OP-019

Accessibility for the Customer Service Standard under the AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act)

Effective Date:

November 3, 2026

Supercedes:

October 18, 2023

Approvals:

Finance Manager	*Managing Director*
Date: Nov. 3, 2026	*Date: Nov. 3, 2026*

Policy:

It is the policy of Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place to develop policies, practices, and procedures that provide accessible quality services to all individuals in accordance with IASR 191/11 Accessibility Standards for Customer Services. Services will be provided to individuals with disabilities in a manner that promotes and respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

The above policy and the procedures will apply to all services that are delivered by Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place including services delivered in person, by telephone, electronically, visually, orally or by written materials. All Accessibility Policies of Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place are available to our clients. Alternative formats are available upon request. Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place, shall prepare one or more documents describing the policies established under this section, and on request, shall give a copy of any such document to any person upon request. Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place, shall notify persons to whom it provides goods, services, or facilities that the documents required is available upon request.

Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place will endeavor to ensure that the policy and related practices and procedures are consistent with the following four (4) core principles:

1. Dignity – Persons with a disability must be treated as valued individuals 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 child. In circumstances where integration does not serve the needs of the person with a disability, service will, to the best of our ability, 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.

Procedure:

The provision of services to individuals with disabilities, and others will be integrated unless an alternative measure is necessary, whether temporarily or permanently, to enable clients with a disability to participate in the services offered by Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place.

Communication

Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place is committed to communicating with individuals with disabilities in different or alternative ways that take into consideration their disability. Except as otherwise provided, Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place shall upon request, provide or arrange or the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities a) in a timely manner that takes into account the persons accessibility needs due to the disability and b) at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to the other persons. Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place, shall consult with the persons making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. Muskoka Family Focus and

Children's Place, shall notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

- Employees will be trained on how to interact and communicate with individuals with disabilities in a manner that is respectful of an individual's dignity and independence.

- Alternative methods of communication will be provided as requested. Employees will be advised about how to communicate with individuals over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

Use of Assistive Supports

Assistive devices, guide animals and/or support persons may be used by individuals to assist in accessing services at Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place in accordance with the regulations outlined in the Childcare and Early Years Act, 2014 and other regional requirements.

- Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place 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.

- Employees and volunteers will be properly trained in how to interact with individuals with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal, a support person or an assistive device. MFF will ensure the training is delivered by someone qualified and knowledgeable about the needs of the individual with a disability.

Use of service animals and support persons

(1) This section applies if goods, services or facilities are provided to members of the public or other third parties at premises owned or operated by the provider and if the public or third parties have access to the premises.

(2) If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the provider shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

(3) If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the provider shall ensure that other measures are available to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the provider's goods, services or facilities.

(4) If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the provider shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.

(5) The provider may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if, after consulting with the person with a disability and considering the available evidence, the provider determines that,
(a) a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises; and
(b) there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability and the health or safety of others on the premises.

(6) If an amount is payable for a person's admission to the premises or in connection with a person's presence on the premises, the provider shall ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person.

(7) If, under subsection (5), Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place requires a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, the provider shall waive payment of the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person's admission to the premises or in connection with the support person's presence on the premises.

(8) Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place, other than a small organization, shall prepare one or more documents describing its policies with respect to the matters governed by this section and, on request, shall give a copy of any such document to any person.

(9) Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place, other than a small organization, shall notify persons to whom it provides goods, services or facilities that the documents required by subsection (8) are available on request.

(10) The notice required by subsection (9) may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the provider, by posting it on the provider's website, if any, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

Notice of Temporary Disruptions

Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place will notify individuals if there is a planned or unexpected disruption of a facility or service that persons with a disability use to access our services. The notice will be posted at the entrance of the applicable premises, as well as being provided verbally, electronically or in person as applicable. Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place, shall prepare a document setting out the steps that the provider will ensure are taken in connection with a temporary disruption and, on request, shall give a copy of the document to any person upon request. The notice will include the following information:

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

Feedback Procedure

AODA requires organizations to implement a feedback method that allows individuals to provide feedback on perceived barriers, including how to ask for assistance.

Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place accepts feedback in a variety of ways including in person, by telephone, in writing or electronically. Our feedback protocol requires MFF & CP to respond to all client inquiries within 10 business days. Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place, that has processes for receiving and responding to feedback, shall ensure that the processes are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communications supports upon request. Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place, shall notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports with respect to the feedback process.

Training and Records

Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place will provide training and ongoing training as required under the Act, to all persons to whom this policy applies as well as those persons charged with developing this policy and related procedures and practices. Training will be provided to all persons to whom this policy applies as soon as practical after he or she is assigned the applicable duties.

Content of Training

Training will include:

- A review of the purpose of the Act and requirements of the Standard.
- A review of the policy.
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.
- How to interact with persons with a disability who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person.

- 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.

- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our premises and/or services.

- Completing the on-line video series training Working Together the Code and AODA from the Ontario Human Rights Commission **http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/working-together-code-and-aoda < http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/working-together-code-and-aoda>**

Documenting Training

- Records of the training provided, including the training protocol,

- The dates on which the training is provided.

- The number and names of individuals to whom the training is provided shall be maintained in accordance with the requirements of the Act.