



ACCESSIBILITY & CUSTOMER SERVICE PLAN & POLICY

Introduction

Abilities Centre recognizes the dignity and worth of every individual and seeks to create inclusive environments in which everyone can fully participate. Building on a culture that embraces diversity and supports social inclusion, Abilities Centre is a shared experience for everyone to enjoy.

Abilities Centre is a global leader in building communities that enable full citizenship and participation for persons of all ages and abilities. We recognize that only the highest calibre of customer service will allow us to create a community worthy of this vision. Abilities Centre is committed to making everyone feel welcome, included and empowered.

Everything within the Centre is specifically selected for maximum accessibility, and all staff

are knowledgeable and trained in their areas of expertise. In general, there are several key accessibility features of the building. These include:

Accessible features of the Centre include:

- **Arrival and Lobby:** ramp to all floors, tactile walking surface, wide automatic doors, bus and car drop off spaces, accessible parking spaces
- **Corridor Design:** flooring colour contrast, handrails along every corridor, enlarged doors
- **Entry points:** long vertical power door operators, elevator access to all floors
- **Wayfinding:** braille, text, colour and icon signage, large print maps and guided tours available
- **Fitness Equipment:** smart card adjustable, wheelchair accessible



(removable seating), touch screens on cardio equipment

- **Rooms:** wide, borderless showers with seats in change rooms, lowered counters, shallow-depth sinks

This barrier-free facility includes several other inclusive amenities, such as:

- Field House featuring walking/training track, full-size basketball courts and accessible spectator seating areas
- Life skills rooms for small group independent living instruction

- Art and music program areas featuring adjustable equipment and materials
- Performing arts theatre with wrap-around ramp

With these and many more design features not listed in this summary, the Centre will be looked upon as an example of inclusive design. Already an international beacon of inclusivity, Abilities Centre will host boccia and Judo events as part of the TO2015 Parapan Am Games.

Our Mission

Abilities Centre enhances the quality of life and citizenship for people of all ages and abilities by providing inclusive programs and services of the highest quality and value. We give people the power to achieve their goals through sports, arts, life-skills programs, and research and provide a welcoming, positive, energized environment in a state-of-the-art facility.

Abilities Centre Charter of Rights

Abilities Centre will be a global leader in building communities that enable full citizenship and participation for persons of all ages and abilities. We recognize that only the highest calibre of customer service will allow us create a community worthy of this vision. Abilities Centre is committed to making everyone feel welcome, included and empowered. The following is our promise to you:

Accessible

We will communicate with you in a manner befitting your abilities and preferences. We are committed to finding a format that suits you.

Inclusive

We are committed to creating opportunities for everyone to take part. Abilities will not define participation.

Innovative

If we are unable to address your inquiries or requests we will connect you with someone who can. Abilities Centre will never be your last or only resource. As a knowledge hub, we are committed to finding a solution to your problems or inquiries, and to assist you in navigating your options, both inside and outside our walls.

We will use feedback to identify issues and help find solutions. We will record and, if requested, respond to all guest comment cards. We will also employ stakeholder committees to help shape our programs and services.

Communicative

Abilities Centre will keep you informed of our available programs, services and facilities. We will keep you informed of any breaks in regular service.

We will keep you informed of any costs associated to participation. If cost is an issue, Abilities Centre will guide you to available resources.

Respectful

Everyone will be treated in a respectful and courteous manner. You will always be greeted warmly and all issues, problems or inquiries will be taken seriously.

Consistent

Everyone can expect the same level of service from all of our staff and volunteers. We promise the same level of service to every person.

We will continuously monitor and evaluate our service to ensure it is of the highest calibre.

Expedient

We will address all issues, problems or requests in an expedient manner. We will estimate the length of service delays, keep you informed of progress and give you alternate options.

Service Excellence

Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their requirements.

For example, this plan is available in alternate accessible formats such as large print, by request (contact: Member Services). Public documents will be made available through our website, email, regular postal services, and on-site. ASL interpreters are provided for identified events.

Assistive Devices

We will ensure that our staff, contractors and volunteers are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by members with disabilities while accessing our services.

For example, our Customer Sales & Service Representatives are fully trained in the use of TTY and relay services. Our equipment is specifically selected for maximum accessibility, and all Fitness Room Equipment Attendants are able to modify and advise members in the use of the fitness equipment.

Service animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

To communicate this, we have posted signage at our entrance that clearly shows in text and picture that service animals are welcome.

Support Persons

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

As demonstration of this commitment, Abilities Centre will waive all fees for companions (i.e., support persons who stay with member at all times).

Where Abilities Centre program or registration fee is charged and revenues or a portion thereof are payable to a third party, or where a fee includes or covers additional costs, the support person may be required to cover these costs.

We will notify members through a notice posted on our premises and website (and any other means by which we notify members of fees).

Abilities Centre may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to accessible services or facilities, Abilities Centre will notify members promptly. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be placed at main entrance and on the website.

Modifications to this or other policies

All policies of Abilities Centre are prepared and approved with the express intent to respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities; any policy found to contravene these principles will be modified or removed.

Feedback Process

Feedback provides Abilities Centre with opportunities to learn and improve. Members (as well as others from the public) who wish to provide feedback on the way Abilities Centre provides services to people with disabilities can do so using a variety of means:

- Speak with any supervisor or manager
- E-mail to: snicholson@abilitiescentre.org
- Phone: 905-665-8500
- On-site: Suggestion box or Feedback card

All feedback will be directed to Sheree Nicholson, *Manager, Membership Sales & Marketing*, who will work with management and staff or refer to appropriate manager for handling. Members can expect to hear back within 2 days.

Complaints will be addressed according to our organization's regular complaint management procedures.

Training for Staff

Abilities Centre will provide training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf.

This training will be provided to staff immediately upon hiring, as part of regular orientation and training. Training will be provided by staff previously qualified to deliver this training.

Training will include:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- Abilities Centre's plan related to the customer service standard
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities

- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Abilities Centre's goods and services organization

Staff will also be trained when changes are made to our plan.



We Believe –

- In equal access for all citizens of our community
- We learn how to relate to one another, not by being separated, but by being together
- We will raise the level of discourse about full inclusion and how to achieve it
- We will be a model for the country and beyond about how to operationalize full inclusion
- We can reflect true Canadian values of equality, acceptance, compassion, and respect for the dignity and worth of everyone.



Resources

Questions or requests for more information can be sent to the following email address:

info@abilitiescentre.org

In addition, the following are sources for information about Accessibility Standards in Ontario:

- To view the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, or Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, visit: www.e-laws.gov.on.ca
- To review requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act of for additional resources about accessibility, visit: <http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/serve-ability/index.aspx>
- More information about the customer service standard for accessibility is also available from: www.accesson.ca/compliance

Additional copies are available in alternate accessible formats such as large print, by request.

Please Contact:
Member Services
905-665-8500
info@abilitiescentre.org