

Category: Employee	REF.: EMP #53
Subject: Accessible Customer Service – Use of a Support Person by the General Public	Page: 1 of 4
Date: 07/Dec/09	Supersedes: New
Human Resources Manager Signature:	Date:
CEO Signature:	Date:

**SUBJECT:** Accessible Customer Service – Use of a Support Person by the General Public

**POLICY:**

The Centre will welcome all members of the community to its facilities by committing its staff and volunteers to providing services that respect the independence and dignity of people with disabilities, such service to incorporate measures that include but are not limited to the use of support persons.

**DEFINITIONS**

Support Person

A support person is a person who assists or interprets for a person with a disability who accesses the services of the Centre.

A support person is an individual chosen by a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services. Personal care needs may include, but are not limited to, physically transferring an individual from one location to another or assisting an individual with eating or using the washroom. Medical needs may include, but are not limited to, monitoring an individual's health or providing medical support by being available in the event of a seizure.

The support person could be a paid professional, a volunteer, a friend or a family member. He or she does not necessarily need to have special training or qualifications.

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PROCEDURE:

1. Responsibility  
Managers will ensure that staff receives training in interacting with people with disabilities who are accessing Centre services accompanied by a support person.
2. Access to Premises
  - a) Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be welcomed on the premises with his or her support person. Access will be in accordance with normal security procedures.
  - b) This requirement applies only to those areas of the premises where the public or third parties customarily have access and does not include places or areas of the building where the public does not have access.
3. Confidentiality
  - a) Where a support person is accompanying a person with a disability, who is the parent/guardian of the client, for the purpose of assisting in a discussion that may involve confidential information concerning the client, consent of the parent/guardian regarding such disclosure must be secured.
  - b) Consent to the disclosure of confidential information in the presence of the support person must be given in writing by the parent/guardian.
  - c) The support person must also provide assurance in writing to safeguard the confidentiality of information disclosed in the disclosure.
  - d) A copy of the signed consent document will be retained.
  - e) If the parent/guardian uses a different support person for subsequent meetings, a new signed consent will be required.
4. Support persons accompanying a person with a disability at Centre events for which there is an admission fee:
  - a) Where an individual with a disability who is accompanied by a support person wishes to attend a Centre event for which a fee is charged, the notice of the event will include information as to whether support persons will be charged a fee and specify the amount of the fee.

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PROCEDURE (cont'd):

5. Where the Centre may require the present of a support person:
  - a) The Centre may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if the support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with the disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.

(NOTE: This would be a highly rare situation and would only occur where, after consultation with the person with the disability, requiring a support person is the only means available to allow the person to be on the premises, and at the same time, fulfill the Centre's obligation to protect the health or safety of the person with the disability or of others on the premises.

It is further noted that people with disabilities are free to accept reasonable risk of injury to themselves just as other people do. Different individuals will have different tolerance for risk. Risk should be weighed against any benefit for the person with a disability. It is not enough that the support person might help to protect the health and safety; a support person must be necessary or essential to protect the health and safety before you can require one – the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means. Any consideration on protecting health or safety should be based on specific factors and not assumptions. Just because someone has a disability doesn't mean they're not capable of meeting health or safety requirements.)

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PROCEDURE (cont'd):

6. SAMPLE CONSENT FORM

I, (parent/guardian), consent to the sharing of confidential information by (name of staff member) related to my child/ward (name) in the presence of my support person (name). My support person (name) consents to safeguarding the confidentiality of information shared.

Affirmation of consent:

Parent/guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name of parent/guardian \_\_\_\_\_

I undertake to safeguard the confidentiality of information shared between Five Counties Children's Centre and (parent/guardian) for whom I am a support person.

Support person signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name of support person \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of witness (Centre staff person) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name of staff member \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Framework

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07

Ontario Human Rights Code

Cross-Referencing

The Accessible Customer Service – Use of Support Person EMP #53 aligns with the following Centre procedures:

Accessible Customer Service - Policy EMP #52

Accessible Customer Service – Notification of Disruption of Service EMP #54

Accessible Customer Service – Use of Assistive Devices by the General Public EMP #55

Accessible Customer Service – Use of Service Animals by the General Public EMP #56

Accessible Customer Service – Monitoring and Feedback on Accessible Customer Service EMP #57