



Accessibility Plan

Revised November 2016

Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (ASCY)

Diversity & Inclusion Guiding Principles

The following policies are to guide ASCY's customer service delivery and accessibility practices for

- all employees
- those who visit our sites or use our services, programs and supports

We will

- provide equal access to goods or services
- be accessible – e.g. facilities, website, etc.
- offer appointments, training and meetings at varied times and in community-based locations
- have professional learning opportunities / learning communities accessible to all who work or live in Hamilton and work with children and youth
- ensure appropriate programs and services are open to all children, families and professionals who work with children and youth
- be respectful and sensitive to the needs of each person
- support independence
- create a culture to 'make things possible' in a manner that supports the person's preferences, when possible
- treat all people with dignity

Our Mandate

ASCY exists to foster lifelong optimal potential.

Our Commitment

Through the lens of belonging, engagement, expression and well-being:

- all employees are competent and capable in their respective areas of expertise
- community professionals and learners are competent and capable and have the resources to support the optimal development of all children
- all families are competent and capable and have the resources to support the optimal development of their children
- children's services that are:
 - high quality
 - integrated
 - co-ordinated
 - based on the pedagogy
- children receive services that are:
 - timely
 - reflective of evidence-based practice
 - based on their individual strengths and competencies
 - facilitate their optimal potential

Our goal is to:

- provide a welcoming and inclusive place for our employees and those who visit our sites
- provide goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of all people

- give people with disabilities equal opportunity to access our goods and services which:
 - allows them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other clients, members, etc.
 - takes into account their preferences in the manner in which we assist them

We are committed to excellence in working with and serving all people including those with disabilities who:

- are employed by our agency
- enter our sites
- use our programs and services

We have put the following policies into practice as required by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA, 2005). The AODA is working towards making Ontario accessible for people with disabilities by 2025 and includes:

- customer service
- information and communications
- employment
- transportation
- design of public spaces

The AODA also works in conjunction with the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.

Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that meet their needs.

To ensure this, we will:

- access sign language and cultural interpreters when possible and requested
- train staff
- provide resources to those who communicate with clients, members and others using our sites and services on how to interact and communicate with people with different types of disabilities
- we will provide information to people with disabilities, including our employees in the manner that best meets their needs upon their request

i. Telephone Services

To meet client and employee needs, we will:

- train staff to communicate over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly
- offer to use email, TTY or other modes of communication that are accessible to both our staff and those we are communicating with

ii. Assistive Devices

Assistive devices may include:

- canes
- wheelchairs

- TTY
- other devices

To meet the needs of those using assistive devices who are employed by our agency or use our sites and services, we will train staff on:

- the different types of assistive devices
- how to use assistive devices at our sites:
 - TTY
 - wheelchair access buttons – at main doors
 - accessible washrooms
 - small magnifying devices – at reception / Professional Resource Library (PRL) member area

The main site location at 526 Upper Paradise Rd. is wheelchair accessible with

- sidewalk ramps
- wheelchair access button at the main door
- wheelchair accessible washroom

Our Early Words location at 1160 Upper Paradise Rd. is wheelchair accessible with wheelchair access button at the main door, however, there are no wheelchair accessible washrooms on-site.

iii. Invoicing

We will provide accessible invoices to all our clients and members.

We will:

- provide invoices in different formats when requested
 - hard copy
 - electronic copy
 - large print
- answer questions about the content of the invoice by
 - telephone
 - e-mail
 - in person by appointment

Service Animals

We welcome people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal. They are welcome in the areas that are open to the public and other third parties.

When it is not easily identifiable that an animal is a service animal, staff may request documentation to support that the individual needs a service animal. People with disabilities can obtain documentation from a regulated health professional such as:

- doctors
- nurses
- psychologists
- psychotherapists
- audiologists
- chiropractors
- optometrists

We will train all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public in how to interact with those accompanied by a service animal.

Support Persons

We welcome people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. A support person is someone who is helping or supporting a person with a disability and is recognized by the person with a disability as their support person.

At no time will a person with a disability be prevented from having access to their support person while at our sites.

Fees will only be charged to support persons for meals or materials if this is part of the fee for individuals attending training, events, meetings or functions.

We will inform our clients, members and others who use our sites about our policy regarding support persons:

- Accessibility Plan posted on our Agency website and available at reception in our main locations.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

If there is a disruption in access to our sites or services, we will post notices:

- at the public entrances of the site affected

- at www.ascy.ca or www.earlywords.ca as appropriate
- on the Professional Learning Calendar at www.ascy.ca
- via group e-mail to those who have provided the appropriate consent as required by Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL)

The notices will clearly state:

- the reason for the disruption
- the expected length of time of disruption
- where clients may access services, if available

Emergency Planning

In an emergency, our first priority is the safety of employees and visitors using our buildings.

Evacuation Procedure

The following steps will be taken in an emergency situation in which individuals need to leave the building.

1. Individuals attending training events and those using the Professional Library Services are required to sign-in.
2. Generally, a staff representative is present for client visits or meetings.
3. During business hours, reception keeps a log of employees present in the building.
4. Staff will help those in their immediate area and guests (clients, members, those attending meetings) to leave the building and ensure everyone is well away from the building.
 - a. In the event the ASCY main site needs to be evacuated, the Regina Gardens (RG) location at 536 Upper Paradise Rd. can

be used as a temporary place of shelter and vice versa if the circumstances allow.

- b. In the event the Early Words (EW) site needs to be evacuated, individuals can meet at the northwest corner of the parking lot or when at the St. Helen Centre site the far corner of the parking lot.
5. During off-hours, staff will survey their immediate area and the entire building to ensure everyone has left the premises (i.e.: office area, washrooms, meeting rooms, etc.)
6. Staff will close office, meeting rooms, washroom doors, etc. as they exit the building.
7. If there is a fire, staff will pull the fire alarm and/or call 911.
8. Any Managers on-site are responsible to ensure employees and visitors safely exit the building.
9. If an employee feels he/she requires additional support or assistance to exit safely in an emergency situation, the employee's immediate Manager will develop a plan in conjunction with the employee to help him/her and discuss the plan with those who would be involved.
10. Any visitors who request a copy of the Evacuation Procedure will be given a copy of the information in the manner or format which works best for that individual. The information will be provided in a prompt manner, however, in some circumstances, there may be a delay of up to 24 business hours to present the information in the requested format.

Training for Staff

Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (ASCY) will provide training to employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on our behalf. Individuals in the following positions will be trained:

Managers

Professional Learning Consultants

Early Literacy Specialists

Project Staff

Professional Resource Librarians & Program Support

Administrative Support/Reception/Intake Personnel

Speech & Language Pathologists

Family Support Worker

Early Childhood Vision Consultants

Communicative Disorders Assistants

Community Screeners

Board of Directors

Third-Party Consultants/Trainers (presenters, independent contractors working with the public)

Volunteers who are under the direct responsibility of our Agency

Students on placement with the Agency

This training will be:

- provided within first 2 weeks of beginning with the Agency
- as outlined in Appendix B
- provided in a way that best suits the duties of employees, Board members, volunteers, etc.

All employees will be asked to sign a form stating they have:

- read the Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (ASCY) Accessibility Plan
- completed the online training and readings as outlined in Appendix B

Training will include:

- the purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (AODA), 2005
- Ontario's accessibility laws and the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities
- the requirements of the standards under the AODA that are relevant to our agency size (i.e.: customer service, integrated accessibility standards, employment standards, etc.)
- how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- how to interact with people with disabilities who use:
 - an assistive device
 - a service animal
 - a support person
- how to use TTY or other assistive devices available on-site to help provide goods or services to people with disabilities
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing goods and services
- the Agency's policies, procedures and practices relating to the standards under the AODA relevant to our agency (i.e.: customer service & integrated accessibility standards, etc.)

If an employee or others dealing with the public on behalf of Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (ASCY) have any questions about the Accessibility Plan or AODA legislation, please contact the Director of Organizational Effectiveness.

Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

Employment Standard

Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (ASCY) is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

On agency job postings circulated internally or on our Career Board located on the ASCY website will indicate that ASCY welcomes and encourages applications from people with disabilities and that accommodations are available on request for candidates taking part in all aspects of the selection process. During the hiring process, we will tell job applicants when they are selected for an interview that accommodation will be provided and at their request we will discuss their needs with them and make adjustments to support them.

ASCY will also work in conjunction with employees with disabilities to ensure their accessibility needs are taken into account during performance management, career development and redeployment processes, upon their request. A written Accommodation Plan will be developed in conjunction with the employee upon their request.

Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of ASCY is to meet and surpass the expectations of clients, members and others we serve who have disabilities. We welcome and appreciate comments on how well we are meeting those expectations.

Feedback regarding the way we provide goods and services to people with disabilities can be made:

- by e-mail
- verbally
- in writing
- through our feedback form on our website
- through surveys, feedback forms, etc.

Feedback will be made available in accessible formats within 24 hours business notice, when possible and upon request.

All feedback will be sent to the Director of Organizational Effectiveness. Anyone who gives feedback will hear back in 3 to 5 business days.

Complaints will be addressed using our regular complaint procedures.

Modifications to this or other Policies

We will develop accessibility policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. No changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

Any policy of Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (ASCY) that doesn't respect and promote the dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Questions about this Policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to our clients, members and others we serve with disabilities as well as our employees. The Director of Organizational Effectiveness will respond to any questions about this policy.

In Closing

Our Agency is open to continuing to learn and build our awareness, knowledge and capacity in providing goods and services to individuals with disabilities.

Appendix A

Background

In May of 2008, Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (ASCY) participated in a pilot Diversity Assessment with the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion (HCCI). We formed a working group to make recommendations about how we could be more inclusive. We developed Guiding Principles for Diversity and Inclusion for our Agency. These have been adapted to align with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (AODA), 2005.

The Diversity/Inclusion Working Group remains active within our organization. The Working Group is familiar with the legislation. Together we will bring our Guiding Principles and the legislation to life as the working group, along with the agency as a whole, will continue to:

- increase our knowledge
- enhance our policies
- implement practices

APPENDIX B

Accessibility Training for Affiliated Services for Children and Youth

New Employees/Students/Volunteers/Independent Contractors

1. Complete the online training modules at <http://accessforward.ca/>
 - a. General Requirements Module (approx. 12 minutes)
 - b. Customer Service Standard Module (approx. 30 to 40 minutes)
 - c. Information and Communication Standard Module (approx. 17 minutes)
 - d. Employment Standard Module (approx. 12 minutes)
 - e. Transportation Standard Module – Optional (approx. 12 minutes)
 - f. Design of Public Spaces Standard Module – Optional (approx. 15 minutes)

Please note: videos can only be viewed in Internet Explorer

2. Complete the online training entitled “Working Together and the AODA” at <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/working-together-code-and-aoda> (5 modules; approximately 20 minutes)
 - a. Part 1 – Introduction
 - b. Part 2 – The Code
 - c. Part 3 – Understanding the Duty to Accommodate
 - d. Part 4 – Applying Human Rights Principles
 - e. Part 5 – Compliance & Enforcement
3. Read the Brochure entitled, “Disability & Human Rights”, Ontario Human Rights Commission

4. Refer to the Binder located at Reception and/or ASCY Professional Resource Library (optional). This includes 2 DVDs: “Serve-Ability: Transforming Ontario’s Customer Service” & “Ontario TALK”
5. Sign-off on Form to indicate you have completed the Accessibility Training & read ASCY’s Accessibility Policy. Provide a signed copy to the Director of Organizational Effectiveness for your HR file within 2 weeks of starting with the agency.

Upon Changes to Legislation or ASCY Policies

1. Complete the online training modules at <http://accessforward.ca/>
 - a. General Requirements Module (approx. 12 minutes)
 - b. Customer Service Standard Module (approx. 30 to 40 minutes)
 - c. Information and Communication Standard Module (approx. 17 minutes)
 - d. Employment Standard Module (approx. 12 minutes)
 - e. Transportation Standard Module – Optional (approx. 12 minutes)
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- a. Part 1 – Introduction
- b. Part 2 – The Code
- c. Part 3 – Understanding the Duty to Accommodate

- d. Part 4 – Applying Human Rights Principles
 - e. Part 5 – Compliance & Enforcement
3. Sign-off on Form to indicate you have completed the Accessibility Training & read ASCY's Revised Accessibility Policy within 2 weeks of the revised plan/policy. Provide a signed copy to the Director of Organizational Effectiveness for your HR file.