

## AODA – Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

### Intent

This 2020 to 2025 accessibility plan outlines the policies and actions that Today's Family will put in place to improve opportunities for people with disabilities in accordance with the requirements communicated under the [Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11](#).

Today's Family strives to meet the needs of its staff and clients with disabilities and is working hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

### Statement of Commitment

At Today's Family, we celebrate the fact that together we can accomplish more. Today's Family understands that we have a responsibility for ensuring a safe, dignified, and welcoming environment for everyone.

As an organization, we respect and uphold the requirements set forth under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), and its associated standards and regulations.

Today's Family is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. This accessibility plan outlines the steps we are taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

We are committed to providing a welcoming and barrier-free environment by offering our services in an equitable and accessible manner that respects the dignity and independence of all stakeholders, including our children and families, staff and providers, job applicants, suppliers, and any visitors who may enter our premises, access our information, or use our services.

We are committed to ensuring our organization's compliance by incorporating accessibility legislation into our policies, procedures, equipment requirements, training, and best practices. We will review these policies and practices annually, as organizational changes occur, or in anticipation of compliance deadlines. In addition, we will strive to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in a timely and effective manner.

Today's Family sees building a truly accessible environment as a community-wide initiative that is strengthened through participation and collaboration. As an organization, Today's Family is committed to working with the necessary parties to make accessibility for all a reality. Likewise, we encourage anyone who has questions, suggestions or concerns to please contact us so we can work together to build a fully inclusive and welcoming space for our families and our community.

### About Today's Family:

Today's Family is a non-profit, charitable agency serving more than 4000 children (and their parents and caregivers) in Hamilton, Halton, Haldimand and Norfolk and surrounding areas. Founded in 1982, Today's Family is committed to providing support to families from diverse cultural, social and economic backgrounds in the communities we serve.

Today's Family offers a wide range of early learning and child care programs and family support program to help children and families every step of the way. We offer professional, caring support that makes a difference in the physical, emotion, social and intellectual development of children.

Our values of caring, collaboration, accountability, innovation and inclusion are at the forefront of all we do. We believe in treating all persons in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

Today's Family knows we are better together. We believe in inclusion and are committed to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner, preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Today's Family focus on equity, diversity and inclusion as a top priority in our 2022-2025 strategic plan. It is with this priority in mind that we work to listen and learn to the communities we serve on needs and opportunities to best serve children and families. We will implement with advice and consultation of our community to ensure appropriate, sensitive and accountable actions towards more equitable, inclusive and diverse programs and services. Our EDI strategy development will allow us to promote and embed equity, diversity and inclusion agency-wide. We are better together.

## **Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers**

### **Customer Service**

Today's Family is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. This means that we will provide goods, services and facilities to people with disabilities with the same high quality and timeliness as others.

Today's Family uses reasonable efforts to ensure policies, practices and processes are consistent with the following principles:

- Persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services
- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons in the access of goods and services
- Persons with disabilities and their service animals are accommodated in all aspects of service provision unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law
- Today's Family staff, when communicating with a person with a disability, will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability

Initiatives from past years:

- Staff completion of training is recorded and tracked
- Feedback related to our programs and services with regards to customer service is welcomed and appreciated. This feedback can be made verbally, via email or in writing. All feedback is directed to the supervisor of that program or unit
- Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person or service animal will be allowed to enter Today's Family's premises with their support person and service animal. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person or service animal be prevented from having access to his or her support person and/or service animal while on our premises
- Report compliance on the Accessibility Compliance Reporting tool to Service Ontario

Initiatives Today's Family is planning:

- A process is in place to ensure that all feedback collected from children and families, staff or the public is reviewed and analyzed to identify potential gaps in customer services, and to ensure appropriate actions are taken.

### Information and Communications

Today's Family is committed to making our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities. Today's Family staff will consult with people with disabilities to determine their information and communication needs. We want to achieve the most effective and efficient access to information for all persons.

Initiatives from past years:

- Feedback process is accessible and alternate formats are available such as phone, email, video conferencing, mail and in person.
- Our website has been designed to be user friendly for people with a range of needs
- Continue to assess accessibility of website and existing organizational content
- Consult with persons requesting alternate formats
- All web content must conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA, subject to exceptions

Initiatives Today's Family is planning:

- Post a notice on the website that information is accessible in a variety of formats
- Our website will have a feature to allow users to change the size of text they see online to suit their preference.
- Today's Family will review and convert existing emergency and public safety information into a format that makes it available in accessible formats on request within a timely manner

### Employment

Today's Family is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

Initiatives from past years:

- Informing employees of supports available to them before, during and throughout the recruitment and onboarding process such as recruitment materials specify accommodation is available for applicants with disabilities; notification of hired staff that Today's Family has policies for accommodating staff with disabilities; consultation with staff to determine suitability of format or support
- Provide updated information to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies
- Return to work: Today's Family is committed to a clear process for developing individual accommodation plans and return to work policies for staff who have been absent due to disability.
- Career development and advancement: Take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when using career development and advancement.  
Documented Individual Accommodation Plans (IAP) Process

Initiatives Today's Family is planning:

- Review Performance management process to ensure accessibility needs of staff with disabilities are taken into account when providing performance management.
- Update the *Workplace Accommodation on the Basis of Disability Policy* under the AODA policy for a more comprehensive policy

- Participation of staff in the IAP
- Ability to request outside medical evaluation to determine if accommodation can be achieved and how
- High level of privacy
- Regular review and update of IAP
- Reasons for denial, if applicable
- If required, individualized workplace emergency response information

## **Training**

Today's Family is committed to providing training in the requirements of Ontario's accessibility laws and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it applies to people with disabilities.

Accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities is a core value for Today's Family.

Initiatives from past years:

- We provide training to employees and volunteers on Accessibility Standards and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.
- Training is done upon hiring of staff and provided in a way that best suits the duties and needs of staff and volunteers and every person who deals with the public on behalf of Today's Family.

Today's Family has taken the following steps to ensure staff are provided with training needed to meet current standards and legislation:

- Provide training and resources in accessible format (print, video, audio) that takes into account the accessibility needs of a person with a disability.
- Ensure new staff and students complete training within 30 days of hire date
- Maintain records of staff training and completion dates

## **Review and Update**

This document was created on October 13, 2021 and must be reviewed and updated every 5 years.

Please note: this plan is available in an accessible format upon request. Please email [info@todaysfamily.ca](mailto:info@todaysfamily.ca)