

## Central Eglinton Children's Centre

Date Policy and Procedures Established: 2011

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: August 2022, March 21, 2023, March 6, 2024

### THE ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (AODA)

#### The Customer Service Standard

##### What is the Customer Service Standard?

Ontario's Accessible Customer Standard, under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), came into force on January 1, 2008. It requires businesses and organizations, including childcare centres, to make customer service policies and practices accessible to people with disabilities. CECC's implementation of the Customer Service Standard was in place before January 1, 2012, the deadline under the Act.

##### What is AODA?

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act was passed by the Ontario Government in 2005 and falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Community and Social Service. AODA is an important law to ensure that we make Ontario accessible to all people by 2025.

The purpose of AODA is to ensure that all businesses and organizations (including childcare) in Ontario develop and implement policies and procedures in accordance with the five accessibility standards outlined in the legislation.

The requirements in the standards set out in this Regulation are not a replacement or a substitution for the requirements established under the *Human Rights Code* nor do the standards limit any obligations owed to persons with disabilities under any other legislation.

*Purpose (Quoted from the Act)*

*"1. Recognizing the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario, the purpose of this Act is to benefit all Ontarians by,*

*(a) developing, implementing, and enforcing accessibility standards to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, and premises on or before January 1, 2025; and*

*(b) providing for the involvement of persons with disabilities, of the Government of Ontario and of representatives of industries and of various sectors of the economy in the development of the accessibility standards. 2005, c. 11, s. 1."*

## The Customer Service Standard

### What are the AODA standards?

There are five standards

- Customer Service standard
- Transportation standard
- Information and Communications standard
- Built Environment standard
- Employment standard

### What is defined as a Disability?

AODA Section 2. In the Act, (*quoted from the Act*)

"disability" means,

- (a) 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 coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impairment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

# The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

## Policy

CECC will use the term "client" to replace "customer" for the purpose of this policy.

### Policy Statement

Central Eglinton Children's Centre (CECC) is committed to developing policies, practices and procedures that provide accessible quality services to its clients and their children. Services will be provided to clients with disabilities in a manner that promotes and respects dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.

CECC is dedicated to ensuring all programs and services are accessible to clients and their children in accordance with Ontario Regulation 429.07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Services.

CECC will endeavor to ensure that the Policy and related practices and procedures are consistent with the following **four (4) core principles**:

#### ***Dignity***

Persons with a disability will be treated as valued clients as deserving of service as any other client.

#### ***Equality of Opportunity***

Persons with a disability will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from our services.

#### ***Integration***

Wherever possible, persons with a disability will benefit from our services in the same place and in the same or similar manner as any other client. In circumstances where integration does not serve the needs of the person with a disability, services will, to the extent possible, be provided in another way that considers the person's individual needs.

#### ***Independence***

Services will be provided in a way that respects the independence of persons with a disability. To this end, we will always be willing to assist a person with a disability but will not do so without their expressed permission.

CECC is committed to providing quality services to its clients including those with disabilities. Every effort will be made to ensure the following:

- The service will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of services to clients with disabilities, and others will be integrated unless an alternative measure is necessary, whether temporarily or permanently, to enable clients with a disability to participate in the services offered by CECC.

## **1. Communication**

CECC is committed to communicating with clients with disabilities in different or alternative ways that take into consideration their disability

- Staff will be trained on how to interact and communicate with clients with disabilities in a manner that is respectful of a client's dignity and independence.
- Alternative methods of communication will be provided as requested e.g., e-mail, TTY telephone communication. \* Staff will be trained to communicate with clients over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

## **2. Use of Assistive Devices – Guide Animals and/or Support Persons**

Assistive Devices, guide animals and/or support persons may be used by clients to assist in accessing services at CECC.

- Service animals, support persons and assistive devices must follow the regulations outlined in the Day Nurseries Act and the Toronto Operating Criteria or other regional requirements.
- CECC may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a Support Person where it is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.
  - Support persons will be required to read and acknowledge CECC's confidentiality agreement and all other policies pertaining to their involvement with our organization. If they will regularly be in the classrooms/with the children a CRC, health check and other documents required by the Day Nurseries Act will be required.
- All service animals must have proof of inoculations/vaccinations required under the Day Nurseries Act

## **2. Use of Assistive Devices – Guide Animals and/or Support Persons continued**

- Staff and volunteers will be properly trained in how to interact with clients with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal, a support person or use an assistive device.

- CECC's director will solicit advice from the clients on how best to work with their service animal, support person and/or their assistive device. Employees, volunteers, and student teachers will read the "Tips for Interacting with People with Disabilities," provided by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

### **3. Notice of Temporary Disruptions**

CECC will notify clients in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption of services or facilities such as the wheelchair lift at St. Monica's School and the elevator at Eglinton School, plus the push button doors at both sites. The notice will be provided verbally; placed on the entrance doors to both sites and sent via e-mail to our families.

The notice will include the following information:

- That a facility or service is unavailable.
- The anticipated duration of the disruption.
- The reason for the disruption.
- Alternative facilities or services, if available.

### **4. Feedback Procedure**

- AODA requires Organizations to implement a feedback method that allows clients to provide feedback on perceived barriers, including how to ask for assistance.
- CECC accepts feedback in a variety of ways including in person, by telephone, in writing or electronically.
- All feedback will be directed to our director and/or our Board of Directors.
- Feedback/complaints will be addressed by: Step 1 – CECC's Employees, Step 2 - CECC's Directors, Step 3 – CECC's Board of Directors
- Responses to feedback/complaints can be expected within 10 business days.
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### **Training and Records**

## A. Timing of Training

CECC will provide training to employees, volunteers and student teachers during their pre-employment and pre-placement orientation sessions and whenever there are changes to the policy. Training materials will be reviewed annually.

### Content of Training

Training will include:

- i. A review of the purpose of the Act and requirements of the Standard.
- ii. A review of the Policy.
- iii. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.
- iv. How to interact with persons with a disability who use an Assistive Device or require the assistance of a Service Animal or Support Person.
- v. How to use equipment or devices made available on our premises to assist persons with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from our services.
- vi. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our premises and/or services.

## B. Documenting Training

- Records of the training provided, including the training protocol, the dates on which the training is provided, and the name of the presenter, will be included on each staff member's Training Record sheet in accordance the requirements of the Act. The binder will be kept in CECC's office.

*The policies and procedures outlined in this document will apply to all services that are delivered by CECC including services delivered in person, by telephone, electronically, visually, orally or by written materials.*

All Accessibility Policies of CECC are available to our clients. Alternative formats are available upon request. Alternative formats may include E-mail, CECC's website, paper copies, information in large print, information read by the director, or translated copies, when possible.

## **5. Modifications to this or other policies**

Any policy of CECC that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

All CECC's policies and procedures, including the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service will be reviewed annually by CECC's Board of Directors.

**Developed – December 2011 – Revised August 2022**

**Central Eglinton Children's Centre**

**The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**

**The Customer Service Standard**

**Employee, Volunteer and Student Teacher Training**

**Training Resource provided by Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act**

**General Tips on providing service to clients with disabilities**

If you are not sure what to do, ask the client "May I help you?" They will tell how you may or may not help.

Speak directly with the person, even if they are accompanied by a support person or companion.

Avoid stereotypes and make no assumptions about what type of disability or disabilities a person has. Some disabilities are not visible, and clients are not required to give you information about any disabilities they may have.

Take the time to get to know the client's needs and focus on meeting those needs just as with any other client

Be patient. People with some kinds of disabilities may take longer to understand and respond. A good start is to listen carefully.

If you cannot understand what your customer is saying, politely ask them to repeat themselves.

Don't touch or speak to service animals – they are working and must always pay attention.

Don't touch assistive devices, including wheelchairs, without permission.

Try to learn about appropriate language and terminology to use when referring to people with disabilities. Words can influence and reinforce the public's perception of people with disabilities. They can create a positive view of people with disabilities, or a negative view. Here are some tips that can help make your communication and interaction with people with all types of disabilities more successful:

Use "disability" or "disabled," not "handicap" or "handicapped."

Don't use terms such as "retarded," "dumb," "psycho," "moron" or "crippled." These words are very demeaning and disrespectful to people with disabilities.

Remember to put people first. It is proper to say, "person with a disability," rather than "disabled person."

If you are not sure about a disability, it's better to wait until the individual describes their situation to you rather than make your own assumptions. Many types of disabilities have similar characteristics, and your assumptions may be wrong.

### **Here are a few tips for interacting with people who have various disabilities:**

#### **People with physical disabilities**

Only some people with physical disabilities use a wheelchair. Someone with a spinal cord injury may use crutches while someone with severe arthritis or a heart condition may have difficulty walking longer distances.

#### **Tips:**

- If you need to have a lengthy conversation with someone who uses a wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so you can make eye contact at the same level.
- Don't touch items or equipment, such as canes or wheelchairs, without permission.
- If you have permission to move a person's wheelchair, don't leave them in an awkward, dangerous, or undignified position, such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.

### **How to communicate with people with different types of disabilities**

#### **People with vision loss**

Vision loss can restrict someone's ability to read, locate landmarks or see hazards. Some clients may use a guide dog or a white cane, while others may not.

#### **Tips:**

- When you know someone has vision loss, don't assume the individual can't see you. Many people who have low vision still have some sight.
- Identify yourself when you approach and speak directly to the client.

- Ask if they would like you to read any printed material out loud to them (for example, a menu or schedule of fees).
- When providing directions or instructions, be precise and descriptive.
- Offer your elbow to guide them if needed.

## **People who have hearing loss**

People who have hearing loss may be deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing. They may also be oral deaf – unable to hear but prefer to talk instead of using sign language. These terms are used to describe different levels of hearing and/or the way a person's hearing was diminished or lost.

### **Tips:**

- Once a client has identified themselves as having hearing loss, make sure you are in a well-lit area where they can see your face and read your lips.
- As needed, attract the client's attention before speaking. Try a gentle touch on the shoulder or wave of your hand.
- If the client uses a hearing aid, reduce background noise, or move to a quieter area.
- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier (for example, using a pen and paper).

## **People who are deaf-blind**

A person who is deaf blind may have some degree of both hearing and vision loss. Many people who are deaf blind will be accompanied by an intervener, a professional support person who helps with communication.

### **Tips:**

- A person who is deaf blind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them, perhaps with an assistance card or a note.
- Speak directly to the person, not to the intervener.

## **People with speech or language impairments**

Cerebral palsy, hearing loss or other conditions may make it difficult for a person to pronounce words or may cause slurring. Some people who have severe difficulties may use a communication board or other assistive devices.

**Tips:**

- Don't assume that a person with a speech impairment also has another disability.
- Whenever possible, ask questions that can be answered with "yes" or a "no".
- Be patient. Don't interrupt or finish the person's sentences.

**People who have learning disabilities**

The term "learning disabilities" refers to a variety of disorders. One example is dyslexia, which affects how a person takes in or retains information. This disability may become apparent when a person has difficulty reading material or understanding the information you are providing.

**Tips:**

- Be patient – people with some learning disabilities may take a little longer to process information, to understand and to respond.
- Try to provide information in a way that considers the person's disability. For example, some people with learning disabilities find written words difficult to understand, while others may have problems with numbers and math.

**People who have intellectual /developmental disabilities**

Developmental or intellectual disabilities, such as Downs Syndrome, can limit a person's ability to learn, communicate, do every day physical activities and live independently. You may not know that someone has this disability unless you are told.

**Tips:**

- Don't make assumptions about what a person can do.
- Use plain language.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.

**People who have mental health disabilities**

Mental health issues can affect a person's ability to think clearly, concentrate or remember things. Mental health disability is a broad term for many disorders that can range in severity. For example, some customers may experience anxiety due to hallucinations, mood swings, phobias, or panic disorder.

**Tips:**

- If you sense or know that a person has a mental health disability. Be sure to treat him/her with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.

Be confident, calm, and reassuring.

- If a person appears to be in crisis, ask him/her to tell you the best way to help.

## **People who use assistive devices**

An assistive device is a tool, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities, such as moving, communicating, or lifting. Personal assistive devices can include things like wheelchairs, hearing aids, white canes, or speech amplification devices.

### **Tips:**

- Don't touch or handle any assistive device without permission.
- Don't move assistive devices or equipment, such as canes and walkers, out of the person's reach.
- Let the person know about accessible features in the immediate environment that are appropriate to their needs (e.g., elevators, accessible washrooms, etc.).

## **Assistive Devices that may be used by CECC clients**

### **Eglinton**

- The elevator in the great hall of Eglinton School
- The push-button doors on the main entrance and the west entrance of Eglinton School

### **St. Monica's**

- The wheelchair-lift on the entrance stairs of St. Monica School.
- The push-button doors on the main entrance, the north (playground) entrance and the east entrance of St. Monica School.

## **Guide Dogs/Service Animals**

People with vision loss may use a guide dog, but there are other types of service animals as well. Hearing alert animals help people who are deaf, deafened, oral deaf, or

hard of hearing; other service animals are trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure.

Under the standard, service animals must be allowed on the premises except for the kitchen.

**Tips:**

- Remember that a service animal is not a pet. It is a working animal. Avoid touching or addressing them.
- If you're not sure if the animal is a pet or a service animal, ask the person.

**How to interact with a person who has a guide dog or other service animal**

Some people with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person, such as an intervener. A support person may be a personal support worker, a volunteer, a family member, or a friend. A support person might help the person with a variety of things from communicating, to helping with mobility, personal care, or medical needs.

CECC welcomes support people to our workplace. They are permitted in any part of your premises if they are accompanying the person who needs assistance.

**Tips:**

- If you're not sure which person is the client, take your lead from the person using or requesting our services, or simply ask.
- Speak directly to the client, not to their support person.

**How to serve a person accompanied by a support person**

If you notice that the client is having difficulty accessing our facilities or services, a good starting point is to simply ask "How can I help you?"

Our clients are your best source for information about their needs. A solution can be simple, and they will likely appreciate your attention and consideration.

**\*Types of accessible formats**

- HTML and Microsoft Word
- braille
- accessible audio formats

- large print
- text transcripts of visual and audio information

## **Types of communication supports**

- reading the written information aloud to the person directly
- exchanging hand-written notes (or providing a note taker or communication assistant)
- captioning or audio description
- assistive listening systems
- augmentative and alternative communication methods and strategies (e.g., the use of letter, word or picture boards, and devices that speak out)
- sign language interpretation and intervenor services
- repeating, clarifying, or restating information

## **Tools to make information accessible**

Other tools to improve the accessibility of information include:

**American Sign Language (ASL):** Uses hand shapes, positions, facial expressions, and body movements to convey meaning to people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

**Braille:** Is a tactile system of raised dots representing letters or a combination of letters. It is used by people who are blind or deafblind and is produced using braille transcription software.

**Captioning:** Uses subtitles to convey the words spoken in a video. They usually appear on the bottom of the screen.

**Digital Accessible Information Systems (DAISY):** Is an audio format for people who have trouble with print — including limited vision and learning disabilities like dyslexia. DAISY digital talking books are like audiobooks but include navigation features to help readers skip forward or back through the material.

**Screen reader software:** Use a speech-synthesizer to read text from a computer screen or convert it to braille. The information must be formatted properly (in a structured electronic file) for the screen reader to recognize it.

**Structured electronic files:** Includes information about how elements of the document are formatted (e.g., titles, section headings). They can be created using "styles" in most standard word processing programs. Documents created as structured electronic files are easier to convert to accessible formats (including braille, DAISY, and web pages) and allow screen readers to navigate the information effectively.

Central Eglinton Children's Centre

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Employee, Volunteer and Student Teacher Training

**I have read and understood the following parts of CECC's Accessibility Standard for Customer (Client) Service**

**(Please check the boxes when you have read the policy & training)**

What is The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)?

What are the Five AODA standards?

- Customer Service standard
- Transportation standard
- Information and Communications standard
- Built Environment standard
- Employment standard

What is the Customer Service Standard?

What is defined as a Disability?

CECC's Policy Statement?

Policy and related practices and procedures consistent with the following four (4) core principles: Dignity, Equality, Integration, Independence?

CECC's Communication with clients?

(Clients) Use of Assistive Devices–Guide Animals and/or Support Persons?

Notice of Temporary Disruptions?

Feedback Procedure?

Tips on interacting with people with disabilities?

Training Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

