

	Section: Human Resources Subject: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) customer Service Standard – Serving Persons with Disabilities	Policy: 6.48
	Revised/Approved: January 1, 2012 February 2019	

Children’s Community Network is committed to providing goods and services to Persons with Disabilities, in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005.

Children’s Community Network accommodates Persons with Disabilities in areas designated accessible to the public. For greater clarity, areas designated as public include reception areas, meeting rooms, and washrooms in our office locations in Sudbury, Espanola, Manitoulin and Chapleau.

CCN employees:

1. Take responsibility to seek resource information on a disability identified under the AODA 2005 that they are unfamiliar with, so that they meet the requirements for customer service as outlined above.
2. Communicate and interact with Persons with Disabilities in a manner that respects their dignity and independence, encourages integration, and provides equality of opportunity taking into account the person’s disability.
3. Remain open-minded about what a person is capable of doing with their disability.
4. Communicate and interact with Persons with Disabilities in a manner that is consistent with our philosophy of client-driven care.
5. Engage with Persons with Disabilities to have a shared understanding of how best CCN can assist them.
6. Arrange to meet, when possible, in an environment that is quiet and free from distraction and obstacles.
7. Contact management for guidance and direction, in situations where they feel they need additional support.

8. Recognize that a person may have more than one disability and apply any necessary accommodations, as outlined in this procedure.
9. Arrange to meet with Persons with Disabilities in an alternate location, in situations when the local office is not adequately accessible.

CCN Customer Service Procedure for Specific Disabilities

Serving persons who use Assistive Devices

CCN offers the following assistive devices and services: pen, paper, computer as available, Interpreters/Intervenors (sign language), and staff available to read information; Bell Relay calls are also accepted. Some of these devices and services are simple to accommodate quickly.

CCN employees:

1. Engage with the person with the disability to understand how best they can assist the person with their assistive device. For example, ask permission before pushing someone in his/her wheelchair and if conversing for a long period, sit down, if possible, to be at eye-level with the person in the wheelchair.
2. Ask permission to assist with any assistive device unless in an emergency. Respect the personal space of the person using the assistive device.

Serving persons who are Hard of Hearing or Deaf

CCN employees:

1. Identify themselves by name and look directly at the person when approaching him/her. Use a normal volume to speak and be attentive to cues that the person may be having difficulty hearing the conversation. The employee may speak slightly louder or suggest moving to a quieter location.
2. Explore other means of communication, such as writing or electronic. If the person reads lips, do not obstruct your face and if possible, sit or stand directly in front of him/her. Provide information clearly and concisely and ensure a shared understanding by paraphrasing and repeating communications more clearly before the interaction is over. Ensure pen and paper are available for exchanging notes.
3. Ensure that if the person uses an assistive device to help them interact in a situation, ask if s/he needs assistance with the device, and support him/her to use the device. For example, a person may use communication aids, hearing aids, or a personal amplification device. If a hearing alert dog is present, do not pet or otherwise distract the service animal.

4. Focus conversation to the person with a disability, if a sign language interpreter accompanies that person. Obtain consent from the person with the disability before engaging in conversation that includes confidential information.

Serving persons with Vision Loss

CCN employees:

1. Identify themselves by name when approaching the person, and speak directly to him/her in normal tones.
2. Address the person by name, to ensure the person understands someone is speaking to him/her.
3. Adjust lighting in accordance with the person's stated preference. For example, raise or dim the room lighting, and/or close curtains/blinds.
4. If the person uses an assistive device to help them interact in a situation, ask if s/he needs assistance with the device and support him/her to use the device as needed. A person may use a white cane or be accompanied by a guide dog. Do not pet or otherwise distract the animal.
5. Offer to read any brochure or document to a person with low vision, and offer assistance in the use of any assistive devices that the person may have, such as magnifying glasses and screen magnifiers.
6. At the end of the interaction, let the person know before leaving.
7. Offer assistance to guide a person, walking slightly ahead and providing information on the surroundings related to uneven ground/steps/obstacles. If in a room, guide the person to a comfortable location.
8. Verbal communication provides specific information or direction, using terms relative to the person. For example, to their left or right, and provide guidance on position of obstacles, distances, and change in direction.
9. For those who can read standard text, written communication is clear and large enough to read easily. For example, use contrasting colours between the text and background.

Serving persons who are ~~Deaf and Blind~~ Vision and Hearing Loss

A support person will likely accompany a person who ~~is deaf and blind~~ has vision and hearing loss; or the blind deaf and blind person with vision and hearing loss will have a card indicating their preference in how to communicate.

In addition to the above accommodations for persons with vision and hearing loss, CCN employees:

1. Ask if they need assistance with any assistive device and support them to use the device as needed. For example, a person may use hearing aids, magnification devices, large print documents, communication boards, white cane, and support person of service animal. Do not pet or otherwise distract the animal.
2. Focus your conversation to the person with a disability when a sign language intervener accompanies.

Serving persons who have Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

CCN employees:

1. Engage with the person, to have a shared understanding of how you may be of assistance when recognizing the disability is not always obvious. Ask the person to repeat any information not understood.
2. Provide information in a clear and concise manner, listen carefully, and restate information to ensure a shared understanding of the communication. Provide small bits of information in simple terms at one time. When speaking, use plain language and avoid technical terms. Encourage them to ask you to repeat any information that the person may not understand.
3. Communicate directly with the person with the disability, rather than a support person if present.
4. Ask the person if an assistive device may help them interact in the situation. If they need assistance with the device, support them to use the device as needed. For example, a person may wish information read aloud to him/her.

Serving persons who have Learning Disabilities

CCN employees:

1. Engage with the person to have a shared understanding of how you may be of assistance to them, recognizing various communication difficulties.
2. Provide information in a clear and concise manner, listen carefully, and restate information to ensure a shared understanding of the communication: break-up lengthy

conversations to shorter ones, allowing the person to process the information. Encourage the person to ask you to repeat any information that was not understood.

3. Ask the person if an assistive device may help him/her to interact in the situation. If s/he needs assistance with the device, support them to use it. For example, a person may use pen and paper, tape recorder, computer, personal data managers, or calculator.

Serving persons with Mental Health Disabilities

CCN employees:

1. Engage with the person to have a shared understanding of how you may be of assistance to him/her, recognizing symptoms may not always be present or s/he may be having difficulty controlling their symptoms.
2. Provide information in a clear and concise manner, listen carefully, and restate information to ensure a shared understanding of the communication. Speak slowly and break-up lengthy conversations, to allow the person to process the information. This may help decrease the person's anxiety.

Serving persons with Physical Disabilities

CCN employees:

1. Engage with the person to have a shared understanding of how to be of assistance, recognizing s/he may take longer to accomplish a task or have a particular way of helping them self.
2. Ask if the person needs help with any assistive device, and provide support as needed. For example, a person may use a wheelchair, scooter, crutches, cane, walker, or personal oxygen devices.
3. Ensure hallways are free of obstacles in the public areas of the building and the person is familiar with the location of automatic doors, elevators, and accessible public washrooms. If needed, assist person with handling brochures or documents and reaching for the item when required.
4. Ask permission to move a person's assistive device unless in an emergency-situation.

Serving persons with Speech or Language Difficulties

CCN employees:

1. Engage with the person to have a shared understanding of how to be of assistance, recognizing they may take longer to communicate. Ask questions that require one or two word answers and do not interrupt the person when responding.
2. Ask if they need assistance with the device and support them to use the device as needed. For example, a person may use pen and paper, computer, communication board, or speech generating device.

Serving people who use Support People

CCN employees:

1. Obtain consent from the person with the disability before engaging in conversation that includes confidential information.
2. Communicate directly to the person with the disability, rather than to the support person.
3. Ensure persons with disabilities have access to their support person.
4. Understand and recognize circumstances where a support person will be required to ensure health and safety and communicate this need to the person with the disability.

Serving persons who use Service Animals:

Note: CCN recognizes that some employees may be afraid of or allergic to service or support animals. In rare circumstances, a person may have a severe or debilitating reaction to an animal, such as respiratory distress. In these situations, alternative means of providing the goods and services to the person with the disability will be offered.

CCN employees:

1. Engage with the person to understand the need for the service animal, if it's not easily identifiable. For example, identification of service animals may be by the vest, harness, or saddle packs they wear. The animal may be observed providing assistance. The person may have a letter from a physician or nurse, stating they require the animal for reasons related to a disability or have a valid identification card or training certificate from a recognized service animal training school. In these cases, the employee can request to see the documentation.
2. Permit the service animal to accompany the person with the disability in public areas of the building and allow him/her to keep the animal with them, unless law excludes.

Employees should not interfere with the service animal by petting, feeding, or distracting it in any way. The person with the disability is responsible to ensure that their service animal is in control at all times, is well behaved, not a threat to health and safety, and immunizations are up-to-date.

3. Ask the person to remove his/her service animal in the event the animal is showing disruptive or aggressive behaviour, such as growling or barking, causing damage to any person or property, or is in poor health.
4. Find an alternate method of providing service to the person with the disability in the instance law excludes the animal, or removal of the animal is necessary or in instances where another person may have a severe and debilitating reaction to the animal, such as respiratory distress.

Feedback Process

Feedback regarding the way the CCN provides goods and services to people with disabilities is made in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email, or other reasonable methods. Addressing complaints is in accordance to POLICY Addressing Clients' Complaints & Concerns and 1.1.26 PROCEDURE Addressing Clients' Complaints & Concerns.

ACCOUNTABILITY

All staff with direct communication with Persons with Disabilities are responsible to know the standard for customer service under the AODA 2005.