

**CHILDCARE MANUAL**

SECTION:	<b>IMPLEMENTATION &amp; REVIEW OF ADDITIONAL POLICIES &amp; PROCEDURES</b>	DATE OF APPROVAL:	<b>May 2017 Revised March 2019</b>
CODE:	<b>IR – 004</b>		
TITLE:	<b>Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy</b>		

**Purpose**

Through the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005, Ontario is paving the way for an accessible province for people with disabilities by 2025. Under this act, accessibility standards have been developed. These are rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario need to follow to break down barriers in important areas of everyday life; customer service, transportation, employment, information and communications (IASR – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation), and the built environment which includes buildings and other structures.

As Kids & Us has grown to an organization with 50+ employees, it is now required to;

- Create written accessibility policies and make them publically available
- Develop statements of commitment to accessibility and make they publically available, and
- Create documented multi-year accessibility plans, updating them at least once every 5 years and post them on their website, if they have one.

The documents listed must be available in accessible format if requested.

**Statement of Commitment**

Kids & Us is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and we are committed to meeting the needs of the people with disabilities in a timely manner. WE will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the AODA and Ontario’s accessibility laws.

**Definitions**

**Accessibility** – giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life. It is used to describe how widely a service, product, device or environment is available to as many people as possible. It can be seen as the ability to access and benefit from a system, service, product or environment.

**Barrier** – Barriers are obstacles that limit access and prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society. Most barriers are not intentional. Barriers usually arise because the needs of people with disabilities are not considered from the beginning. See Table A for examples.

**Disability** –the Ontario Human Rights Code identifies disability broadly as;

- 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 development disability,

- A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- A mental disorder, or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*

## Policy

Kids & Us will train staff, volunteers and students in accessibility standards and organization policies and procedures as they relate to their specific roles.

All staff, students and volunteers will communication with people with disabilities that take into account their disability. When asked, Kids & Us will provide information about our organization and its services in accessible formats (e.g. large font, read aloud) or with communication supports. (e.g. translator, recording)

Kids & Us will notify employees, potential new candidates and the public that accommodations can be made during the recruitment and hiring process. In addition, employees will be made aware that supports can be available for those with disabilities, and we will support employees by developing an individual accommodation plan, which may include customized emergency information to assist the employee during an emergency.

## Procedures

- 1.0 Kids & Us mission is to be able to provide information about our programs and services to all interested people in a manner that they can understand.
- 2.0 Kids & Us is committed to review their Accessibility Plan at minimum every 5 years or when necessary.
- 3.0 Kids & Us will post to their website the Accessibility Standards Policy and our Accessibility Plan.
- 4.0 New employees, students, volunteers as part of their orientation will be informed of the Accessibility Standards Policies and review training modules on the following Standards; Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, Design of Public Spaces and Transportation. In addition, the Ontario Human Rights Code, as it relates to People with Disabilities. (See Table B.) A record of training will be kept at each site.
- 5.0 Identifying barriers (see Table A. for examples) will be the responsibility of every employee, student and volunteer
  - A barrier is an obstacle that makes it difficult or even impossible, for people with disabilities to fully participate in life, and some barriers may be unique to Kids & Us.
  - Barriers usually develop because the needs of people with disabilities are not considered.
  - All barriers should be brought to the attention of the supervisor or Programs Manager for review and a plan developed to remove the barrier, if it cannot be done immediately. Kids & Us is committed to removing barriers in a timely manner, providing it not cause undue hardship to the organization.
- 5.0 Kids & Us is committed to excellence in serving all people with disabilities and we carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas;
  - a. Communication - We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We will train staff, students and volunteers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
  - b. Telephone Services - We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to people with disabilities. We will offer to communicate with customers by email, writing (large print),

voice recordings, or support persons if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs.

- c. Assistive Devices - We are committed to accommodating people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain information about or use our services. We will ensure staff is trained and familiar with these assistive devices.

- 6.0 Kids & Us is committed to welcoming people with disabilities that are accompanied by a service animal and/or support person into our centre. Service Animals are not permitted into the kitchen and food preparation areas.
- 7.0 Kids & Us will provide notice in the event of a planned (Closing for holidays) or unplanned (school closure due to inclement weather, hydro outage) disruption in the program. The notice should include the anticipated duration, if known. The notice will be available on our Facebook pages, Remind Ap., and often local radio stations.
- 8.0 Kids & Us will provide training to employees, volunteers and others who deal with people with disabilities on behalf of Kids & Us. The training will be completed as soon as possible after the staff or volunteer commence their position.
- 9.0 The ultimate goal of Kids & Us is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving people with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated. Feedback regarding the way Kids & Us provides programs and services to people with disabilities can be made; verbally, through email, in writing to the Board of Directors, or the Executive Director. A response can be expected if forwarding information is left.

We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

**Compliance**

Staff, students and volunteers will review these policies and procedures and complete training as soon after employment commences as possible. A record of the training and policy review will be kept on file. Supervisors will conduct ongoing monitoring for compliance. (See Table B)

As Kids & Us now employs more than 50 people, the policy is required to be made public. (Available on request and on the website) Compliance reports will be submitted to the government as required.

**Contraventions**

Staff and volunteers who fail to observe or implement policies, procedures or individual plans under the regulations are subject to the Progressive Discipline Policy 4.6.12 of the agency.

**Retention**

Records of compliance or contravention observed will be kept a minimum of 3 years in a secure location from their date of creation.

**Table A.**

Type of Barrier
<u>Attitudinal Barrier</u> – may result in people with disabilities being treated differently than people without disabilities. E.g. employee speaking to an individual’s support person rather than the individual with the disability.

<u>Informational and Communication Barriers</u> – arise when a person with a disability cannot easily receive and/or understand information available to others. E.g. Relaying important messages verbally, a person with hearing loss could not hear clearly.
<u>Systemic Barriers</u> – these could be policies and procedures that result in people with disabilities being treated differently than other, or excluded altogether. E.g. Documents not available in large print, digitally or other accessible formats.
<u>Physical and Architectural Barriers</u> – occurs in the environment and prevent access for people with disabilities. E.g. clutter in hallways, steps to access.
<u>Technological Barriers</u> – occur when technology or the way it is used does not meet the needs of people with disabilities. E.g. Website that doesn't support screen reading software, meetings held in locations that are not accessible to people with wheelchairs.

**Table B.**

<b>Training Supports</b>
<u>Policies and Procedures</u> – staff, students and volunteers are required to review the relevant policies and procedures prior to commencing care and guidance and annually or as needed after.
<p><u>Online Modules</u> – As soon after commencing care and guidance as reasonable possible, staff, students and volunteers shall complete the following online training modules; (available at <a href="http://www.accessforward.ca">www.accessforward.ca</a>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Requirements</li> <li>• Information and Communication Standard</li> <li>• Employment Standard</li> <li>• Design of Public Spaces Standard</li> <li>• Transportation Standard</li> <li>• Customer Service Standard</li> </ul>
<p><u>Ontario Human Rights</u> – staff, students and volunteers shall complete the following online training module;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ontario Human Rights Code – Working Together</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/working-together-ontario-human-rights-code-and-accessibility-ontarians-disabilities-act">http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/working-together-ontario-human-rights-code-and-accessibility-ontarians-disabilities-act</a></p>