

CHAPTER SIX: TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Approval Date: April 2011 Revision Date: August 2021	Policy: ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE
	Policy Number: 6.31

Purpose

To ensure Child Care Algoma treats all customers equally and with dignity, courtesy and respect of their particular needs.

Policy

Child Care Algoma is committed to excellence in serving all customers / clients, including *persons with disabilities* with respect, dignity, independence and equal opportunity. We will be committed to identifying and removing barriers in order that persons with disabilities may fully participate in our services and we will commit to prevent further barriers from being created in our future planning. Child Care Algoma will support children and families through high quality, inclusive services that meet their diverse developmental, early learning and child care needs. Child Care Algoma strives at all times to provide services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Child Care Algoma is committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services as to allow them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as others.

Commitment Statement

Child Care Algoma is committed to providing a barrier-free environment for all stakeholders, including our clients, employees, job applicants, suppliers, and any visitors who may enter our premises, access our information, or use our services. As an organization, we respect and uphold the requirements set forth under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and its associated regulations.

Child Care Algoma understands that we have a responsibility for ensuring a safe, dignified, and welcoming environment for everyone. We are committed to ensuring our organization's compliance by incorporating accessibility legislation into our policies, procedures, equipment requirements, training, and best practices. We will review these policies and practices annually, as organizational changes occur, or in anticipation of compliance deadlines. In addition, we will strive to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in a timely and effective manner.

Providing an accessible and barrier-free environment is a shared effort, and we are committed as an organization to working with the necessary parties to make accessibility for all a reality.

Procedures

Child Care Algoma will carry out its functions and responsibilities to ensuring excellent customer services by giving attention to the following areas;

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VISION DISABILITIES

Vision disabilities reduce a person's ability to see clearly; however people with vision disabilities may not be totally blind. Vision disabilities can restrict your customers' abilities to read signs, forms and other documents, locate landmarks or see hazards. Types of assistive devices customers may use with a vision disability are a guide dog, white cane, magnifier, audio cassette, large print, braille or a support person.

When interacting with persons with a vision disability the succeeding guidelines will be adhered to:

- 1.0 Never assume the individual can't see you
- 2.0 Identify yourself when approaching the individual and speak directly to them
- 3.0 Speak naturally and clearly
- 4.0 Never touch your customer without asking permission; unless it is an emergency
- 5.0 Offer your elbow to guide the person. If they accept, walk slowly
- 6.0 If you are guiding your customer towards stairs:
 - let them know if they have to walk up or down
 - approach the stairs head on, not at an angle and come to a full stop in front of the stairs
 - make sure your customer is on the rail side and allow them to take hold of it
 - let them find the first step and then start to climb or descend the stairs
 - try to be one step ahead and always announce the last step
- 7.0 Identify landmarks or other details to orient your customer to the environment
- 8.0 Don't touch or address service animals
- 9.0 If you are giving directions or verbal information, be precise and clear
- 10.0 Do not leave a customer in the middle of a room. Show them to a chair, or guide them to a comfortable location
- 11.0 Do not walk away without saying good-bye

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DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

People who have hearing loss may be deaf or hard of hearing. Like other disabilities, hearing loss has a broad range of levels. Types of assistive devices customers may use with a hearing loss or who are deaf may be a hearing aid, personal amplification device, phone amplifier, telephone teletype, sign language interpreter, service animal or paper and pen.

When interacting with persons who have a hearing loss or are deaf the succeeding guidelines will be adhered to:

- 1.0 Attract the individual's attention before speaking
- 2.0 Always ask how you can help ~ don't shout
- 3.0 Make sure you are in a bright area where they can see your face
- 4.0 Do not put your hands in front of your face when speaking ~ some people may read lips
- 5.0 Ask if another method of communicating would be easier ~ pen and paper
- 6.0 Be patient if you are using a pen and paper to communicate
- 7.0 Look at and speak directly to your customer ~ address the customer, not the interpreter
- 8.0 Be clear and precise when giving directions, and repeat or rephrase if necessary ~ make sure you have been understood
- 9.0 Reduce background noise or move to a quieter area, especially if the person uses a hearing aid
- 10.0 Discuss any personal matters in a private room to avoid other people for overhearing

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DEAF AND BLIND

A person who is deaf-blind cannot see or hear to some level. This results in more complications in retrieving information and handling daily activities. Most people who are deaf-blind will be accompanied by a professional who helps with communicating. Types of assistive devices customers may use who are deaf-blind are telephone teletype, large print, braille, audio cassette, support person, service animal and communication boards.

When interacting with persons who are deaf-blind the succeeding guidelines will be adhered to:

- 1.0 Do not assume what a person can or cannot do
- 2.0 A customer who is deaf-blind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them or give you an assistance card or note explaining how to communicate with them
- 3.0 Speak directly to your customer as you normally would, not to the support person
- 4.0 Identify yourself to the support person when you approach your customer
- 5.0 Do not touch or address service animals
- 6.0 Never touch a person who is deaf-blind suddenly or without asking permission, unless in an emergency

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

There are many forms and gradations of physical disabilities and it sometimes can be difficult to recognize a customer with a physical disability. People who have heart or lung conditions or amputations may also have difficulty with moving, standing or sitting. Types of assistive devices customers may use who have a physical disability are a wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane, crutches, an elevator or a support person.

When interacting with persons who have a physical disability the succeeding guidelines will be adhered to:

- 1.0 Ask before you help ~ be patient as customers will identify their needs to you

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- 2.0 Respect your customer's personal space
- 3.0 Try to put yourself at your customer's eye level and at increased distance if you are having a long conversation
- 4.0 Speak naturally and directly to your customer
- 5.0 Do not touch or move assistive devices
- 6.0 If you are given permission to move a person in a wheel chair:
 - wait for and follow the person's instruction
 - make sure your customer is ready to be moved
 - describe what you are going to do before you proceed
 - avoid unlevelled grounds
 - never leave a person in an uncomfortable, dangerous or degrading position
- 7.0 Inform your customer of accessible features in the environment, such as automatic doors, accessible washrooms, elevators
- 8.0 To ensure a unobstructed path remove barriers and rearrange furniture

MENTAL HEALTH DISABILITIES

People with mental health disabilities look like anyone else and unless you are informed your customer has a mental health disability you may not be aware. Depression, phobias, schizophrenia, bipolar, mood disorders and anxiety are examples of mental health disabilities. Some common characteristics of a mental disability may be; inability to think clearly, depression or acute mood swings, poor concentration, difficulty in remembering, hallucinations and lack of motivation. Types of assistive devices customers may use who have a mental health disability are a support person or service animal.

When interacting with persons who have a mental health disability the succeeding guidelines will be adhered to:

- 1.0 Treat the individual with the same respect and consideration as you would anyone else
- 2.0 Be confident and reassuring

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- 3.0 Listen prudently and work with the customer to meet their needs
- 4.0 If someone appears to be in crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help

INTELLECUTAL OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Individuals with intellectual or development disabilities can slightly or profoundly limit the person's ability to learn, communicate, socialize and manage their everyday needs. Unless you are informed, or you observe the way the person acts, asks questions or uses body language, it can be difficult to know that someone has this disability. Types of assistive devices customers may use who have an intellectual or developmental disability are a communication board, speech generating device, support person or paper and pen.

When interacting with persons who have an intellectual or developmental disability the succeeding guidelines will be adhered to:

- 1.0 Treat the individual with the same respect and consideration as you would anyone else
- 2.0 Do not assume what a person can to cannot do
- 3.0 Use plain language and speak in short sentences
- 4.0 Make certain your customer understands what you have said
- 5.0 Offer one portion of information at a time
- 6.0 Be supportive and patient
- 7.0 Speak directly to the person
- 8.0 If it is difficult to understand what has being said, just ask again

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LEARNING DISABILITY

A leaning disability can interfere with your customer's ability to process information. It may affect how they acquire, organize, retain and comprehend the information that is given to them; however it is not that they are incapable of learning, they may just learn in a different way. Examples include dyslexia (reading and related language-based learning), dyscalculia (mathematics) and dysgraphia (writing and fine motor skills). Types of assistive devices a person with a learning disability may use are a support person, mini pocket recorder, large print, communication board or speech generating device.

When interacting with persons who have a learning disability the succeeding guidelines will be adhered to:

- 1.0 Be supportive and patient. If you need to explain something over again, be willing to do so ~ they may take longer to understand and respond.
- 2.0 Ask how you can best help
- 3.0 Speak naturally, clearly and directly to your customer
- 4.0 Try to provide information in a way that works best for the customer ~ have a paper and pen available

SPEECH OR LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT

Cerebral palsy, hearing loss or other conditions may make it difficult to communicate. These disabilities may also make it difficult for a person to express themselves or understand written or spoken language. Some people who have difficulties may use assistive devices, such as a communication board, speech generating device, support person or paper and pen.

When interacting with persons who have a speech or language impairment the succeeding guidelines will be adhered to:

- 1.0 Be polite, patient, respectful and willing to find a way to communicate
- 2.0 Do not interrupt or finish your customer's sentences

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- 3.0 If possible ask questions that can be answered “yes” or “no”
- 4.0 Ask the customer to repeat the information if you do not understand
- 5.0 Do not make assumptions that a customer who may have difficulties speaking may as well have an intellectual or developmental disability

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Child Care Algoma is committed to providing accessible service to children and families with disabilities. This means that we will provide services to people with disabilities with the same high quality and timeliness as others.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Child Care Algoma is committed to making our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities in a timely manner and will provide any emergency information to clients and the public in an accessible way upon request. We will provide information and communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability to ensure they have the same access to services as do all others we serve. We will train staff who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

All new websites and web content on Child Care Algoma’s website will conform with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

We are committed to providing full accessible telephone service to our customers. We will train staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in a clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly. We will offer to communicate with customers by email, in person, or by relay services if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

TALKING WITH CUSTOMERS WITH DISABILITES OVER THE TELEPHONE

- 1.0 Speak slowly, naturally and clearly
- 2.0 Concentrate on what is being said ~ be patient, do not interrupt or finish your customer’s sentences ~ Give your customer time to explain or respond
- 3.0 If you do not understand; ask them to repeat what they have communicated ~ If you are still uncertain what your customer said, repeat or rephrase what you heard

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- 4.0 If your customer has great difficulty communicating it may be necessary to make arrangements to call back when it is convenient to speak with someone else
- 5.0 If telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs we will offer to communicate by email or Bell Relay Services

RELAY SERVICE

- Telephone the number 1-800-855-0511 and tell the operator your name, the name of the person you are wishing to call and the number you wish to reach
- The operator will make the call for you. You will speak to the operator as if you were talking directly to the customer
- Speak slowly so your message can be typed while you are speaking
- Operators will not betray confidences; however will relay banking, personal financial information and other personal conversations

ASSISTIVE DEVICES

We are committed to serving people with disabilities, who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services. We will ensure that our staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our services.

USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS AND SUPPORT PERSONS

We are committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. We will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal. The customer that is accompanied by a service animal is responsible for maintain care and control of the animal at all times. If a health and safety concern presents itself for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, Child Care Algoma will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter Child Care Algoma premises with his/her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.

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BILLING

- 1.0 Child Care Algoma will provide accessible invoices to all our customers. For this reason, upon request invoices will be provided in the following formats: hard copy, large print, email.
- 2.0 Child Care Algoma will be committed to answering any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or e-mail.

NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION

- 1.0 Child Care Algoma will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption of our services. The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.
- 2.0 The notice will be placed at public entrances and reception areas on our premise(s).

STAFF TRAINING

- 1.0 Child Care Algoma is committed to providing training in the requirements of Ontario's accessibility laws and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it applies to people with disabilities. Child Care Algoma will provide training to employees and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf. Individuals in the following positions will receive *formal* training: Executive Director, Managers, Program Coordinators, Reception / Administrative Staff. Other employees to include Registered Early Childhood Educators, casual, maintenance, cooks and volunteers will be trained on policies and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities.
- 2.0 Training will be provided by the Manager of Programs and Human Resources at time of Child Care Algoma's Orientation and prior to staff commencing their duties.
- 3.0 Training will include the following:
 - The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
 - How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities

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- How to interact and communicate with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person
- How to use equipment or devices that may help with the provision of services to people with disabilities
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing Child Care Algoma's services
- Child care Algoma's policies and procedures relating to the customer service standard

4.0 All employees will be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to the policy and procedures in accordance with Ontario Accessibility Laws.

FEEDBACK PROCESS

1.0 In meeting and surpassing customer service while serving customers with disabilities, Child Care Algoma welcomes comments on our services in regards to how well those expectations are being met.

2.0 Feedback regarding the way Child Care Algoma provides services can be made through completing Child Care Algoma's Feedback Form by email, in person or by phone. All feedback will be directed to the Executive Director.

Anne DeLuco, Executive Director
148 Dacey Road
Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5J7
adeluc@childcarealgoma.ca
705-945-8898 ext. 243

Appendices I – Child Care Algoma Accessibility Feedback Form

3.0 Those who provide feedback can expect to hear back within five working days.

MODIFICATION TO POLICY

1.0 Child Care Algoma's "Accessibility Standards for Customer Service" Policy and Procedure respects and promotes the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. No changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

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- 2.0** All policies and procedures of Child Care Algoma will respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.
- 3.0** If anyone should have a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation will be provided by the Manager of Programs and Human Resources.

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APPENDICES I

Child Care Algoma
Accessibility Feedback Form

Thank you for choosing Child Care Algoma. We strive to provide quality services that are accessible to children and families, employees, community partners and visitors. Your comments and concerns help us identify where changes should be considered and ways we can make our services more accessible.

If you or someone you know experienced difficulties related to accessibility in any of our Programs or using any of our services, please fill in this form with as much detail as possible about your experience.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Preferred method of communication:

- Telephone E-mail Mail
- No response required; I would prefer not to be contacted.

I am:

- An employee A Parent/Guardian A visitor Other

Date of experience: _____

Location of experience (if applicable): _____

