

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY
Policy, Practices and Procedures

Tikinagan Child and Family Services provides service to persons who may have characteristics or needs resulting from a disability that may pose a barrier to the person's ability to access or participate in services delivered by Tikinagan Child and Family Services. These needs or barriers may raise issues of accessibility. Tikinagan Child and Family Services is committed to resolving, where possible, any barriers that limit, impede or frustrate any person's ability to access or receive services provided by Tikinagan Child and Family Services in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* ("AODA") and Regulations.

This Policy and the practices and procedures referred to in this Policy govern the provision of services by Tikinagan Child and Family Services to persons with a disability and were developed to assist Tikinagan Child and Family Services employees, Board Members, volunteers, third party contractors and persons or entities providing services on behalf of Tikinagan Child and Family Services in understanding expectations concerning their respective roles and responsibilities dealing with access requirements that may be required by persons with disabilities.

Any reference to "employee" in this Policy shall include Board Members, volunteers, third party contractors and persons or entities providing services on behalf of Tikinagan Child and Family Services.

Tikinagan Child and Family Services is committed to ensuring that issues relating to accessibility to the delivery of services are identified and addressed in a manner that facilitates effective access to, and participation in, services provided by Tikinagan Child and Family Services by persons with a disability.

Tikinagan Child and Family Services will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

1. That service is provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
2. The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.
3. Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the services.

Definitions:

For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11 will apply:

Disability means,

- a. 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, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d. a mental disorder, or
- e. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Barrier to accessibility means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of the services of Tikinagan Child and Family Services. This includes but is not limited to, a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier or a technological barrier, a policy or a practice. Tikinagan Child and Family Services is committed to the following in connection with ensuring equal access to and participation in services provided by Tikinagan Child and Family Services:

- to identifying, assessing and responding to accessibility issues identified by individuals accessing or receiving services provided by Tikinagan Child and Family Services;
- to the removal of barriers relating to accessibility issues identified by participants in Tikinagan Child and Family Services's services including but not limited to physical barriers, informational barriers, communications barriers;
- to serving persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use, or benefit from services. Tikinagan Child and Family Services is committed to purchasing additional technology as appropriate to ensure accessibility in accordance with the AODA and all associated regulations;
- to providing service to persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal;
- to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person;
- to providing service recipients and stakeholders with appropriate notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services used by persons with disabilities;

- to providing training about accessibility to services for people with a disability. This will include training for all employees who deal with the public. Training will be provided to each person as soon as practical after he or she is assigned applicable duties;
- to communicating with persons with disabilities in a manner that takes into account the person's disability;
- to establishing a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which it provides services to persons with disabilities.

Tikinagan Child and Family Services shall notify persons to whom it provides services that a copy of this Policy is available upon request by posting a copy of this Policy at a conspicuous place in the Agency's offices and/or on the Agency's website.

Tikinagan Child and Family Services will provide the requested documents or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability, where required, and after discussing this with the individual.

This Policy exists to achieve service excellence to service recipients and stakeholders with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to, the Director of Finance & Administration.

PROCEDURES

Identifying, Assessing and Responding to Accessibility Issues And Removal of Barriers to Accessibility

Tikinagan Child and Family Services requires that:

- Each employee demonstrates sensitivity and responsiveness to any accessibility issues that come to her/his attention in the course of any service delivery activity, including broader community communication and interaction, and:
 - whenever a person identifies a barrier that limits his/her ability to participate in Tikinagan Child and Family Services' services, the employee promptly communicates Tikinagan Child and Family Services' commitment to address the relevant accessibility issues.
 - When an employee identifies a barrier that limits an individual's ability to participate in Tikinagan Child and Family Services' services, the employee will raise the issue with the person experiencing the barrier and confirm Tikinagan Child and Family Services' commitment to resolving the situation.
- Where barriers are reported or identified to an employee, the employee will engage the person experiencing the barrier in a discussion so as to understand the following:
 - the precise nature and source of the barrier;
 - the impact of the barrier on the person's ability to participate in Tikinagan Child and Family Services' services;
 - Once the specific impact of the barrier on the person's ability to participate in Tikinagan Child and Family Services' services is understood, the employee assesses what is required to resolve the presenting barrier and in

consultation with the immediate supervisor and where appropriate, other Agency staff to develop proposed steps for addressing the identified barrier;

- the employee shall communicate to the person experiencing the barrier the steps proposed to accommodate or resolve the accessibility issue.
 - if the person is satisfied that the proposed measures resolve the issue, implementation may proceed;
 - where the person does not agree that the proposed measures will resolve the barrier, further consultation with the supervisor and/or the Director of Finance & Administration should occur prior to confirming a final decision to the individual.
- Tikinagan Child and Family Services will keep a continuous record of the above, making simultaneous notes as appropriate for future reference.
- Tikinagan Child and Family Services agrees to examine needs on a case by case basis and make every effort to accommodate each individual need where possible.

Assistive Devices

Definition:

“**Assistive Devices**” may include an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (i.e. canes, crutches, wheelchairs, or hearing aids).

To serve persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use, or benefit from services employees shall:

- acknowledge that persons with a disability have the right to use their own assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from services and shall use reasonable efforts to facilitate such.
- be trained, as appropriate, on how to use Tikinagan Child and Family Services assistive devices which may be available for use by service recipients and stakeholders.
- inform service recipients and stakeholders of any assistive devices available for their use.

Service Animals

Definitions:

“**Guide dog**” means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations of the *Blind Persons Act*.

“**Service Animal**” means an animal that provides a service to a person with a disability:

- a. if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or

- b. if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.”

Examples of service animals include dogs used by people who are blind, hearing alert animals for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, and animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure and lead them to safety.

To provide services to persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal:

- Employees shall accommodate the use of service animals by persons with a disability who are accessing Tikinagan Child and Family Services’ services unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law and/or from areas not open to the public.
- If a person with a disability is accompanied by a service animal, Tikinagan Child and Family Services will ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises or parts of the premises that are open to the public or other third parties, with the service animal and to keep the service animal with him or her unless the service animal is otherwise excluded by law.
- Where a service animal is excluded by law** from sections of the premises, the reason why the service animal is excluded will be explained to the person with a disability. Other reasonable arrangements to provide services shall be explored with the assistance of the person with a disability.
- If the service animal is excluded, by law or from areas not open to the public, these areas will be identified as off limits to service animals.
- Tikinagan Child and Family Services will ensure that all employees dealing with service recipients and stakeholders are trained in how to interact with persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.
- When a service animal is unruly or disruptive (jumping on people, biting, or other harmful behaviour) an employee may ask the person with a disability to remove the service animal from the area. Other reasonable arrangements to provide services shall be explored with the assistance of the person with a disability.
- Should the employee experience an allergy, fear or trepidation of the service animal other reasonable arrangements to provide services shall be explored with the employee.
- If it is not readily apparent that an animal is a service animal, a request may be made to the person with a disability to provide a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to a disability. The letter need only indicate that the animal is required, not why or how the animal is needed or identify the nature of the disability. Due to privacy issues a copy of this letter should only be kept on file as long as the file remains open.

Note ** For example, Ontario Regulation 562 under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, animals are not allowed in places where food is manufactured, prepared, processed, handled, served, displayed, stored, sold or offered for sale. It does make an exception for service dogs to allow them to go where food is normally served, sold or offered for sale. Other types of service animals are not included in this exception.

Support Person

Definition:

“Support Person” means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services. This may include a paid professional, volunteer, family member, or friend who will assist and support the service recipient or stakeholder.

To ensure that persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person are welcomed:

- Where a person with a disability accessing Tikinagan Child and Family Services’ services is accompanied by a support person, employees will ensure that both persons are permitted to enter any premises owned or operated by Tikinagan Child and Family Services together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.
- Where a support person is accompanying a person with a disability, for the purposes of assisting in a discussion that may involve confidential information, written consent of the person with a disability must be secured. The support person must also provide assurance in writing to safeguard the confidentiality of information disclosed in the discussion. If a different support person is used for any subsequent meeting, a new consent form will be signed. The Consent Form attached to this Policy (or comparable written documentation) must be used. If the information to be discussed relates to another individual, consent from or on behalf of that individual (by a person with authority to provide that consent) to disclosure to the support person must be obtained before such information is disclosed in the presence of the support person.
- In the event that services are unable to be delivered to the person with a disability due to the presence or absence of a support person for reasons such as consents not signed, the employee will explore alternative ways for the person with the disability to access the service.
- The absence of a support person cannot unreasonably delay the provision of child protective services.
- If Tikinagan Child and Family Services charges an admission fee in connection with a support person’s presence at an event or function, Tikinagan Child and Family Services will ensure that notice is given in advance to a support person about the amount payable. This notice shall also be posted in a conspicuous place.

- Tikinagan Child and Family Services will ensure that all employees dealing with service recipients and stakeholders are trained in how to interact with persons with a disability who are accompanied by a support person.
- Tikinagan Child and Family Services may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others. In this situation discussion should occur with the person with a disability concerning Tikinagan Child and Family Services' requirement for a support person.
- The assessment of the requirement of a support person by Tikinagan Child and Family Services must be based on consideration of the nature, type and duration of risk, the likelihood, nature and severity of the potential harm, and that the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means.

Notice of Disruption

To provide service recipients and stakeholders with appropriate notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services used by persons with disabilities the following procedures will be followed:

- **Expected Disruption**
If a disruption in service is planned and expected, Tikinagan Child and Family Services will provide notice and will include information about the reason for disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.
- **Unexpected Disruption**
In the event of an unexpected disruption in service, Tikinagan Child and Family Services will provide notice and will include information about the reason for disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available, as quickly as possible.
- Employees are to notify the Supervisor of any expected or unexpected circumstances that may impact service delivery.
- Any Notice of Disruption shall be completed by the Supervisor, who will arrange to have it posted after it is approved by the Service Manager.
- Such notice may be provided by a variety of methods, depending on the circumstances, and may include postings in conspicuous places at the affected premises, other Tikinagan Child and Family Services facilities, Tikinagan Child and Family Services' website as well as by any other means that will ensure that the notice reaches those persons potentially affected by the temporary disruption.
- This notice will be provided in accessible formats where appropriate and feasible.

Sample Notices are attached to this Policy.

Training

The following steps will be taken to provide training about accessible services:

- Training will occur as a condition of employment to all new employees on orientation, and as necessary on an ongoing basis, to ensure all employees remain current with any policy or procedural changes as it relates to the AODA and policies and procedures specific to assigned responsibilities.
- Training will include instructions regarding the following:
 - the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (“AODA”) 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 use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
 - how to use the assistive devices, if any, available on Tikinagan Child and Family Services’ premises or otherwise that may help with the provision of services to people with disabilities; and
 - what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Tikinagan Child and Family Services’ services.
- Tikinagan Child and Family Services will ensure that training records are maintained, including dates when training is provided, the name and number of employees who received training and a summary of the contents of the training.
- Third party contractors will be required to demonstrate to Tikinagan Child and Family Services that they are in compliance with the AODA Customer Service Standard training.

Communication

In order to ensure that employees communicate with persons with disabilities in a manner that takes into account the person’s disability the following guidelines apply:

- Employees who communicate with service recipients and stakeholders will be trained on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- When communicating with a person with a disability, employees shall do so in a manner that respects the person’s disability.
- Tikinagan Child and Family Services will provide alternative methods of communication and technology upon request, where reasonable in the circumstances.
- Employees will offer as necessary, to communicate with service recipients and stakeholders by email, or other agreed upon method if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

- Tikinagan Child and Family Services will continue to review the nature, manner, and methods with which to communicate to people with disabilities in an attempt to improve the accessibility of information and services.

Feedback

The following process for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which it provides services to persons with disabilities shall be followed:

- All persons with disabilities will be encouraged to provide feedback to Tikinagan Child and Family Services regarding the accessibility of the program and/or facilities in person, writing, e-mail, telephone, by delivering an electronic text by email or on CD or otherwise to the attention of the Director of Finance and Administration.
- Feedback may be accepted by any employee, in whatever format, and directed to the Director of Finance and Administration.
- A feedback questionnaire will be made readily available.
- Tikinagan Child and Family Services will document and track all feedback.
- All feedback will be reviewed for possible action that can be taken to improve Tikinagan Child and Family Services' services.
- For individuals who have left contact information and if contact has been requested, Tikinagan Child and Family Services will respond to the request as soon as possible.
- A document describing the feedback process will be available, upon request to any person.
- The feedback/response will endeavour to be in a format that is accessible to the person with a disability.

Complaints

- Complaints should be addressed to the Director of Finance & Administration.
- A response back to the individual that the complaint has been received and that the matter will be reviewed will be provided within 10 business days or as soon as possible.
- Further follow up will be provided as soon as possible, indicating when and how the matter will be addressed.
- Action(s) taken in response to the complaint will be documented.

Tikinagan Child and Family Services
Accessibility Feedback Form

Your feedback is important to us. By answering the following questions, you will help Tikinagan Child and Family Services to better assist you in accessing our services.

Date and time of your visit:

Please circle your answers:

Is our service provided to you in an accessible manner?

Yes Somewhat No

If no or somewhat, please explain:

Do you encounter any problems in accessing our services?

Yes Somewhat No

If yes, or somewhat, please explain:

Please add any other comments you may have:

Would you like a Tikinagan Child and Family Services representative to contact you? No Yes

If YES, contact information:

- Please deposit in the mail box provided or direct you comments to: the Director of Finance and Administration.

Thank You

TIKINAGAN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
Information Sharing Consent Form
CONSENT TO INFORMATION SHARING WITH SUPPORT PERSON

To be completed by Person Being Supported

I (name/print) _____ hereby consent to the sharing of confidential information related to myself with _____ who is attending as my support person:

My support person (name / print) _____ consents to safeguarding the confidentiality of the information shared.

Signature _____ Date _____

printed name of Supported Person _____

Witness Signed

.....

To be completed by Person Being Supported

I undertake to safeguard the confidentiality of information shared by Tikinagan Child and Family Services and (name /print) _____ for whom I am a support person.

Signature _____ date _____
Of Support Person

printed name of Support Person _____

Witness Signed

Signature _____ date _____
of Tikinagan Employee

printed name of Employee _____

**Notice
Service Disruption**

There will be a scheduled service disruption at:

The disruption will be from _____ to _____.

These disruptions include:

The following alternative services are available:

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On behalf of Tikinagan Child and Family Services, we would like to thank you for your patience in this matter.

For questions or additional information contact:

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

TIKINAGAN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

**Notice  
Service Disruption**

There is currently an unexpected service disruption at:

The estimated time of the service disruption will be from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

These disruptions include:

The following alternative services are available:

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On behalf of Tikinagan Child and Family Services, we would like to thank you for your patience in this matter.

For questions or additional information contact:

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____