

Category: Employee	REF.: EMP #52
Subject: Accessible Customer Service	Page: 1 of 3
Date: 07/Dec/09	Supersedes: New
Human Resources Manager Signature:	Date:
CEO Signature:	Date:

SUBJECT: Accessible Customer Service

POLICY:

Five Counties Children's Centre is committed to providing services to the public and our staff that are free of barriers and biases. Five Counties Children's Centre strives to ensure that key principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity are reflected and valued in our working environments. Our conduct will demonstrate our belief in the strength that diversity brings to our communities.

It is the policy of Five Counties Children's Centre to provide an environment in all of its sites that builds independence, dignity and respect for our children/parents/families and the general public. Further, we are committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity of access to our services in all our sites.

DEFINITIONS:

The following definitions will be used in the related procedures associated with Accessibility Standards for Customer Service:

Customer is any person who uses the services of Five Counties Children's Centre.

Assistive Device is any device used by people with disabilities to help with daily living. Assistive devices include a range of products such as wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, electronic communication devices.

Service Animal is an animal that is used by a person with disability and this is either readily apparent or is supported by a letter from a medical practitioner (refer to procedure for the use of service animals)

Support Person is a person who assists or interprets for a person with a disability as they access Centre services. A support person is distinct from an employee who supports a client.

Third Party Contractors is any person or organization acting on behalf of or as an agent of the Centre (e.g. snow removal, building contractor).

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DEFINITIONS (cont'd):

Barriers to Accessibility means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of Centre services. This includes, but is not limited to, a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier.

Accommodation is a means, through reasonable efforts, of preventing and removing barriers that impede individuals with disabilities from participating fully in Centre services.

APPLICATION:

Five Counties Children's Centre will act to implement the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service by ensuring the following:

1. The Centre will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that all policies, practices and procedures from the date of this policy forward are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity to all with particular attention for persons with disabilities.
2. The Centre will welcome all members of the community to its facilities by committing its staff, volunteers and students on placement to providing services that respect the independence and dignity of persons with disabilities, such service to incorporate measures that include but are not limited to the use of assistive devices and service animals.
3. To ensure greater awareness and responsiveness to the needs of a person with disabilities, the Centre will provide appropriate training for all staff/volunteers/placement students who interact with the public or other third parties on behalf of the Centre.
4. Training will be provided to all staff and, when appropriate, to volunteers/placement students. As new staff is hired, the training will become a component of their orientation training and will be provided within a reasonable timeframe.
5. The Centre will ensure that its policies and procedures related to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* are made available to the public and also ensure there is capacity to provide communication about these policies and procedures in a format that takes into account a person's disability.

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APPLICATION (cont'd):

6. When services that are normally provided to a person with a disability are temporarily unavailable such as access to an elevator, appropriate communication procedures will be implemented. (Refer to notification of disruption of service procedure.)
7. In order to monitor the effectiveness of implementation of the Accessible Customer Service Standard, the Centre will develop a process for receiving and responding to feedback. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to the public and will allow people to provide feedback using a number of methods.
8. So that adherence to this policy can be achieved efficiently and effectively, the Centre and all its managers will take into account the impact on persons with disabilities when purchasing new equipment, designing new systems or planning a new initiative.
9. The Centre will create a feedback process that will review the implementation of this policy with the Centre's various constituency groups. Examples include Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey, other identified groups and methods would include use of electronic means such as website.
10. The Centre will also consult with the Staff Personnel Committee representing frontline staff who have a role in implementing the expectations and procedures established under this policy to review its effectiveness.

Legal Framework

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07

Ontario Human Rights Code

Cross-Referencing

The Accessible Customer Service policy aligns with the following Centre procedures:

Accessible Customer Service – Use of a Support Person by the General Public EMP #53

Accessible Customer Service – Notification of Disruption of Service EMP #54

Accessible Customer Service – Use of Assistive Devices by the General Public EMP #55

Accessible Customer Service – Use of Service Animals by the General Public EMP #56

Accessible Customer Service – Monitoring and Feedback on Accessible Customer Service EMP #57