

Family Options AODA Customer Service Standards Policy

Background:

Family Options is required to comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Services, Ontario Regulation 429/07 by January 2012. This policy has been prepared to outline what Family Options will do to comply with the regulation and what our clients may expect from us. The intent of this policy is to benefit the full range of persons with disabilities, as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code. Whether a person's disability is apparent or not, everyone should be treated with courtesy, made to feel welcome, and have their need for accommodation respected whenever they interact with Family Options and its employees.

Policy:

Family Options provides people with disabilities the same respect, access to services and service benefits as others.

Scope:

This policy applies to all workers, students, volunteers, and consultants of Family Options as all these people provide some form of client or customer service. This policy also applies to all services offered at facilities owned, leased, or operated by Family Options.

Providing Services to People with Disabilities

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

- The services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities
- The provision of services to persons with disabilities are integrated with those provided to persons who do not have disabilities, unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from Family Options services; and
- Communicate in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

Assistive Devices

A person with a disability may provide their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using, and benefiting from Family Options services. Exceptions may

occur in situations where Family Options has determined that the assistive device may pose a risk to the health, safety, and security of a person with a disability or the health, safety, and security of others on the premises.

Any risk would be considered on a case-by-case basis. In such situations, Family Options may offer the person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist him or her in obtaining, using, and benefiting from Family Options services, where Family Options has such other measures available.

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that their assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

Service Animals

Family Options recognizes that some individuals with disabilities may require the use of service animals in order to enter Family Options premises or access services. Persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal will be permitted to enter the parts of the premises that are common areas and to keep the animal with them unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. Excluded areas include, where food preparation is being undertaken, medication preparation areas, and clean or sterile supply storage areas.

People accompanied by service animals are responsible for the care and supervision of their service animals. Family Options will not accept responsibility for service animal's care while the animal is on the premises.

If any person has a severe allergy to animals, which could result in health and safety concerns, reasonable efforts will be made to meet the needs of all individuals.

Employees and Pets

Family Options is responsible for assuring the health and safety of all clients and employees. In keeping with this objective, employees of Family Options are not permitted to bring their household pets to work. Animals may pose a threat of infection and may cause allergic reactions to other employees. Some employees may feel threatened or be distracted by the presence of animals, particularly dogs.

Support Persons

Family Options recognizes that some individuals with disabilities rely on support persons for assistance while accessing services. A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter Family Options premises together with the support person and will not be prevented from having access to the support person while on our premises or while receiving services. In situations where privacy and consent issues are applicable, a service worker is subject to the same confidentiality requirements as the person with a disability that they are assisting, as well as other employees. A service person may be required to sign an oath of confidentiality and privacy.

Training

Family Options will provide training to all employees, students, volunteers, and consultants (if applicable) about the provision of services to persons with disabilities and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices, and procedures.

The training is provided through a web-based application and/or in house training. This is considered mandatory training and new employees will be required to complete this training within their first month of work.

The content of the training will include:

- A review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with persons 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 Family Options services
- Family Options policies, practices and procedures relating to the provision of services to persons with disabilities and customer service standards.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

Temporary disruptions in Family Options services may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within Family Options control or knowledge. Family Options will make reasonable efforts to provide prior notice of planned disruptions, if

possible. However, in the case where the disruption is unplanned, Family Options will provide notice as soon as possible.

This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative services, if available. The notice will normally be posted on the premises or on the telephone auto-attendant, where appropriate in the circumstances.

Feedback Process

Family Options is committed to providing high quality services. Feedback regarding the way Family Options provides services to all people with or without disabilities is welcomed and appreciated. Feedback, or questions about this policy, can be made by e-mail, verbally, or in writing.

See feedback section, and/or feedback can be made by:

- Speaking directly to Family Options House Lead and/or
- Contacting Family Options 888-217-8625 or info@familyoptions.ca