

The Hospital for Sick Children **2022-24 Accessibility Plan**



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About The Hospital for Sick Children

The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) was founded in 1875. It is recognized as one of the world's best paediatric health-care organizations, and it is Canada's leading centre focused on advancing children's health through care, research and education. SickKids is affiliated with the University of Toronto and has a strong research focus. Researchers at SickKids have helped children globally through their research findings. SickKids' mission is to provide the best in complex and specialized family-centred care; pioneer scientific and clinical advancements; share expertise; foster an academic environment that nurtures health-care professionals; and champion an accessible, comprehensive and sustainable child health system. SickKids is a founding member of Kids Health Alliance, a network of partners working to create a high quality, consistent and coordinated approach to pediatric health care that is centred around children, youth and their families. SickKids is proud of its vision for Healthier Children. A Better World.

You can find more information about the hospital in [the annual report on the SickKids website](#).

SickKids Commitment to Accessibility Planning

An accessible child health system is a key part of SickKids' mission. We are committed to accessibility planning to ensure our facilities and services are accessible for children and their families, staff, learners, volunteers, and members of the community. We strive to create and review multi-year accessibility plans with input from people with disability lived experience, and ensure SickKids policies and procedures align with the AODA.

Aim and Objectives of Accessibility Plan

This multi-year accessibility plan will help SickKids meet and go beyond the requirements of the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#). In past years, SickKids focused on meeting the requirements of the AODA. For this multi-year accessibility plan, we are also looking beyond the requirements of the AODA to consider how else we can actively remove barriers for people with disabilities at SickKids.

In Fall 2019, the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility in Ontario brought together the Health Care Standards Development Committee, which includes people with disabilities, disability organizations and other experts, who made recommendations for accessibility standards for hospitals (Government of Ontario, 2022a). Along with actions linked to the requirements of the AODA, this multi-year accessibility plan has actions linked to some of the new recommendations by the Health Care Standards Development Committee, and additional actions based on feedback from SickKids' staff, learners, volunteers, children or youth, and families or caregivers.

This plan links to SickKids' [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025](#) by supporting our goals of:

- Ensuring equity, accessibility and cultural safety across SickKids spaces
- Implementing mandatory training for staff and leaders

We continue to make sure that staff, volunteers and learners are informed and educated about the AODA, the issues and barriers faced by people with disabilities, and the responsibility of everyone in the organization to remove these barriers. This multi-year accessibility plan includes actions that help us continue to understand the disability-related needs of children and their families, staff, learners, volunteers, and members of the community, and ensure that these needs are accommodated in a manner that supports the dignity of the individual.

Development of the Accessibility Plan

To develop this multi-year accessibility plan, we asked a mix of SickKids' staff, learners, youth, and family members or caregivers with lived experience of disabilities for input. We reviewed feedback that children and families shared with clinical staff or the Office of Patient and Family Experience at SickKids. We reviewed employee feedback through our Health Absence Management Program. We worked with Directors and Senior Leaders in different hospital areas to find out what we can do within the timelines of this plan. We also asked for feedback from members of our Accessibility Steering Committee at different stages of developing the plan.

The Accessibility Steering Committee

The purpose of The Accessibility Steering Committee (hereby referred to as the Committee) is to guide how the organization can improve accessibility at SickKids and meet the requirements of the AODA. The Committee is responsible for developing SickKids' multi-year accessibility plans.

The Committee will:

1. Provide leadership in steering the Accessibility Program for SickKids.
2. Establish policy related to Accessibility.
3. Review and endorse key documents related to Accessibility (e.g., policies, education materials).
4. Raise awareness of accessibility legislative requirements, initiatives, and issues.
5. Review accessibility concerns and make recommendations to the appropriate areas/owners.
6. Identify barriers to services and facilities and develop plans to remove these barriers.
7. Review accessibility related best practices and put them in place as appropriate.
8. Assign responsibility for deliverables, monitor progress, and evaluate outcomes of the actions listed in the multi-year accessibility plan.

Executive Sponsor(s):

- Susan O'Dowd, Vice President, Human Resources and Commercial Services
- Tee Garnett, Executive Lead, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

Co-Chairs: Vacant

Committee Members:

- Alex C. Salmon, Patient Advisor
- Bonnie Fleming-Carroll, Associate Chief of Nursing & Interprofessional Education
- Caitlin Johannesson, Manager, Digital Media & Creative Services, Communications & Public Affairs
- Carolynn Darrell Cheng, Manager, Family Spaces & Events
- Gary Wong, Director, Facilities Development
- Holly Yip, Family Advisor
- Karen Sappleton, Senior Manager, Child and Family Centred-Care
- Kyle Robinson, Chief Redevelopment Officer, Project Horizon & Sustainable Facilities Officer
- Laura Alexander, Director, Occupational Health & Safety, Human Resources
- Natasha Thexton, Workplace Strategy Design Lead, Project Horizon
- Miranda Vermeer, Risk Management Specialist, Compliance, Privacy & Risk Management
- Natalia Kaniuk, Senior Manager, Research Training Centre & Faculty Support, Research Operations
- Neil Merovitch, Volunteer
- Nimira Dhalwani, Chief Technology Officer, Information Services
- Victoria Moreno, Program Coordinator, Faculty Development, Department of Pediatric Medicine

Recent Efforts to Prevent and Eliminate Barriers

Since January 2022, SickKids has completed the following efforts to increase accessibility for children, families/caregivers, staff, learners and volunteers in the organization.

- A) Installed a new card access reader onto the University Avenue accessible entrance door to accommodate staff accessibility needs.
- B) Developed resources with guidance on how to write job postings to align with O. Reg. 191/11, s. 22. and O. Reg. 191/11, s. 23 (1) of the AODA.
- C) Made resources available to increase knowledge about the types of accessibility supports that may be needed by a job candidate, accessible interview formats and tips, and guidance about disclosure of disability during an interview.

Campus Redevelopment

We are building a new SickKids. Project Horizon is our campus redevelopment project which includes four phases:

- Building a new Patient Support Centre (2023)
- Taking down the Black and Hill Wings of the current hospital building (2025-2035)
- Renovating and expanding the Burton Wing (2025-2035)
- Building the new hospital building (2035)

Right now, we are engaging people with lived experience of disability to include accessibility design and features into a proposal for the new building(s) and renovations at SickKids. The proposal will be submitted to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC). In our proposal, we plan to meet or exceed the applicable requirements of the AODA and advance accessibility in other ways where possible.

The Hospital for Sick Children Preventative & Emergency Maintenance of Accessible Elements in Public Spaces

The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) has procedures in place to conduct regular preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces. These procedures include:

1. Facilities Operations at SickKids, or the appropriate team responsible for the accessible element, will develop and follow preventative maintenance schedules (as required) for accessible elements in public spaces.
2. SickKids personnel, or an assigned third-party contractor will routinely inspect accessible elements in public spaces (as applicable). Any accessible elements that are found to have defects or need maintenance will be identified so they can be addressed.
3. A work order or communication will be submitted for repairs/maintenance of accessible elements to the relevant SickKids team (as identified in the table below).
4. After reviewing the work order, the appropriate team will perform the maintenance, or identify another responsible team/third party and notify them to complete the maintenance.

SickKids has procedures in place for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements in public spaces are not in working order. These procedures include:

5. When a need for emergency maintenance is identified, the accessible element will be taken out of service and repaired.
6. Temporary signage or notices (digital or non-digital) will be used to notify the public of the temporary disruption and identify any alternatives that exist.

SickKids will work to continue to ensure any new accessible elements in public spaces are incorporated into the ongoing preventative and emergency maintenance program.

Responsible Teams at SickKids

Accessible Element in Public Spaces	SickKids Team
Exterior paths of travel (where these elements are not already covered by the Ontario Building Code or maintained by the City of Toronto)	Facilities Operations PGCRL Facilities Operations (exterior rest areas)
Accessible (off-street) parking spaces	Nutrition & Commercial Services
Accessible service counters	Facilities Operations Facilities Development (525 University)

2022-24 Accessibility Initiatives

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Accessibility Standards for Customer Services (Ontario Regulation 429/07)

Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11)

AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards: General Requirements

AODA Sub-section	Action(s)	Accountable Leader	Deadline	Status
<p>Accessibility Plans</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 4 (1).</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 4 (2).</p>	<p>1. Multi-year Accessibility Plans</p> <p>Develop a new SickKids accessibility plan at least once every five years in consultation with persons with lived experience of disabilities and the Accessibility Steering Committee.</p> <p>a. Complete an organization-wide barrier assessment and audit; and</p> <p>b. Use the information from the assessment and audit to develop the next multi-year accessibility plan (2025-2030).</p>	<p>Executive Lead, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)</p> <p>Vice President, Human Resources & Commercial Services</p>	December 31, 2024	Ongoing
<p>Accessibility Plans</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 4 (3); O. Reg. 413/12, s. 3 (1).</p>	<p>2. Annual Status Reports</p> <p>a. Prepare annual status report on the progress of actions listed in the multi-year accessibility plan; and</p> <p>b. Post the report on the SickKids website and provide the report in an accessible format upon request.</p>	<p>Executive Lead, EDI</p> <p>Vice President, Human Resources & Commercial Services</p>	December 2024	
<p>Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 5 (1); O. Reg. 413/12, s. 4 (1).</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 5 (2); O. Reg. 413/12, s. 4 (2).</p>	<p>3. Project Horizon</p> <p>Make sure accessibility design, criteria and features are included when procuring goods, services or facilities for new building(s) and renovations at SickKids.</p>	<p>Chief Redevelopment Officer, Project Horizon</p> <p>Director, Supply Chain</p>	December 2024	

AODA Sub-section	Action(s)	Accountable Leader	Deadline	Status
<p>Training</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 7 (1); O. Reg. 165/16, s. 5 (1).</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 7 (2).</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 7 (3).</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 7 (4).</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 7 (5).</p> <p>O. Reg 165/16, s. 16.</p>	<p>4. Orientation for New Staff, Learners & Volunteers</p> <p>a. Make sure we provide training on the requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in this Regulation and on the <i>Human Rights Code</i> (about persons with disabilities) to,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all SickKids staff, trainees, and volunteers; • all persons who participate in developing SickKids’ policies; and • all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of SickKids. <p>b. Make sure that each person receives training that is appropriate for the duties in their role.</p> <p>c. Provide the training as soon as practicable.</p> <p>d. Provide training on any changes to SickKids’ Accessibility Policies on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>e. Keep record(s) of the training, including training dates and number of people who received the training.</p>	<p>Associate Chief, Nursing Education and Interprofessional Education</p> <p>Executive Lead, EDI</p> <p>Vice President, Human Resources & Commercial Services</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Training</p> <p>O. Reg 165/16, s. 16.</p>	<p>5. Customer Service Standard Training</p> <p>Review and improve the online, mandatory training module about the customer service standard.</p>	<p>Associate Chief, Nursing Education and Interprofessional Education</p> <p>Executive Lead, EDI</p> <p>Vice President, Human Resources & Commercial Services</p>	<p>December 2024</p>	

AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards: Information & Communication Standards

AODA Sub-section	Action(s)	Accountable Leader	Deadline	Status
<p>Feedback</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 11 (1).</p> <p>O. Reg. 165/16, s. 7.</p> <p>O. Reg. 165/16, s. 7.</p>	<p>6. Patient & Family Experience Surveys</p> <p>a. Have a process in place to make accessible formats of patient & family experience surveys available upon request; and</p> <p>b. Let children and families know that accessible formats are available upon request, and how to request them.</p>	<p>Director, Centre for Innovation & Excellence in Child and Family-Centred Care</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	
<p>Accessible websites and web content</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 14 (2).</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 14 (4).</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 14 (5).</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 14 (6).</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 14 (7).</p>	<p>7. Accessible websites and web content</p> <p>a. Ensure that SickKids public-facing websites and web content (to which this Regulation applies) conform to WCAG 2.0 guidelines (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) to Level AA.</p> <p>b. Stay up to date on changes to WCAG criteria.</p> <p>c. Work towards meeting the updated guidelines (example: WCAG 2.2) on our public-facing websites and web content, except where meeting the guidelines is not practicable.</p>	<p>Deputy Chief Information Officer (CIO)</p> <p>Director, Communications & Public Affairs</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards: Employment Standards

AODA Sub-section	Action(s)	Accountable Leader	Deadline	Status
<p>Accessible formats and communication support for employees</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 26 (1).</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11, s. 26 (2).</p>	<p>8. Assistive Devices for Hearing Disabilities</p> <p>a. Explore high quality assistive devices and equipment to help with phone calls for employees, learners, or volunteers who have a hearing disability; and</p> <p>b. Create a list of equipment/devices that can be used to meet employee, learner or volunteer needs.</p>	<p>Director, Occupational Health & Safety</p> <p>Director, Supply Chain</p>	March 2024	

AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards: Design of Public Spaces Standards

AODA Sub-section	Action(s)	Accountable Leader	Deadline	Status
<p>Outdoor public use eating areas</p> <p>O. Reg. 413/12, s. 6.</p>	<p>9. Outdoor Rooftop Patio – Patient Support Centre</p> <p>Construct the outdoor rooftop patio in the new Patient Support Centre building to go beyond AODA requirements.</p>	Chief Development Officer, Project Horizon	December 2024	<p>In Progress.</p> <p>Design, furniture planning and purchasing completed. Full completion of patio space expected in 2024.</p>
<p>Service counters</p> <p>O. Reg. 413/12, s. 6.</p>	<p>10. Service Counters</p> <p>Incorporate accessible design into the following service counters in the new Patient Support Centre building:</p> <p>a. The Information Desk at Main Entrance; and</p> <p>b. The Information Technology (IT) Service desk on Level 3 of the new Patient Support Centre.</p>	Chief Redevelopment Officer, Project Horizon	December 2023	<p>In Progress.</p> <p>Drawings for these desks were completed in 2022-23, installation is in progress.</p>

Health Care Standards Development Committee Final Recommendations

Recommendation	Action(s)	Accountable Leader	Deadline	Status
Recommendation 1: Accessibility Lead/Consultant	11. Hire an Accessibility Coordinator	Executive Lead, EDI Vice President, Human Resources & Commercial Services	December 2023	
Recommendation 2: engagement with persons with disabilities in hospital accessibility planning and design	12. Engagement with persons with disabilities a. Seek people with lived experience of disabilities to join the Children’s Council or Family Advisor Network (FAN). b. Increase representation and engagement of staff, children or youth (e.g., patient advisors) and families or caregivers (e.g., family advisors on the FAN) with lived experience of disability in health services planning, capital planning and quality improvement at SickKids. c. Actively seek out persons with disabilities when selecting members for the Board of Trustees.	Executive Lead, EDI Vice President, Human Resources & Commercial Services Director, Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Child and Family-Centred Care	December 2024	
Recommendation 3: procurement of services and equipment, and consideration of the Design of Public Spaces/Built Environment to ensure accessibility	13. Elizabeth Street Ramp Design a. Review the design of ramp to the Elizabeth Street entrance with people who have lived experience of disabilities to go beyond AODA requirements; and b. Submit the new design to the appropriate capital planning committee for approval and funding.	Director, Facilities Development	April 2024	In Progress

Additional Actions

Action(s)	Purpose	Accountable Leader	Deadline	Status
<p>14. Accessible Entrances</p> <p>a. Install automatic door operators at the Burton Wing staff entrance of the hospital.</p> <p>b. Make sure the following entrances in the new Patient Support Centre building have automatic door operators: 1) entrance from Elizabeth Street, 2) entrance from Elm Street, 3) bridge entrance on Level 3, and 4) PGCRl connection on Level 3.</p>	To ensure main entrances into SickKids buildings are accessible, and to reduce barriers to staff entering the workplace.	Director, Facilities Development	December 2023	In Progress
<p>15. Increase Awareness of Accessible Washroom Locations</p>	To make sure children and families know where to find accessible washrooms early in their journey and know how to get to these washrooms.	Director, Centre for Innovation & Excellence in Child and Family-Centred Care	December 2023	
<p>16. Accessibility Support at Elizabeth Street Entrance</p> <p>Engage children or youth and caregivers with lived experience of disability to develop accessibility support when arriving at the Elizabeth Street entrance.</p>	To provide support to family/caregivers who are arriving with, or dropping off, children with disabilities at Elizabeth Street entrance.	Director, Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Child and Family-Centred Care	December 2024	
<p>17. Planning Study for Tactile Floor Surface in the Atrium</p> <p>Get approval to do a planning study about installing tactile floor surface(s) in the Atrium entrance.</p>	To better understand the need for tactile floor surfaces to help individuals with visual disabilities get to elevators and stairwells from the Elizabeth Street entrance.	Director, Facilities Planning Director, Facilities Development	April 2024	

Action(s)	Purpose	Accountable Leader	Deadline	Status
<p>18. Waiting Area Layouts</p> <p>a. Identify 1-2 clinical areas to do a trial of different waiting area layouts; and</p> <p>b. Engage people with disabilities in the trial(s) to identify layouts that are better for people using a mobility device.</p>	<p>To make it easier for people who are using a mobility device to move through waiting areas that have COVID-19 related separators or dividers.</p>	<p>Director, Facilities Development</p> <p>Director, Facilities Planning</p>	<p>December 2024</p>	
<p>19. Waiting Area Seating/ Comfort Options for Children in Wheelchairs</p> <p>a. Engage children who use wheelchairs and their families/caregivers to understand the need; and</p> <p>b. Develop a project to meet the need; and</p> <p>c. Submit a proposal to the appropriate capital planning committee for approval and funding.</p>	<p>It can be uncomfortable for some children who use a wheelchair to sit in it for a long period of time. This project would help us understand how we can provide a way for children using wheelchairs or other mobility aids to wait more comfortably.</p>	<p>Director, Facilities Development</p>	<p>September 2024</p>	
<p>20. Review Timeliness of Employee Accommodations Process</p> <p>Engage staff with lived experience and Managers in a review of the timeliness of accommodations process.</p>	<p>To identify challenges with getting timely work accommodation, and identify any changes that may be needed, including support or resources for Managers.</p>	<p>Director, Occupational Health & Safety</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	
<p>21. Improve Accommodations Process for Students/Learners</p> <p>Develop relationships with universities and colleges to clarify how to work together to support the accessibility needs of students/learners at SickKids</p>	<p>To clearly outline what SickKids is responsible for and what universities or colleges are responsible for to meet the accessibility needs of students/learners at SickKids fully and in a timely way.</p>	<p>Director, Occupational Health & Safety</p> <p>Executive Director, Learning Institute</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	

Action(s)	Purpose	Accountable Leader	Deadline	Status
<p>22. Braille Signage for Washrooms</p> <p>a. Ensure that washrooms in the Atrium that are in planned renovation areas under Project Horizon have braille signage.</p> <p>b. Submit a project request to Facilities Development to ensure other washroom doors in the Atrium (that are not addressed under Project Horizon), and Burton Wing include braille signage; and</p> <p>c. Conduct a study to identify the washrooms that need braille signage; and</p> <p>d. Submit a proposal to the appropriate capital planning committee for approval and funding.</p>	<p>To help people with visual disability identify washrooms by making sure braille is consistently part of washroom signage in the Atrium as renovations occur in this area of the hospital.</p>	<p>Director, Facilities Development</p> <p>Chief Redevelopment Officer, Project Horizon</p>	<p>September 2024</p>	

Review and Monitoring Process

The Accessibility Steering Committee meets bi-monthly and will use a portion of each meeting to review progress on all requirements on the workplan. Each lead responsible for deliverables or their delegate will be asked to provide regular reports on these deliverables. Quarterly updates will be provided to the Executive Sponsor.

Communication of the Plan

The SickKids Multi-Year Accessibility will be posted on the internal and external website, and hard copies will be made available on request. Copies of the plan in an accessible format will be made available on request.

Glossary

1. **Accessible Formats:** Written information or other forms of communication that are accessible. HTML and Microsoft Word, braille, and large print are just a few examples of accessible formats (Government of Ontario, 2022b).
2. **Assistive Devices:** a device that helps a person with hearing or speech disabilities or language disorders communicate (example: picture board, text to speech software, sound amplifier) (National Institute for Deafness and other Communication Disorders, 2019).
3. **Barrier:** According to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, a barrier is “anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice” (O. Reg 191/11, c.11, s.2, (2005)).
 - a. **Attitudinal Barrier:** personal attitudes or beliefs that influence how someone interacts with a person with disability (Carleton University).
 - b. **Information or Communications Barrier:** things that prevent a person with a disability from communicating or accessing information (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).
 - c. **Organizational/Systemic Barrier:** policies, procedures or practices that discriminate against people with disabilities (Council of Ontario Universities, 2017).
 - d. **Physical/Architectural Barrier:** structural elements in the environment that prevent a person with a disability from moving around in the environment (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).
 - e. **Technological Barrier:** when technology is not accessible to a person with disability, or cannot be used with an assistive device (Council of Ontario Universities, 2017).
4. **Children’s Council:** a group of SickKids patients (ages 9-17) who work together to make SickKids a better place. They provide their perspectives as patients on SickKids programs and plans.
5. **Family:** our use of the term ‘family’ means whomever a person chooses to define as their ‘family’ or a ‘family member’.
6. **Family Advisor Network (FAN):** a group of family members or caregivers and past SickKids patients who volunteer their time to make SickKids a better place. They share their perspectives as patients and families in different activities at all levels of the hospital.
7. **People with lived experience of disability:** any person who either has a disability or has direct experience caring for someone with a disability in their life (i.e., caregiver).
8. **PGCRL:** Peter Gilgan Centre for Research and Learning at the corner of Bay Street and Elm Street. This building is used by researchers and trainees at SickKids and has meeting rooms and an auditorium for learning together.
9. **WCAG 2.0 Guidelines (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines):** a document with recommendations for making web content more accessible. There are three levels of meeting the guidelines: Level A (lowest), Level AA, and Level AAA (highest) (Caldwell et al., 2008).

References

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