

HALTON HILLS CHILD CARE CENTRE

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Board of Directors Approval

Approval Date	Rev.	BOD Name	BOD Signature
June 24, 2021	1	Vicki Hurley	
June 28, 2023	2	Julia Plomske	

Revision History

Date	Rev.	Reason	Prepared by	Approved by
Sept. 28, 2020	3	Updated Policy Format	LW	GI
Oct. 28, 2020	4	Added Forms	LW	GI
Apr. 11, 2023	5	Policy Review	LW	

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Halton Hills Child Care Centre
Accessible Customer Service Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Halton Hills Child Care Centre (HHCCC) is committed to providing accessibility to our services for persons with disabilities in a respectful and dignified manner that respects the independence of each individual.

HHCCC is committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services, allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

This policy establishes accessibility standards for customer service at HHCCC in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA) and Ontario Regulation 429/07.

Background Information

The goal of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act is to make Ontario accessible for people with disabilities by 2025. Ontario is developing mandatory province-wide standards to achieve this goal and to improve accessibility.

Definitions

Disability is defined according to the AODA 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 coordination, 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 developmental 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.

Principles

HHCCC will use every reasonable effort to be consistent with the principles: Dignity, Independence, Equal Opportunity, and Integration.

Dignity

Service is provided in a respectful manner consistent with the needs of the individual.

Independence

Services for persons with disabilities shall support their independence while respecting their right to safety and personal privacy.

Equal Opportunity

Service outcome is the same for persons with disabilities as for persons without disabilities.

Integration

Services allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

Barriers

The AODA defines a barrier as anything that prevents a person with disabilities from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including Attitudinal, Architectural and Physical, Information and Communication, Technology, and Organizational.

Attitudinal

Attitudinal barriers are those that discriminate against people with disabilities.

Architectural and Physical

Architectural and physical barriers are features of buildings or spaces that cause problems for people with disabilities.

Information and Communication

Information and communication barriers happen when a person cannot easily understand information.

Technology

Technology barriers occur when a technology cannot be modified to support various assistive devices.

Organizational

Organizational barriers are an organization's policies, practices or procedures that discriminate against people with disabilities.

Assistive Device

Is a technical aid, communication device or medical aid that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities, in seeing, hearing, speaking, mobility, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, working, or self-care.

Support Person

Means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services. O. Reg. 429/07, s. 4 (8).

Service Animal

Is an animal for a person with a disability,

- a) if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- b) if the person provides a letter from a regulated health professional (i.e. physician, nurse, psychologists, psychotherapists, audiologists, chiropractors, and optometrists) confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability. O. Reg. 429/07, s. 4 (9).

Service animals include, but are not limited to "guide dogs": a guide dog as defined in section 1 of the Blind Persons' Rights Act; means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the Blind Persons' Rights Act. R.S.O. 1990, c. B.7, s. 1 (1).

ACCOUNTABILITY/ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Directors

- To read *Accessible Customer Service Policy* every two years.
- To review amendments as they occur.
- To participate in training. See Appendix A – Training.
- To budget for areas that may require further and/or ongoing development.

Management

- To review *Accessible Customer Service Policy* with all staff, students, and volunteers at commencement of employment or placement, whenever changes are made to the policy and thereafter every two years.
- To provide training for all members of our organization (Board, staff, volunteers, and students). See Appendix A – Training.
- To ensure that accessible customer service is provided to all clients.
- To identify all barriers of accessibility.
- To investigate all reports of barriers of accessibility.
- To develop a plan to deal with barriers of accessibility.
- To ensure feedback regarding accessible customer service is addressed in accordance with the policy.
- To review the Emergency Response Plan with any employees and/or clients who have a disability to determine if an individualized plan is necessary.
- To complete *Compliance Report* for the Government of Ontario as necessary.
- To retain staff training participation and attendance information.
- To retain written documentation for staff policy review.
- To add amendments as they occur.
- To update policy annually.

Staff

- To adhere to the practices as outlined in this policy.
- To ensure that accessible customer service is provided to all clients.
- To identify and report all barriers of accessibility to the Director.
- To participate in training as deemed necessary by the Director.
- To bring to the Director's attention any questions, concerns, or ideas.

PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

Providing Services to People with Disabilities

HHCCC will make every reasonable effort to provide services for all customers including people with disabilities.

Compliance Reporting

Compliance reporting for this policy is required as per the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA) by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Notice of reporting is sent to the director's email.

Communication

HHCCC will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We will train staff members who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

Telephone Services

HHCCC is committed to providing accessible telephone service to our customers. We will train staff members to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

HHCCC will offer to communicate with clients by email, TTY (1-800-268-9242), and/or Bell relay services (1-800-268-9243).

Assistive Devices

HHCCC is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services. We will ensure that our staff members are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing services. We will ensure that staff members know how to use assistive devices on our premises for clients: wheelchairs, walkers, etc.

Billing

HHCCC is committed to providing accessible invoices to all our customers. Weekly fees are paid electronically in advance and a Tax Receipt is given out annually. Upon request, we can provide invoices for extra fees such as field trips, late fees, NSF notices in the following formats upon request; hard copy, large print, and/or email. We will answer questions clients may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone and/or email.

Use of Service Animals

HHCCC is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal in the parts of the premises that are open to the public. We will ensure that all staff members are trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

Exceptions to the rule

Service animals will not be permitted:

- i. Where food preparation is being undertaken
- ii. Health and safety of another person (i.e. severe allergy)
- iii. Laws restricting animal breeds

A customer with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal must always maintain care and control of the animal.

If a customer or staff member has a severe allergy to animals, which could result in health and safety concerns. The Centre will make reasonable effort to meet the needs of all individuals which may include moving the individual to another area, etc.

Support Persons

HHCCC is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. A support person would have to be an adult. In situations where a fee for the support person may be applicable (i.e., admission, fare, etc.), the HHCCC will waive such fees.

Notice of Service Disruption

HHCCC will provide clients with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services if available. This notice will be placed at all public entrances. Phone calls may be placed if time and staffing allow.

The first staff with knowledge of a disruption of service will post Notice of Temporary Disruption on all public entrances. See Notice of Temporary Disruption form.

Training for Staff

HHCCC will provide training to all Board members, employees, volunteers, and students. See Appendix A – Training.

This training will be provided upon employment, as needed, and thereafter every two years.

The training will include:

- Policy review.
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
- How to use the equipment or devices available that may help with the provision of services to people with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with disabilities is having difficulty in accessing HHCCC services.

HHCCC will keep records of training provided.

Availability of Documents

HHCCC will provide our Accessible Customer Service Policy upon request in a format that takes into account the person's disability (i.e. reading technology, etc.). This policy can also be found on our website www.hhchildcare.ca.

Feedback Process

Our goal at HHCCC is to meet and surpass customer expectations while servicing customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way HHCCC provides services to people with disabilities can be made by feedback form available on our website, by email, and/or verbally. All feedback will be forwarded to the Director. Customers can expect to hear back in 10 days. Complaints will be addressed following our established complaint procedure as outlined in our Complaint Policy.

Modifications to This or Other Policies

HHCCC is 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.

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

Questions about This Policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation will be provided by the Director of HHCCC.

TRAINING

General Guidelines

- Ask before you help.
- The customer may have their own way of doing things.
- Respect the customer's personal space.
- Never lean over the customer or the assistive device.
- Never move an assistive device out of the customer's reach (cane, walker, etc.).
- Do not touch assistive devices without permission.
- Inform the customer of accessible features (i.e. accessible washroom).

Customers with Physical Disabilities

- There are many types and degrees of 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.

Types of assistance the customer might use:

- Wheelchair
- Scooter
- Walker
- Cane
- Crutches
- Support person

Assisting a Customer in a Wheelchair

- Ensure the customer is ready to move.
- Describe what you are going to do.
- Avoid uneven surfaces.
- Never leave the customer in an awkward, dangerous, or undignified position facing a wall or in the path of a door.

Vision Disabilities

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

Assisting a Customer with Vision Disabilities

- Never assume the customer cannot see you.
- Identify yourself when you approach the customer.
- Speak directly to the customer.
- Offer your elbow to guide the customer.
- If the customer accepts, walk slowly, and describe your surroundings.
- Identify landmarks or other details to orient the customer to the environment around them.
- If giving directions or information, be precise and descriptive.
- Do not leave the customer in the middle of a room.
- Guide to a chair or comfortable location.
- Do not walk away without saying goodbye.
- Offer to read or use reading technology for printed materials.

Types of assistance the customer might use:

- Braille
- Large print
- Magnification devices
- White cane
- Guide dog
- Support person

Hearing Disabilities

- People who have hearing loss may be Deaf, oral deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing.
- These are terms used to describe different levels of hearing and/or the way a person's hearing was diminished or lost.

Assisting a Customer with Hearing Disabilities

- Get the customer's attention with a visual cue before speaking.
- Walk into their vision path.
- Look and speak directly at the customer.
- Wave your hand and say "Hello, may I help you?" from outside of their personal space.
- Do not shout.
- Speak clearly and naturally.
- Make sure you are in a well-lit area where the customer can see your face, may read your lips.
- If the customer has a hearing aid, reduce background noise, or move to a quieter area.
- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier (using a pen and paper).

Types of assistance the customer might use:

- Hearing aid
- Pen and Paper

- Personal amplification device
- Phone amplifier
- Relay service
- TTY
- Hearing ear dog
- Support person

Deafblind Disabilities

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

Assisting a Customer with Deafblind Disabilities

- Do not assume what the customer can or cannot do. Some people who are deafblind have some sight and/or hearing, while others have neither.
- If in attendance, identify yourself to the intervenor when you approach.
- Speak directly to the customer, not to the intervenor.
- A customer who is deafblind is likely:
 - to explain to you how to communicate
 - by providing you with a card

Types of assistance the customer might use:

- Braille
- Large print
- Print on paper
- Communication boards
- Hearing aid with built-in FM system
- Magnification equipment
- TTY
- White Cane
- Service animal
- Support person

Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

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

Assisting a Customer Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

- Do not assume what a customer can or cannot do.

- Treat the customer like everyone else.
- The customer will appreciate that you treat them with respect.
- Be patient.
- Use plain language.
- Make sure the customer understands what you have said.
- You can be direct and say, “Please don’t hesitate to ask me if you need additional information.”
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- You can break down the information into simple concepts without exaggerating speech or gestures or being patronizing.

Types of assistance the customer might use:

- Communication board
- Speech generating device
- Service animal
- Support person

Learning Disabilities

- The term learning disabilities refers to a variety of disorders, such as dyslexia, that affect 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.

Assisting a Customer Learning Disabilities

- Be patient.
- Allow the customer to understand the information given, process and respond.
- Provide information in a way that works for the customer.
- Keep a pen and paper handy.
- Explain and review the information using the notes.
- Be prepared to explain any written materials that you provide to the customer.

Types of assistance the customer might use:

- Alternative technology for writing
- Calculator
- Scanning or reading technology
- Tape recorders, mini pocket recorders

Mental Health Disabilities

- Mental health issue 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.

Assisting a Customer Mental Health Disabilities

- Be confident, calm, and reassuring.
- Listen carefully and focus on meeting the customer's needs.
- If the customer appears to be in crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help "How can I help?"
- If the customer appears to show signs of mental health related stress, be mindful that the customer's reactions are not connected to you personally.

Types of assistance the customer might use:

- Service animal
- Support person

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.
- Do not assume that just because the customer has a speech disability that he/she must also have other disabilities.

Assisting a Customer Speech or Language Impairments Disabilities

- Give the customer sufficient time to get their point across.
- If possible, ask yes or no questions.
- Do not interrupt or finish the customer's sentences.
- Wait for them to finish.

Types of assistance the customer might use:

- Communication board
- Pen and Paper
- Speech generating device
- Support person

Service Animals

Service animals may provide assistance to customers with a variety of disabilities:

- Vision Loss

- Hearing Loss
- Seizures

Service animals assist people with:

- Autism
- Mental Health Disabilities
- Mobility Disabilities
- Other Disabilities

Assisting a Customer with a Service Animal

- Service Animals are permitted anywhere the customer has access to.
- The customer must maintain care and control of the animal at all times.
- Do not touch or speak to service animals. They are working and have to pay attention.

Access Exceptions:

- Where food preparation is being undertaken.
- Health and safety of another person (severe allergy, etc.).
- Laws restricting animal breeds.

Support Person

Support person may be:

- Personal Attendant
- Volunteer
- Family Member
- Friend
- A support person is allowed to accompany the customer.

Assisting a Customer with a Support Person

- The customer may not introduce their support person.
- Take the cue from the customer using or requesting our services.
- Speak directly to the customer, not to the support person.

Personal 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.

Assisting a Customer with Personal Assistive Devices

- The assistive device is part of the customer's personal space.

- Respect the customer’s personal space.
- Do not touch or handle assistive devices without permission.

Assistive devices that assist people with disabilities in accessing our services:

- TTY (teletypewriter) – Sends typed text messages across phone lines.
- Bell Relay Services (1-800-268-9243) – Operator assistance is intermediary.

Types of Assistive Devices could include but not limited to:

- Wheelchairs
- White Canes
- Speech Amplification Devices
- Special Keyboards
- Pen and Paper
- Pointing Device
- Information in Braille
- Hearing and Amplification Devices

When Customers with Disabilities Experience Difficulties in Accessing Our Services

- Be flexible
- Ask “May I help you?”
- Solicit a few suggestions from the customer to guide the conversation and find a mutually respectful solution.
- Offer to communicate via pen and paper.
- Confirm that needs are met.

Remember

Disabilities do not define a person.

Some disabilities are visible.

Some disabilities are invisible.

FEEDBACK FORM

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE FEEDBACK FORM

Halton Hills Child Care Centre is committed to providing accessibility to our services. We value all of our customers and strive to meet everyone’s needs. We welcome your comments to help us monitor and improve our services and experiences.

Please submit your completed form to any of the following:

Mail or Deliver to:

Halton Hills Child Care Centre
Attention: Director
371 Mountainview Road South
Unit 8
Georgetown, Ontario
L7G 5X3

Phone:

905-877-5004
ext. 100

Email:

director@hhchildcare.ca

Please tell us about your experience. (please print)	
Date	Time
Did we respond to your service needs? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (please explain below)	
Was our customer provided in an accessible manner? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> No (please explain below)	
Please provide details of your customer service experience.	
<hr/>	
<hr/>	
<hr/>	

Contact Information (please print) Would you like us to follow up with you? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Name	Phone Number
Address	Email

Personal information contained on this form is collected in accordance with Halton Hills Child Care Centre *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* and will be used for the purpose of responding to you so we can provide better service.

NOTICE OF SERVICE DISRUPTION FORM

NOTICE OF SERVICE DISRUPTION

Duration of Disruption	
Date Starting	Date Ending

Nature of Disruption

Alternate Services (if available)

For Additional Information or Assistance	
Contact Person	Date Posted
Phone Number	Email

We apologize for any inconvenience

EMERGENCY INFORMATION WORKSHEET – 3 PAGES

EMERGENCY INFORMATION WORKSHEET

Please complete this worksheet to help us identify barriers that could arise in an emergency situation and provide suggestions on how to overcome them. Your input will help us provide an *Individualized Response Plan*.

the information in this document is confidential and will only be shared with consent. You do not have to provide details of medical conditions or disability, only the type of help you may need in an emergency.

Contact Information	
Name	Date
Phone Number	Cell Number

Emergency Contact Information	
Name	Relationship
Phone Number	Cell Number

Potential Emergency Response Barriers (Response to the questions that are applicable)	
Can you see or hear the fire alarm signal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
If no, what would help you know the alarm is ringing?	
Can you activate the fire alarm signal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
If no, what would help you to sound the alarm?	
Can you talk to emergency staff?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
If no, what would help you to communicate with them?	

Potential Emergency Response Barriers (Response to the questions that are applicable)	
Can you use the emergency exits?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
If no, what would help you to exit the building?	
Does your mobility device fit in the emergency area?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
If no, what would help it fit, or is there a better location?	
Can you find the exit if it was smoky or dark?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
If no, what would help you find the exit?	
Can you exit the building by yourself?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
If no, what would help you to get out?	
Would you be able to evacuate during a stressful and crowded situation	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
If no, what would help you evacuate?	
Can you read/access our emergency information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
If no, what would make this information available to you?	

Evacuation/Emergency Actions

If you need help to evacuate, what instructions do people need to help you?

If you need other accommodations in an emergency, please list them here.

From your responses, we will develop an individual

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN – 2 PAGES

EMERGENCY RESPONSE WORKSHEET

The information collected in the Emergency Information Worksheet will be used to create an individual Emergency Response Plan for each person with a disability.

All the information in this document is confidential and will only be shared with consent.

Contact Information	
Name	Date
Phone Number	Cell Number

Emergency Contact Information	
Name	Relationship
Phone Number	Cell Number

Emergency Alerts
You will be informed of an emergency situation by:
<input type="checkbox"/> Existing Alarm System
<input type="checkbox"/> Phone
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Assistance Methods
List types of assistance (i.e. staff assistance, transfer instruction, etc.)

Equipment Provided
List any devices, where they are stored, and how to use them.

Evacuation Route and Procedure

Provide a step-by-step description from the first sign of an emergency.

Alternate Route

Provide a step-by-step description from the first sign of an emergency.

Emergency Support Staff

You will be helped by the following designated people in an emergency.

Name	Location and/or Contact Information	Type of Assistance

Consent

I give consent to Halton Hills Child Care Centre to share this individualized Emergency Response Plan information with the individuals listed above who have been designated to help in an emergency.

Signature <small>(parent/guardian/staff)</small>	Date
Director Signature	Date

EMERGENCY RESPONSE POSTING

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Posting
Staff
Classroom #1
Classroom #2
Classroom #3
Classroom #4
Classroom #5
Classroom #6