



Accessibility Policy

Discovery Children's Centre is committed to complying with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

Our policies, practices and measures reflect the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

If a barrier to accessing our services cannot be removed, we seek to provide alternate ways to access the services.

Our "customers" are the children we serve, as well as their caregivers and, during special events, their community supporters.

The following policy statements, organizational practices and measures are intended to meet the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and management.

This policy does not affect program criteria.

- 1.0 Communications** that reach all our customers. We ensure communication with a person disabled by a barrier is done in a way that removes that barrier.
 - 1.1 To meet communication needs, when appropriate we offer to communicate in different ways, such as writing things down, reading things out loud, and taking extra time to explain things. We also:
 - 1.1.1 Keep paper and pens available to write things down.
 - 1.1.2 Offer a chair when longer conversations are needed.
 - 1.1.3 Offer a quieter space.
 - 1.1.4 Sit down to engage with someone using a wheelchair.
 - 1.1.5 All publications are available in alternate formats on request.
 - 1.1.6 We use signs and documents that are easy to read, including using larger fonts and colour contrast, and ensuring messages are not printed on images.
 - 1.1.7 We write signs and documents in plain language.
- 2.0 Assistive devices** vary and include wheelchairs, canes or communication boards. We welcome the use of assistive devices to remove or reduce barriers. We do not charge fees for the on-site assistive devices, such as hearing technology or descriptive video.
 - 2.1 We accommodate the use of assistive devices when customers are accessing our services or facilities.
 - 2.1.1 We do not touch or move customers', assistive devices without permission.

- 2.1.2 We are trained in how to use the assistive devices that we provide including types of assistive devices provided on-site, such as:
 - 2.1.2.1 Automatic doors which remain on at all times.
 - 2.1.2.2 Doorbells with intercom system. We will post signs on the main entrance with our centre's phone number so that there is a way to contact us in the event that the system is down.
 - 2.2 In cases where the assistive device presents significant and unavoidable health or safety concerns, we attempt to use other measures to ensure the person with disabilities can access our services or facility.
- 3.0 Support persons** are people accompanying a person with a disability to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs to access our services.
- 3.1 We welcome support persons.
 - 3.1.1 We address the customer not the support person, unless requested by the customer to do otherwise.
 - 3.1.2 We make space for support persons on-site and ensure customers have access to their support persons at all times.
 - 3.1.3 We waive admission or service fees for support persons for extracurricular events (example: field trips).
- 4.0 Service animals** are animals (typically dogs) that have been trained to provide assistance to a person with a disability that relates to that person's disability. A service animal may accompany our customer to assist in removing or reducing barriers. Service animals can be present in any public space.
- 4.1 We allow service animals on our premises. We:
 - 4.1.1 Treat a service animal as a working animal.
 - 4.1.2 Do not distract a service animal from its job by petting, feeding or playing with it, unless given permission by the person with the service animal to do so.
 - 4.1.3 Know how to identify a service animal by its harness or vest and by the assistance the animal is providing.
 - 4.2 If we have concerns, we may ask if the animal has been trained to help a person with a disability-related need.
 - 4.3 We do not inquire about the disability.
 - 4.4 We expect the person who is handling the service animal to maintain control of the animal physically or through voice, signal or other means.
 - 4.5 If the service animal is showing signs of not being controlled (i.e., by barking, whining or wandering), we may provide a warning to the handler to control the animal.
 - 4.6 If the service animal continues to misbehave, we may ask the handler to leave.
 - 4.7 We will explain why the animal cannot enter food preparation areas and discuss with the person another way of providing services.
- 5.0 Barrier-free access** ensures that aspects of the built environment that facilitates barrier-free access to services are available for the use in the intended manner. This includes clear and unobstructed hallways and accessible features, such as automatic entrances, doors and ramps.

- 5.1 To ensure barrier-free access to our services or facilities, we maintain our accessibility features so they can be used as intended.
 - 5.1.1 We organize our space so that there is room for people with wheelchairs, electric scooters and walkers.
 - 5.1.2 Our seating accommodates people of varying sizes and abilities.
 - 5.1.3 We keep hallways, aisles, entrance and reception areas, waiting rooms and meeting rooms clear of clutter.
 - 5.1.4 We keep our entrance area clear of ice and snow.
 - 5.1.5 We place standing signs out of the way to avoid tripping hazards.
 - 5.1.6 We may assist a care giver by helping them with their child if they're not able to enter our facility (example: bringing children in from the parking lot).
- 5.2 Our accessibility features affected by this policy include
 - 5.2.1 Hallways
 - 5.2.2 Entrance
 - 5.2.3 Reception areas
 - 5.2.4 Accessible washrooms
 - 5.2.5 Automatic doors
 - 5.2.6 Doorbells
 - 5.2.7 Ramps

6.0 Disruption of Services/Temporary barriers refers to finding alternatives and letting customers know when there are temporary barriers to service, such as ramps and door openers.

- 6.1 We let the public know when and why an accessibility feature is temporarily unavailable, how long it will be unavailable, and other ways to access our services.
- 6.2 If one of our accessibility features becomes temporarily unavailable, we:
 - 6.2.1 Prepare and post a notice and/or announcement about the disruption, the reason for the disruption, how long it will last, and whether there are other ways we can provide access to our services (e.g., by using an alternate entrance).
 - 6.2.2 If requested, we work with the customer to find other ways to provide goods and services.
- 6.3 We let the public know about disruptions in the following ways:
 - 6.3.1 Posted on website
 - 6.3.2 Posted at our building entrances

7.0 Feedback process allows organizations to receive and respond to customer comments about the accessibility of their goods and services.

- 7.1 We welcome and respond promptly to feedback we receive on the accessibility of our services.
- 7.2 We document the actions we take to respond to the feedback we receive, and that information is available on request in a format that meets the individual's communication needs.
- 7.3 We invite feedback in the following ways:
 - 7.3.1 Visit our reception desk, or contact us by phone or email
 - 7.3.2 Speak with our Unit Leaders or Management
- 7.4 All feedback is directed to the Executive Director who determines what action, if any, should occur.
- 7.5 If the feedback requires us to follow-up, the customer is notified that the request is being reviewed and when they can expect a response.

- 7.6 We let the customer know what action we will take to address their feedback, if any.
- 7.7 We respond to feedback in a way that meets the communication needs of the individual.

8.0 Training - We provide the required training on accessible customer service to employees, volunteers and management. The training includes:

- 8.1 How to interact and communicate with people who face barriers to accessing goods and services, use assistive devices, are assisted by a support person and/or are assisted by a service animal.
- 8.2 How to use any equipment or assistive devices that are available on-site.
- 8.3 An overview of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, The Human Rights Code (Manitoba), and the Customer Service Standard.
- 8.4 Our organizational policies, practices and measures, including updates or changes.
- 8.5 Training new employees, volunteers and management by including the policy in their orientation package.
- 8.6 Providing a refresher training regularly, including updates to policies, practices and measures. Reviews are offered yearly.
- 8.7 Keeping records of who has taken training and when by the Director of Programs and Operations.
- 8.8 Feedback on the accessibility of our services is addressed at regular staff meetings.

9.0 Best Practices - Advanced notice of any accessibility barrier will be accommodated to the best of our ability as outlined in points 1-8 for public events such as workshops, Family Fun Day and our Annual General Meeting.