

Accessibility for Ontarians Service Policy Serving People with Disabilities

Policy Statement

Vanier Children's Services is committed to ensuring that our staff, students, and clients will be provided access, technology, and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Vanier is also committed to ensure that people with disabilities have the opportunity to access our services and allow them to benefit from this in a similar way to other clients.

Definition

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) has been developed to create mandatory accessibility standards that identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. These standards apply to all private and public sector organizations across Ontario.

Responsibilities

Vanier's commitment is to:

- develop policies and procedures to ensure all staff provide services to people with disabilities;
- make our buildings, workspaces, and meeting places accessible to visitors and employees with disabilities and;
- report on its progress in developing and implementing policies and practices to improve access, participation and outcomes for people with disabilities.

Providing Services to People with Disabilities

Vanier is committed to excellence in serving all clients including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

- *Communication*

Vanier will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We will train staff on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

- *Telephone Services*

We will train staff to communicate with clients over the phone in clear and plain language. We will offer to communicate with clients by email or via their support person if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs.

- *Assistive Devices*

Vanier will ensure that staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by clients with disabilities while accessing our services.

- *Documents and Information Sharing*

Vanier will provide reports via email, with consent, or in large print format upon request.

- *Use of a Service Animal*

Vanier welcomes clients and external professionals with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal to our premises. Vanier will ensure staff is properly trained on how to interact with people who are accompanied by a service animal.

- *Use of a Support Person*

Vanier welcomes clients and external professionals with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. A person with a disability attending a training session or seminar at our agency with a support person will not be charged for the support person. Participants will be informed of this at the time of registration.

- *Notice of Temporary Disruption*

Vanier will provide clients and external professionals with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the devices used by people with disabilities. Notice will include the reason for disruption, the anticipated duration, and a description of alternate measures, if available. This notice will be placed at all public entrances.

- *Training for Staff*

Vanier will provide training to all staff and will include the following points:

- 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 use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person;
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing Vanier's services;
- Vanier's policies, practices, and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Training will be provided to new staff upon hire. Staff will also receive a training update when changes are made to policies, practices, and procedures.

- *Emergency Planning*

The AODA requires employers to provide information about emergency response plans and public safety information. Vanier does have an evacuation safety plan posted at the entrance that provides information on: fire pull stations, smoke alarms, CO alarms, fire extinguishers and exit locations. If information is required in a more accessible format, this will be provided.

Any individual (staff, visitor, client) who requires assistance in the case of emergency should make it known to their supervisor (for staff) or a staff member (for visitors or client). Emergency response plans will be developed to meet these individual needs.

- *Feedback Process*

Feedback regarding the way Vanier provides services to people with disabilities can be made verbally in person or over the phone, in writing via email or letter sent to our agency address. All feedback will be directed to the appropriate Director who will respond within a reasonable time limit.

- *Monitoring and Review*

This policy will be monitored and reviewed according to Vanier Administrative Policy 1-40, every three years. All Vanier policies are reviewed to ensure they respect the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

- *Confidentiality*

Any information given or collected about a person with a disability will be kept strictly confidential, unless otherwise agreed to by the person(s) involved.