



ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Accessibility Compliance
Secretariat, Dept of
Families Approved:

April 1, 2025

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Statement of Commitment

- Bright Beginnings Educare (BBE) is committed to complying with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service under the Accessibility for Manitobans Act.
- In establishing the following policies and practices, we recognize the principles of dignity, maintaining independence, equal opportunity and integration for people with disabilities.
- BBE has taken steps to identify existing barriers and if a barrier to accessing our services cannot be removed, we seek to provide alternate ways to access the services.
- The following policy statements, organizational practices and measures are intended to meet the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and management.
- BBE provides notice that documented customer service measures, policies, and practices are available upon request.
- BBE provides any requested policy documentation in an accessible format within a reasonable time frame and **at no cost**.
- Our “customers” are the children we serve, as well as their caregivers and, during special events, their community supporters.

This policy does not affect program criteria.

1. Communication

To remove communication barriers, we will offer a variety of options that meet the individual’s needs, including:

A. Be respectful and inclusive:

Using inclusive language and be open-minded and empathetic.

- a) Be at the same level as the individual you are communicating with, for example offer a chair.
- b) Use people first language - refer to “a person with a disability” rather than “the disabled person” or “the disabled”.
- c) Talk in a normal tone of voice.
- d) Ask the person with a disability if assistance is needed; do not assume that help is needed until you ask.

B. Adapting communication style:

Using different communication tools and adjusting communication based on cues from the person. Examples include:

- a) Whiteboard signs at entrances asking if we can help
- b) Read out loud
- c) Keep paper and pens available to write things down,
- d) All publications are available in alternate formats on request
- e) Providing electronic and printed documents
- f) All information to be formatted using larger black and white fonts and ensuring messages are not printed on images
- g) Providing both written and visual information when possible.
- h) Communicate in plain language – signs, visuals, messages and documents
- i) Telephone numbers for the centre will be posted on entrance doors
- j) Offer a chair

C. Speak clearly and directly:

Face the person directly, maintain eye contact, and don't speak too fast or too slow and take time to explain.

D. Listen actively:

Giving the person your full attention and adjust your communication based on what they say.

D. Ask about their communication:

Ask the person or their close ones how they communicate and what helps them get their message across. Check for understanding and make sure you have been understood correctly and you understand them.

F. Create an accessible environment:

Keep background noise and distractions down by providing a quieter space.

G. Be creative:

Follow the lead of the person you're communicating with.

H. Respect their desire not to communicate:

Some people may not want to communicate

2. Assistive Devices

BBE welcomes the use of assistive devices. Care will be taken to create space for devices, such as walkers, wheelchairs, canes, special seating, or communication boards or electronics.

These items will be respected and will not be touched or moved without permission of their owners.

2.1 Staff will receive related training, including:

- a) any assistive devices available on site.
- b) how to enlarge print on the computer used by the daycare.
- c) automatic door, which is on at all times and having phone numbers listed in case the power is not working.
- d) Doorbell/buzzer with intercom system.

In situations where the assistive device presents significant and unavoidable health or safety concerns, we attempt to use other measures to ensure the person with disabilities can access our services or facility.

3 Support Persons

BBE welcomes support persons, who accompany a person with a disability to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs to access our services.

If the support is for a child who is in our care, the nature and duration of the support will be discussed in advance with the Director, including to determine the role of staff and goals for independence, if applicable. Staff will receive related training to best support the child.

We will address the individual not the support person, unless requested by the individual to do otherwise.

We make space for support persons on-site and ensure individuals have access to their support persons at all times.

4 Service Animals

BBE is committed to meeting the requirements of The Human Rights Code (Manitoba) by allowing service animals, typically dogs, who are trained to provide assistance to a person with a disability that relates to that person's disability. The service animal is able to accompany the individual wherever the public is allowed.

The daycare will ask registrants to identify both the need for service animals and any allergies to animals at time of registration to meet potentially confliction requirements of the children.

BBE is committed to:

- a) Treat a service animal as a working animal.
- b) Not distract a service animal from its job by petting, feeding or playing with it, unless given permission by the person with the service animal to do so
- c) Know how to identify a service animal by its harness or vest and by the assistance the animal is providing.
- d) If we have concerns, we may ask if the animal has been trained to help a person with a disability related need.
- e) We do not inquire about the disability.
- f) We expect the person who is handling the service animal to maintain control of the animal physically or through voice, signal or other means.
- g) If the service animal is showing signs of not being controlled (i.e., by barking, whining or wandering), we may provide a warning to the handler to control the animal.
- h) If the service animal continues to misbehave, we may ask the handler to leave.
- i) We will explain why the animal cannot enter food preparation areas and discuss with the person another way of providing services.

5 Maintain Barrier-Free Access

BBE will maintain barrier free access in our centre by ensuring that aspects of our facility that can facilitate access are maintained as intended.

5.1 This includes:

- a) maintaining the entrance free of snow and ice
- b) removing clutter from hallways, vestibules, meeting rooms
- c) seating accommodates people of varying sizes and disabilities
- d) Provide space so that there is accessibility for people with wheelchairs, electric scooters and walkers.
- e) Using whiteboards rather than standing signs to avoid tripping hazards.
- f) We may assist a care giver by helping them with their child if they're not able to enter our facility (example: bringing children in from the parking lot or taking them to the vehicle).

5.2 Our accessibility features affected by this policy include

Hallways, entrances, accessible washrooms, automatic doors, doorbells

6 Notice of Temporary Disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption of services or facilities affecting customers disabled by barriers, BBE will:

- a) promptly, post notices at the entrance of buildings and on the website letting people know when and why an accessibility feature is temporarily unavailable and how long it will be unavailable.
- b) Provide information about other ways to access our services such as using an alternate door.
- c) Contact individuals directly via email, text or telephone, providing information and alternative solutions.
- d) If requested, work with the individual to help find other ways to support them

7. Feedback Process

Improving the quality of services and care individuals receive is important. BBE will include a feedback process that welcomes suggestions on how to better serve our clients, including ways to enhance accessibility.

7.1 We invite feedback in the following ways:

- a) Visit our office, or contact us by phone 204 895 1147 ext. 1 call or text 204 299 0564 or email brightbeginnings@mymts.net
- b) Speak with our Site Leaders or Management

7.2 Process:

- a) feedback is directed to the Executive Director who determines what action, if any, should occur.
- b) the individual is notified that the request is being reviewed and when they can expect a response.
- c) When responding to feedback we receive, the actions taken are documented and shared in a format that meets the individual's communication needs.

7.3 Effective feedback includes:

- a) Focusing on the behavior, not the person
- b) Being specific, realistic, and timely
- c) Being respectful and empathetic
- d) Being flexible and adaptable
- e) Being collaborative and inclusive

8 Training

BBE provides training to staff and volunteers that includes instruction on what to do if a person disabled by a barrier is having difficulty accessing goods or services

Keeping records of who has taken training and when will be documented in Fastoche. Feedback on the accessibility of our services is addressed at room and staff meetings or as required on individual needs.

8.1 Disability awareness training can help employees:

- a) Understand the barriers that people with disabilities face
- b) Address systemic and personal hurdles experienced by people with disabilities
- c) Acknowledge the unique expertise and life experiences of people with disabilities
- d) Feel more confident in helping customers with a variety of needs

8.2 Training will be provided:

- a) during orientation
- b) part of the annual review of policies
- c) may be part of professional development training days
- d) Refresher training and updates will be provided as needed throughout the year.

8.3. Training topics will include:

- a) **Safety and dignity**
How to ensure the safety and dignity of people with disabilities,
- b) **Communication**
How to interact and communicate with people who face barriers to accessing goods and services, use assistive devices, are assisted by a support person and/or are assisted by a service animal.
- c) **Disability awareness**
How to understand the barriers that people with disabilities face, and how to address them.
- d) **Equipment or Devices**
How to use any equipment or assistive devices that are available on-site.
- e) **The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, The Human Rights Code (Manitoba), and the Customer Service Standard.**
an overview of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act and related impact of The Human Rights Code (Manitoba),
- f) **How to interact with people with disabilities**
How to treat people with disabilities with respect, and how to avoid making assumptions or being patronizing.

This policy is public and available in alternate format on request.