1:20 p.m.: Draw for “Mocktail Making Package”

1:25 p.m.: Closing statements from host

### Media:

Best Start will be inviting Toronto area media to attend the provincial launch event and will be notifying them with a media advisory.

Best Start will have media kits on-site, containing:

- News release
- Backgrounder
- Fact Sheet
- Sample campaign materials
- Speaking notes and biographies of speakers *(if applicable)*

Best Start encourages all community partners to consider hosting or taking part in a local alcohol-free event in support of the provincial alcohol and pregnancy awareness campaign and in support of pregnant women everywhere.

### Hosting a launch event in your community will help:

- increase awareness about the alcohol and pregnancy campaign,
- deliver important messages about the dangers of prenatal exposure to alcohol,
- show community support for alcohol-free pregnancies, and
- attract some media attention to the campaign and the issue.

Planning a community launch event does not have to be expensive or overly time consuming. Refer to the Event Planning Checklist attached and consider partnering with other people and organizations to share the workload and resources. Plan an event that makes sense for your community. Be creative and have fun!

Here are a few things to consider when planning your own local event.

### Overview:

*What is the aim of the event?*

In this case, it is to launch your local alcohol and pregnancy awareness campaign. Have this objective in the back of your mind through the entire planning process.

*What's the message?*

There is no known safe amount of alcohol during pregnancy.  
There is no safe time to drink alcohol while pregnant.

### Timing:

*When is the best time to host an event?*

You want to avoid 'big' news days (i.e. provincial budget, religious or cultural holidays, community crisis, etc.) Best Start is hosting a launch event on Tuesday, May 11 in Toronto. If your community schedule permits, Best Start encourages you to host your local launch event on the same day. These combined efforts will have a greater impact with media and in itself is newsworthy. If you are unable to host your event on May 11, perhaps you can hold it another day during the same week.

### Location:

*Where should the event be hosted?*

When choosing a venue please consider:

- the number of people who may be attending
- availability on the specified date

- the cost
- access to parking and public transit
- restrictions on catering and/or audio/visual
- weather

The location should be convenient, accessible, pleasant and exciting. Consider a public park or a restaurant patio. Visit potential venues to make your choice. Your community event does not have to be outside. If the weather is still brisk at this time of year, consider an inside location such as a community centre. If you are planning an outside event, have a backup plan in case of rain.

### Guests:

Best Start encourages you to think about who you might invite to your event. Consider inviting:

- Local dignitaries
- MPPs
- Expectant parents (*through prenatal groups*) and children
- Families living with FASD
- Local experts
- Local media

*Who will be able to attend the event? Who should attend?*

While you want to make sure your message reaches a large public audience, you may not want to invite the broader public to your launch event. If you are serving food and beverages at your event, it may be cost prohibitive to extend the invitation to the public-at-large. Consider inviting expectant families through prenatal groups.

*How will you invite the public?*

If you are opening the event to the public, you'll need to consider how you're going to invite them. You can place an ad in the community newspaper or distribute flyers in the neighbourhood. You can promote the event on community calendar listings in your local paper and/or radio station. You can also post the event details on your website or distribute an electronic invite through email lists. Or contact local organizations who have regular contact with pregnant women or those who could become pregnant, and ask them to help promote the event to their clients/patients.

### Speakers:

*Who should speak at the event?*

Who will make the best presentation and answer questions most effectively? Ideally the people who speak at your event should be familiar with the community campaign plans and the subject of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. They need to be able to answer questions on the subject, from the public and media alike. They should be experienced at speaking publicly.

A locally recognized, popular speaker can act as a draw – people will come to listen and talk to them. You may want to have 2 or 3 speakers at the event – maybe a medical professional to talk about the effects of alcohol use during pregnancy, a family representative to talk about their personal experience of living

with someone affected by prenatal exposure to alcohol and a representative to discuss the local campaign efforts.

Make sure that all participating speakers are aware of what is going to happen at the event, when, what their role is and what everybody else is going to be doing. Make sure they all know:

- Date
- Start and finish times
- Location
- Theme and goal
- Who is saying and doing what and when
- The main message
- Other details – lunch, giveaways, contest, etc.

Do your speakers require an honorarium? If not, consider presenting a small gift as a token of appreciation.

### **Presentation Tips:**

If you plan to be one of the speakers at the launch event, be sure to look and feel your best. You can be dressed casually, but smart and be sure to be comfortable too. Smile regularly as you talk and as you answer questions. Make sure you can be heard. Stand up and be seen by everyone. Hold up your head and make eye contact with your audience. If you need to refer to speaking notes, write your key points, in large double spaced print.

### **Equipment:**

*Will you require audio/visual equipment?*

It's important to identify your audio/visual requirements – this may have an impact on which venue you ultimately choose.

Do you have a movie to show and require a TV and VCR? Do you have overheads to show and require an overhead projector? Do you have a powerpoint presentation and require a computer and LCD projector? Do you need a whiteboard or flip chart for your speakers? Do you need a sound system or extra lighting, a stage or platform, tables and chairs? If planning your event outdoors, you may need to consider portable toilets, a tent and barricades.

### **Activities:**

Here are some suggested activities you could plan for the launch event:

- An introductory speech
- A mocktail demonstration and/or competition
- A question and answer session
- BBQ lunch and non-alcoholic refreshments
- Healthy lifestyle activity demonstrations for pregnant women or couples
- Activities for children (e.g. face painting)

## Signage:

Depending on the type of event and location, you may require signage. You may want:

- A banner or podium sign
- Directional signage
- Name tags
- Parking permits

## Cost considerations:

The following is list of anticipated costs that you might need to consider when planning your own launch event:

- Invitations and maps
- Promotion and advertising
- Rental fee for venue
- Parking permits
- Tables, chairs, linens, tent, etc.
- Audio/visual equipment and staging
- Signage – banners; appropriate directional signage (if needed); name tags, place cards and a podium sign
- Speaker honorariums and/or gifts
- Mocktail ingredients
- Food and beverage service
- Children's entertainment/activities

If you are working with a limited budget ask people and/or organizations in the community to contribute supplies and/or services for the event.

## Media:

*How will you invite the media?*

You should personally invite your media contacts with a phone call and then follow-up with media advisory, invitation or letter. Be sure you include the date, start and end times, location, theme, purpose, guest speakers and other attractions. It is a good idea to ask them to RSVP or follow-up with personal phone calls.

Have handouts for media – a news release, FASD fact sheet, backgrounder, FAQs and samples of the campaign poster and pamphlet.

To make this as easy as possible for you, Best Start has prepared sample media material for local use. It is posted on the campaign website at: [www.beststart.org/apcampaign/media\\_strat.html](http://www.beststart.org/apcampaign/media_strat.html)

## Evaluation:

Evaluating your efforts is important – in order to measure your success, to effectively evaluate the provincial campaign as a whole and to make recommendations for future efforts. There are many ways to evaluate the success of your launch event. Consider:

- Number of attendees
- Number of campaign resources distributed
- Audience participation
- Media coverage
- Written survey
- An exit survey (informal one-on-one questions as people are leaving)
- Number of phone inquiries or website visits as a result of the event promotion

Take a few minutes at the end of the event to do your own evaluation – while it's still fresh on your mind. Think about what went well and what could be improved. How many people attended the event? Did it look like they were interested, engaged and informed? How were the speakers? Were there questions from the audience? Did any local media come out and cover the event? If so, did it result in some positive media coverage? Did the key messages get out? Was the venue satisfactory? How about the food and beverages?

## Follow-up:

Once the event is over you can breathe a sigh of relief – but your work is not quite finished. Follow-up with media to see if they require any additional information to do a story. Send thank you notes to everyone who contributed to the event.

Please refer to the Event Planning Checklist attached to make sure you haven't missed anything.

## Together we can make a difference:

A community event can be an effective way of reaching a large number of women in your community. Depending on the size and scope, it could lend itself to generating a lot of interest in your local campaign efforts and interest in the subject of alcohol and pregnancy.

Your local event can be as simple or as complex as you can manage. More importantly it should be planned with your community, budget and schedule in mind. Think about the needs of your community, the opportunities and the interest in an alcohol-free community event. Think about sharing resources and finding 'in kind' contributions to make the event planning easier and more affordable.

Remember, regardless of how big or small, if your event helps spread the word on the dangers of drinking alcohol while pregnant, then it is a worthwhile endeavour. The most important thing is to have fun, be safe and promote alcohol-free pregnancies.

Through our combined efforts we *will* make a difference.

Name:		
Organization:		
Mailing Address:		
City:	Province:	Postal Code:
Phone:	Fax:	
Email:		

1. Do you plan to host or take part in an alcohol-free community event, in support of Best Start's Alcohol and Pregnancy campaign?

- Yes                       No

2. If yes, what is the proposed date for the community event?

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3. Please provide a brief description of your plans for the alcohol-free community event.

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**Please fax this form to Best Start at: 416-408-2122 by March 29, 2004**



## Event Planning Checklist

- Identify objectives
- Set the event date
- Select venue
- Develop the guest list  
*(identify total # of attendees)*
- Approach potential partners
- Recruit volunteers
- Establish budget
- Solicit 'in-kind' contributions
- Invitations
- Advertising
- Event agenda
- Food and beverage
- Activities for children
- Solicit and confirm speakers
- Draft speaking notes
- Thank you gifts for speakers
- Photo opportunity for newspaper and TV cameras
- Contact media with initial invitation or media advisory
- Follow-up with media to confirm attendance
- Give-aways/door prizes
- Audio/visual requirements
- Mocktail ingredients
- Handouts
- Signage
- Media handouts
- Identify room/space set-up
- Assign tasks for event day
- Send thank you letters/cards