



## SCHOOLHOUSE PLAYCARE CENTRES of DURHAM

POLICY TITLE:	ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY
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### POLICY

**Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham** is committed to excellence in serving all families with respect and dignity including people with disabilities, respecting their independence and the need for integration.

### DEFINITION

Accessibility legislation uses the same wide-ranging definition as the Human Rights Code to identify the term “disability”.

(Reference – Human Rights Code and Durham Region Information for Employees)

- 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
  - brain injury
  - any degree of paralysis
  - amputation
  - lack of physical co-ordination
  - blindness or visual impediment
  - deafness of hearing impediment
  - muteness or speech impediment
  - physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal
  - reliance 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 process involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language
- a mental disorder
- an injury for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act

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### **PROCEDURE**

**Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham** will strive to make the following accommodations in an effort to ensure that our operations are accessible to all and allowing persons with disabilities to benefit from our services.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Staff of **Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham** will communicate with people who have disabilities in ways that will accommodate their disability.

**Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham** will undertake the training of staff who communicate with our families with strategies to use when interacting and communicating with people who have a variety of disabilities.

### **TELEPHONE**

**Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham** is committed to providing fully accessible telephone services to our families. We will train our staff to be aware that when communicating with customers over the telephone speaking in a clear voice, using plain language and repeating information back to the family or vice-a-versa will ensure that messages and information are conveyed accurately.

**Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham** will also offer the option of communication via e-mail, relay services etc. when telephone communication is not available or is unsuitable in meeting families' communication needs.

### **ASSISTIVE DEVICES**

**Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham** is committed to accommodating assistive devices used by people with disabilities while accessing our services.

We will ensure that staff are familiar with the following assistive devices available on our premises for families:

- automatic door opener (certain centres only)
- Bathroom grab bars in wheelchair accessible bathroom

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### **INFORMATION AND BILLING**

**Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham** will provide accessible information on fees and billing to all our families. If requested this information will be provided in hard copy, large print and by e-mail.

Families who have questions about the content of the information or bill may ask for clarification in person, by phone or by email.

### **SERVICE ANIMALS**

**Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham** will welcome people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal in the areas of our premises that are open to the public. We will ensure that our staff, volunteers, and others dealing with our families are trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

### **SUPPORT PERSONS**

**Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham** will welcome people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. People with a disability who are accompanied by a support person will be allowed entry to any Schoolhouse Playcare centre with his/her support worker. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his/her support person while on our premises.

Support persons whose visit to our centres involve more of an ongoing participation in the programme (ie not a single visit), are required to follow the same requirements as a volunteer. This pertains to the submission of documentation (medical, police background check etc.), adherence to SPC's policies and procedures etc.

### **NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION**

**Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham** will provide families 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.

The notice will be placed in the entrance to the child care centre.

### **TRAINING FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS**

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**Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham** will provide training to all employees, volunteers and students who deal with our families or the public on their behalf, and those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

This includes all staff members, students and volunteers who are part of our child care centres. Part of this training will be a policy review during the orientation practices.

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
- How to interact with people with disabilities who have an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- How to use an automatic door opener (if available) and have knowledge of the special bathroom
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing a **Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham** centre
- **Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham's** policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standards
- **Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham** will endeavor to access any/all resources that will support inclusionary practices.

Applicable staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis if/when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

### **FEEDBACK PROCESS**

**Schoolhouse Playcare Centres'** ultimate goal is to provide and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated. This can be done by e-mail, verbally in person or on the telephone, or in written form to the centre Supervisor or to Head Office using Appendix B – Feedback Form for Accessibility Services.

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### FORMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS POLICY

Accessible Customer Service Policy Review for Staff Signature

### APPENDICES TO THIS POLICY

- Appendix A - Language and Terminology
- Appendix B - Feedback Form
- Appendix C - Customer Service Training Sheets

### ADDITIONAL TRAINING

“How Can I Help You” Training Video

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### APPENDIX B

#### Feedback Form for Accessibility Services

Centre: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Comments/Concerns/Request:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Schoolhouse Playcare will provide accessible formats and communication supports upon request, at no cost to the person requesting them.

Please return to the centre supervisor or to Head Office by either:	
<b>Mail:</b> Schoolhouse Playcare Centres 1000 Simcoe Street North Oshawa ON L1G 4W4	<b>Email:</b> p.smith@schoolhouseplaycare.ca <b>Fax:</b> 905 728 7744

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### APPENDIX C

#### Customer Service Training Sheets

### PHYSICAL

**PHYSICAL** disabilities include a range of functional limitations from minor difficulties in moving or coordinating one part of the body, through muscle weakness, tremors, and paralysis. Physical disabilities can be congenital such as Muscular Dystrophy; or acquired, such as tendonitis. A physical disability may affect an individual's ability to:

- Perform manual tasks such as holding a pen, turning a key or grip a door knob
- Move around independently
- Control the speed or coordination of movements
- Reach, pull or manipulate objects
- Have strength or endurance

#### Tips for Customer Services:

- Wheelchairs and other mobility devices are part of a person's personal space. Don't touch, move or lean on them
- Keep ramps and corridors free of clutter
- If a desk or furnishings are too high or wide, step around it to provide service
- Provide seating for those that cannot stand in line

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### HEARING

**HEARING** loss can cause problems in distinguishing certain frequencies, sounds or words. A person who is deaf, deafened or hard-of hearing may be unable to:

- Use a public telephone
- Understand speech in noisy environments
- Pronounce words clearly enough to be understood by strangers

#### Tips for Customer Services:

- Deaf people may use a sign language interpreter to communicate—always direct your attention to the Deaf person—not the interpreter
- If necessary, write notes back and forth to share information
- Face the person and keep your hands and other objects away from your face and mouth
- Don't shout. Speak clearly

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### DEAF-BLINDNESS

**DEAF-BLINDNESS** is a combination of hearing and vision loss. The result for a person who is deaf-blind has significant difficulty accessing information and performing daily activities. Deaf-blindness interferes with communication, learning, orientation and mobility. People who are deaf-blind communicate using various sign language systems, Braille, telephone devices, communication boards and any combination thereof.

Many people who are deaf-blind use the services of an Intervener who relay information and facilitate auditory and visual information and act as sighted guides.

#### Tips for Customer Services:

- Understand that communication can take some time – be patient
- Direct your attention to you customer, not the Intervener

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### VISION

**VISION** disabilities range from slightly reduced visual acuity to total blindness. Vision loss can result in:

- Difficulty reading or seeing faces
- Difficulty maneuvering in unfamiliar places
- Inability to differentiate colours or distances
- A narrow field of vision
- The need for bright light, or contrast
- Night blindness

#### Tips for Customer Services:

- Verbally identify yourself before making physical contact
- If the person uses a service animal – do not touch or approach the animal – it is working
- Verbally describe the setting, form, location as necessary
- Offer your arm to guide the person. Ask first. Do not grab or pull

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### INTELLECTUAL

**INTELLECTUAL** disabilities affect a person's ability to think and reason. It may be caused by genetic factors such as exposure to environmental toxins, brain trauma or psychiatric disorders. A person with an intellectual disorder may have difficulty with:

- Understanding spoken and written information
- Conceptual information
- Perception of sensory information
- Memory

#### Tips for Customer Services:

- Use clear, simple language
- Be prepared to explain and provide examples regarding information
- Remember that the person is an adult and unless you are informed otherwise, can make their own decisions
- Be patient and verify your understanding

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### SPEECH

**SPEECH** disabilities involve the partial or total loss of the ability to speak. Typical disabilities include problems with:

- Pronunciation
- Pitch and loudness
- Hoarseness or breathiness
- Stuttering or slurring

#### Tips for Customer Services:

- If possible communicate in a quiet environment
- Give the person your full attention. Don't interrupt or finish their sentences
- Ask them to repeat as necessary, or to write their message
- Verify your understanding

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### LEARNING

**LEARNING** disabilities include a range of disorders that effect verbal and non-verbal information acquisition, retention, understanding and processing. People with a learning disability have average or above average intelligence, but take in and process information and express knowledge in different ways. Learning disabilities can result in difficulties in reading, problem solving, time management, direction and location finding and processing information.

#### Tips for Customer Services:

- Learning disabilities are general invisible and ability to function varies greatly – respond to any requests for verbal information, offer assistance in filling in forms and so on with courtesy
- Allow extra time to complete tasks if necessary

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### MENTAL HEALTH

**MENTAL HEALTH** disabilities include a range of disorders however there are three main types of mental health disability:

- Anxiety
- Mood
- Behavioural

People with mental health disabilities may seem edgy or irritated; act aggressively; be perceived as pushy or abrupt; be unable to make a decision; start laughing or get angry for no apparent reason.

#### Tips for Customer Services:

- Treat each person as an individual. Ask what would make him/her the most comfortable and respect his/her needs to the maximum extent possible
- Try to reduce stress and anxiety in situations
- Stay calm and courteous, even if the customer exhibits unusual behaviour, focus on the service they need and how you can help

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### SMELL, TOUCH, TASTE, OTHER

**SMELL** disabilities can involve the inability to sense smells or a hypersensitivity to odors and smells. A person with a smelling disability may have allergies to certain odors, scents or chemicals or may be unable to identify dangerous gases, smoke, fumes and spoiled food.

**TOUCH** disabilities can affect a person's ability to sense texture, temperature, vibration or pressure. Touch sensations may be reduced or heightened resulting in a hypersensitivity to touch, temperature, or the opposite, numbness and the inability to feel touch sensations.

**TASTE** disabilities can limit the experience of the four primary taste sensations; sweet, bitter, salty and sour. A person with a taste disability may be unable to identify spoiled food or noxious substances.

**OTHER** disabilities result from a range of other conditions, accidents, illnesses and diseases including ALS, asthma, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS, environmental sensitivities, seizure disorders, heart disease, stroke, and joint replacement.

Disabilities are not always visible or easy to distinguish.

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