



Accessibility Policy

Approved: December 15, 2011 Revised: January 2017

Statement of Commitment

The Whitney Child Centre 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.

The Integrated Accessibility Standard (“IAS”) was adopted as a regulation under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (“AODA”). The Whitney Child Centre is committed to meeting the needs of persons with a disability in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements in accordance with AODA. This policy will be implemented in accordance with the time frames specified by the IAS Regulation, and will apply to all operations of the Whitney Child Centre.

The five standards of the Act are:

Customer Service; Information and Communications; Employment; Transportation and Design of Public Spaces.

The Whitney Child Centre will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies and related practices and procedures are consistent with the following four (4) principles:

- 1. *Dignity*** - Persons with a disability must be treated as valued clients as deserving of service as any other customer.
- 2. *Equality of Opportunity*** - Persons with a disability should be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from our services.
- 3. *Integration*** - Wherever possible, persons with a disability should benefit from our services in the same place and in the same or similar manner as any other customer. 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 takes into account the person’s individual needs.

4. **Independence** – Services must 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 the express permission of the person.

Information and Communication

Accessible Formats and Communication Support

The Whitney Child Centre is committed to communicating with clients with disabilities in different or alternative ways that take into consideration their disability. Individuals may contact the Supervisor to receive any information or materials in an accessible format or to receive support with communication. The Centre will ensure that its process for receiving and responding to feedback is accessible to persons with disabilities by providing, or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communications upon request and in a timely manner. The Supervisor will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

Information about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports is on the website and included in the information and registration packages given to families.

Some examples of alternate format or support may include:

- Staff trained to communicate with clients over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.
- Reading written information to a person directly.
- Providing material in larger print.
- Text transcripts of audio information.
- Handwritten notes instead of spoken word, or electronic documents.
- Information written in plain language.

If it is not possible to convert any requested material the Centre will provide a timely explanation as to why the information or communication cannot be converted, and a summary of the information or communications.

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.

Use of Assistive Devices

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

The Whitney Child Centre 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.

All service animals must have proof of inoculations/vaccinations required under the Child Care and Early Years Act.

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 an assistive device.

The use of such items must be in compliance with the regulations outlined in the Child Care and Early Years Act or other regional requirements.

Workplace Emergency Response Information

The Supervisor will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary, and if the Supervisor is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability. The Supervisor will provide this information as soon as is practicable after becoming aware of the need for accommodation.

The Supervisor will review the individualized workplace emergency response information when the employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed, or when relevant policies are revised.

The Centre will create an individualized emergency plan in the event of a situation such as a fire, power outage, severe weather, evacuation or lockdown, for any client or staff member who requires one due to a disability. It is the responsibility of the client or employee to notify the employer that they require accommodation.

The plan will be developed after discussing with the employee or client what support they need. The Centre will get permission to share the information with other staff or individuals if it is necessary for the implementation of the plan.

The Centre will ensure that the information is shared in a manner that supports the individual's independence and dignity.

The plan will be reviewed when there are changes to the person's disability, or when the Centre's Fire, Lockdown and Evacuation policies are revised.

Notice of Temporary Disruptions

Whitney Child Centre will notify clients if there is a planned or unexpected disruption to the facility or to the services that persons with a disability use to access our programs. The information will be provided verbally or electronically or by any other method as may be reasonable under the circumstances, or may be posted. The information will include:

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

Whitney Child Centre welcomes feedback on how we provide services to clients, staff or members of the public with disabilities. Our goal is to ensure we meet the needs and expectations of our clients and their families with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcomed and appreciated.

Whitney Child Centre accepts feedback in a variety of ways including in person, by telephone, in writing or electronically. Our Feedback Form is available in the lobby or on our website.

Our feedback protocol requires Whitney Child Centre to respond to all client inquiries within thirty business days. Information about accessible feedback is given to all new clients in their registration package, and is included on our website for both prospective and existing clients.

Training and Records

Whitney Child Centre will provide training and ongoing training on the Accessibility Standards and the Human Rights Code as required under the Act, to all persons to whom this Policy applies as well as to those persons charged with developing this Policy and related procedures and practices. This includes management, Board Members, volunteers, employees and ECE students.

A. Content of Training

Training will include:

- i.* A review of the purpose of the Act and its requirements.

- ii. A review of the Centre's 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.
- vii. A review of the Human Rights Code as it pertains to accessibility.

B. Timing of Training

Training will be provided to all persons to whom this Policy applies as soon as it is practicable after he or she is assigned the applicable duties. Staff will be retrained when the policy is revised.

C. Documenting Training

Records of the training provided will be maintained in accordance the requirements of the Act. Each individual trained will sign and date the Accessibility Training Form.

The above policies and procedures will apply to all services that are delivered by Whitney Child Centre including services delivered in person, by telephone, electronically, visually, orally or by written materials.

All Policies of the Whitney Child Centre are available to our clients. Alternative formats are available upon request, and will be provided in a timely manner.

Employment

The Employment Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation sets out the accessibility requirements that the Centre must follow to support the recruitment and accommodation of employees. This includes preparing individualized emergency response information for persons that have an identified disability and to make employment practices and work places more accessible for new and existing employees with disabilities.

Informing Employees of Support

The Supervisor will inform its employees of its policies (and any amendments or updates to these policies) used to support persons with a disability, including policies on the

provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability. This information will be provided to new employees as soon as is practicable after commencing employment.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

All employees are made aware that they may request information to be provided in an accessible format. If a request is received, the Supervisor will meet with the staff to gather information regarding the disability and to understand how to best provide that support and information. Accessible formats and communication supports can be requested for information required for employees to perform their job, and covers all information generally available to employees.

In determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support, the Supervisor will consult with the employee making the request.

Hiring

The Centre will ensure that when advertising for positions, that the advertisement will state that accommodations for job applicants with disabilities are available on request. When interviewing candidates the Supervisor will ask if the candidate requires any accessibility accommodations to participate in the hiring process.

Recruitment and the Interview Process

The Supervisor will notify job applicants when they are selected to participate further in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request.

If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, the Supervisor will consult with the applicant and provide, or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs due to a disability.

Notice to Successful Applicants

When making offers of employment, the Supervisor will notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Questions about Policy

If anyone has any questions regarding this policy, or would like to obtain a copy of this document in an alternative format, please ask the Supervisor.

