

Strive Niagara is a non-profit, social service organization dedicated to assisting and fostering the independence of young families pursuing an education through the provision of quality childcare and other necessary supports.

Through education and support, Strive Niagara empowers young families so that they can make informed healthy decisions, and transform their lives. We provide quality licensed childcare in St. Catharines, Welland, Thorold, and Grimsby. Most childcare staff are registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE's).

Strive Niagara's outreach class is an informal program offering personalized academic and parenting support where you can achieve high school credits. Strive Niagara aims to establish and maintain reciprocal relationships with the young student parent and their children under the professional supervision of the agency.

### **Statement of Commitment:**

Strive Niagara is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity, respect and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people and disabilities in a timely manner and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), including the integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), and the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC).

### **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan:**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) multi year accessibility plan outlines that policies, practices and procedures that Strive has prepared are implemented. Strive Niagara will continue to do so by improving opportunities for people with disabilities. This plan will cover a 5-year period from 2022-2027.

Some of the initiatives that Strive has implemented in the last 2 years to increase accessibility are:

- Providing enrollment packages, forms, parent handbooks etc., online as well as in hard copy.
- When interviewing and hiring new staff, there is assistance provided with understanding and completing forms. Assistance in person, by email or phone is readily available.
- Strive Niagara's website has an accessibility tool icon which provides different formats for reading.
- Accommodations are made for employees returning to work from illness/injury by adjusting hours and duties of work, however possible.

- AODA/Human Rights training is provided online for all employees.

Strive Niagara strives to meet the needs of its employees and customers with disabilities and is working hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

Strive 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.

Our plan shows how we will play our role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians.

We train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies

We maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided. All staff's name is recorded along with date training was completed.

Strive Niagara has completed the following accessibility initiatives.

### **Strategies and Actions:**

Strive Niagara 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.

The Business will provide accessible customer service training to all employees and volunteers, any person involved in developing our policies and any person who provides goods, services or facilities to customers on the Business's behalf.

The training will encompass:

- purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- the Business's policies related to the customer service 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 support person;

By March 2026, Strive Niagara will conduct an accessibility audit of its physical locations and develop a plan to remediate any identified barriers, prioritizing accessible washrooms and entrances; if needed.

## **Employment:**

### Accessible Formats & Communication Supports for Employees

Where an employee with a disability requests it, the Business will consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for information that is (a) needed in order to perform the employee's job and (b) generally available to employees in the workplace.

### Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement, Redeployment

The Business shall take into account the accessibility needs of employees when using performance management processes, providing career development and advancement, and using redeployment.

### Workplace Emergency Response Information

The Business provides individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary, and the employer is aware of the need for accommodation. The Business provides this information as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the need for accommodation.

If an employee who receives individualized workplace emergency response information requires assistance and provided that the employee's consent is obtained, the Business will provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated by the employer to provide assistance to the employee.

The Business reviews the individualized workplace emergency response information in the following circumstances: when the employee moves to a different location in the organization, when overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed, and when it reviews its general emergency response policies.

## **Training:**

Strive Niagara 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.

The Business will provide accessible customer service training to all employees and volunteers, any person involved in developing our policies and any person who provides goods, services or facilities to customers on the Business's behalf.

The training will encompass:

- purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the customer service standard.
- how to interact and communicate with various types of disabilities.

- how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assisted device or require the assistance of a service animal.
- the Business's policies related to the customer service standard;
- how to use the equipment or devices available on site or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services, or facilities to people with disabilities; and
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the Business's goods, services or facilities.
- staff will be trained on accessible customer service as part of their training when they are fired hired, and again if changes are made to our accessible customer service policy.

**Review:**

The plan is reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years. The plan will be reviewed by the Management Team and will discuss the following:

- The progression towards the goals
- Areas of improvement
- The updated plan will be posted on the website