

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

In keeping with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), Family Respite Services has developed this policy regarding accessibility. The first specific standard addresses the issue of Accessible Customer Service Standards. Family Respite Services, is an organization that works with families caring for children with developmental and/or physical disabilities, providing respite care to their families. In fulfilling our mission, Family Respite Services strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services and allow them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other consumers.

## **PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES:**

Family Respite Services will strive to ensure that the services of the agency are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. To further this end:

- We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.
- We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. We will train staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.
- We will offer to communicate with customers by email, TTY, if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.
- We will ensure that our staff members are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by consumers with disabilities while accessing our services. Training will be specific to each service location and will include ensuring that staff members know how to use equipment in the location that they provide service at, including lifts, handicapped accessible vehicle wheelchair locks, elevators. We will work with the child and their parents to ensure that there is an orientation for the specialized equipment or communication tools required by each child that is necessary to assist them to fully participate in the programs.
- If a child requires a service animal, FRS will work with the child and family to ensure that a full plan is developed to allow the child/consumer to use the service animal while maintaining safety for others.

- Invoices, time sheets and other pay related materials will be provided in the following formats upon request: large font, hard copy, email. We will answer any questions consumers may have about the content of the invoice or any record of service or other financial record in person, by telephone or by email.

**Notice of Temporary Disruption:**

Family Respite Service will provide consumers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. The 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 depend on the service disruption, but may include telephone, posting on the agency website and/or posting on our public entrance and front desk of the main office.

**Training for Staff:**

Family Respite Services will provide training to all of its employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of consumer service policies, practices and procedures. Individuals in the following positions will be trained:

Staff members with reception duties, Family Coordinators, Managers.

This training will be provided within 30 days of hire.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer services 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 TTY, wheelchair lifts (where applicable) etc. that are available on the premises that may assist with the delivery of services to people with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing FRS goods and services.
- Family Respite Services policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standards.

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 when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

**Feedback process**

It is our intent to ensure that services at FRS are delivered in a manner that preserves the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated. FRS will post a sign in a prominent place with notification of our intent to provide accessible service and welcome feedback about our efforts.

Feedback about the way FRS provides services to people with disabilities can be made by telephone or email to the Executive Director or any of the Managers. Feedback will be provided to the Executive Director. Consumers can expect to hear back within 5 working days.

Complaints will be addressed according to complaint procedures established by the agency.

**Modifications to this or other policies:**

We are committed to developing consumer policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

Any policy of Family Respite Services that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Any questions about this policy may be directed to the Executive Director.

**Notice to be posted for Feedback Process** (to be posted in a prominent place)

Family Respite services is committed to improving accessibility for people accessing our services who have disabilities. We would like to hear your comments, questions and suggestions about the provision of our services to people with disabilities. Please contact Catharine Shanahan by mail at 3295 Quality Way, Unit 101A, Windsor ON N8T 3R9 or at 519 972 9688 or by email [cshanahan@familyrespice.org](mailto:cshanahan@familyrespice.org) to share your comments. Please let us know if you would like a copy of our Customer Service policy.