

CATEGORY:	SERVICE DELIVERY PRACTICES
SUBJECT:	Accessible Client Service
POLICY NO.:	#130
Approved:	April 20, 2011
Reviewed/Revised:	March 9 ,2023

POLICY

It is the policy of Children's Centre Thunder Bay (CCTB and/or the Centre) that clients and visitors with disabilities achieve accessibility in the provision of services, consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity, as set out in the regulations of the *Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). The purpose of this Customer Service Standards policy is to recognize the Centre's obligation to facilitate the implementation of the AODA, and all regulations pursuant to the Act.

Definitions

Assistive Device

An assisted device is a technical aid, communication device or, other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them such as: a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank, which might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

Disability

The term disability as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, refers to:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- a learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- a mental disorder; or,
- any injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received, under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

Guide Dog

A guide dog is a highly trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*, to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are blind.

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Service Animal

As reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- It is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or,
- If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Service Dog

As reflected in *Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562* a dog other than a guide dog for the blind is a service dog if:

- It is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability; or,
- The person who requires the dog can provide on request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires a service dog.

Support Person

As reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, a support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

PROCEDURE

1. Provisions of Good and Services to Persons with Disabilities

Children's Centre Thunder Bay will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity by:

- Ensuring that all clients receive the same value and quality;
- Allowing clients with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing goods and services as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- Using alternative methods when possible to ensure that clients with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;
- Taking into account individual needs when providing goods and services; and
- Communicating in a manner that takes into account the client's disability.

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2. The Use of Assisted Devices

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services provided by The Centre. The Centre will ensure that our employees are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by clients with disabilities while accessing our good or services.

3. Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the Centre will permit the person to enter the premises with the animal and it keep it with him or her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. If the service animal or guide dog is excluded by law from the premises, the Centre will look to other available measures to enable the person with a disability to obtain services from the Centre.

4. The Use of Support Persons

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter our locations with his or her support person and the client shall have access to their support person at all times. In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the customer, prior to any conversations where confidential information might be discussed.

5. Notice of Disruptions in Services

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of the Centre. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that customers with disabilities rely on to access or use the Centres goods or services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. In some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible. The notice will be posted on the Centre's website as well as on the main entrance doors and in prominent locations throughout the locations so they can be easily found.

6. Customer Feedback Process

Feedback on the accessibility of the Centres services will be accepted through the following channels:

1. In person at the Office of the CEO, 283 Lisgar St., Thunder Bay ON P7B 6G6
2. By phone at 807-343-5000

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3. By filling out the feedback form available on the Centre's website
4. By mail, sent to: Office of the CEO, Accessibility Feedback, 283 Lisgar St.,
Thunder Bay ON P7B 6G6

All reasonable efforts will be made to acknowledge the feedback within five (5) business days or receipt. This acknowledgement does not have to address the problems identified; however, it should outline any action being taken based on the feedback.

Any feedback provided will be kept on file by the Chief Executive Officer

7. Training

The Centre will ensure that all employees, volunteers, students and others who deal with the public will receive accessible customer service training. Accessibility Awareness Training will be provided, as soon as is practical after beginning their employment. The Centre will also provide ongoing training with respect to changes in its policies, practices, and procedures to those individuals who require such training as soon as practicable. The Centre will keep records of the training provided, which will be maintained by Human Resources.

The Centre will ensure that everyone involved in developing policies, practices and procedures, and everyone who directs, monitors, evaluates or approves policies on how goods or services are provided, receive accessible customer service training.

Training will include:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard.
- The Centre's plan related to the Customer Service Standard.
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or, require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
- How to use the assistive devices available (e.g. wheelchair lifts, TTY, etc.).
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the Centre's goods and services.

The Centre will provide ongoing training in connection with changes to the accessibility operating guidelines, policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.

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8. Contractors Training

Agents and contractors of the Centre deal with the public during their work for the Centre will provide proof of 'Accessibility Awareness' training (as part of their contractual agreement with the Centre) prior to beginning their work for the Centre. If proof of training isn't supplied, contractors will be required to complete the staff accessibility training. Human Resources will maintain proof of training on file in the event of an audit by the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

9. Notice of Availability and Format of Documents

Children's Centre Thunder Bay shall notify customers that the documents related to the Customer Service Standards are available upon request and in a format that takes into account the customer's disability. Notification will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place owned and operated by Children's Centre Thunder Bay, the Children's Centre Thunder Bay's website and/or any other reasonable method. Children's Centre Thunder Bay will upon request, provide or arrange for the provision or accessible formats and communication supports for a person with disabilities in a timely manner and at no additional cost to the individual.

Administration

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy or its related procedures, please contact:

1. In person at the Office of the CEO, 283 Lisgar St., Thunder Bay ON P7B 6G6
2. By phone at 807-343-5000
3. By mail, sent to: Office of the CEO, Accessibility Feedback, 283 Lisgar St., Thunder Bay ON P7B 6G6

This policy and its related procedures will be reviewed as required in the event of legislative changes or, changes to company procedures.