



**Holland Bloorview**  
Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

# Accessibility Status Report

2022 - 2023

## Purpose

The 2022-2023 annual Accessibility Status report is Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital's commitment to the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 \(AODA\)](#) and Holland Bloorview's [Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2021-2026](#).

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), Holland Bloorview must meet specific requirements of the AODA. There are general compliance requirements which must be met every year. This includes ensuring there is accessible information, transportation, communication, public spaces, policy employment, customer service, educational reception, healthcare access, emergency procedures and training.

## Background

At Holland Bloorview we take the approach that accessibility can and should be approached as an ongoing project which demands continuous critical attention and community engagement. We prioritize not only the clients we serve, but also our employees, volunteers and students so that we can strive to model being a top employer. When a place, process or thing is designed to be fully available and usable to all, it takes into account every person and community's unique needs to access and participate.

One organizational change should be noted: in February 2023, the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) office was relocated to the Experience, Transformation and Social Accountability portfolio. It now goes by Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Anti-Racism (IDEAA). This additional lens acknowledges the need to consider the intersectionality of ableism and racism and creates a broader context for considering and implementing accessibility requirements.

## Accomplishments in Accessibility 2022-2023

Holland Bloorview has accomplished many milestones in 2023 to create a more accessible and inclusive culture and environment. In many cases, the end product was the result of months of collaboration with internal programs, community stakeholders and centred in client and family partnership.

### Revision of policies and supporting documents to ensure AODA compliance (February 2023)

Based on feedback from an AODA desktop audit in January 2023, we replaced our Modified Workplan Policy with a **Workplace Accommodation Policy** which includes an undue

hardship form, a temporary modified work plan and a permanent accommodation plan. Updates were made to supporting documents covering functional and cognitive abilities. Our [Accessibility Policy](#) was reviewed. Additionally, a new supporting document was created for the **Emergency Response Planning for Employees with Disabilities**. Unique considerations have presented themselves as our workforce adapts to a hybrid workplace. Our emergency response planning must now factor building in contingencies around employee presence within an office. In some cases this could necessitate moving away from a traditional 'buddy system' to a more universal and democratic level of awareness of who will need assistance within a given department.

## Building upgrades (August - November 2023)

### Parking equipment installation in main lot

We invested in new parking equipment to enhance convenience and efficiency in our main lot. This includes the introduction of a new parking access system and mobile app to assist with payment and reservations. With the addition of this new equipment, we aim to streamline the parking process and provide a more user-friendly and accessible experience for everyone.

### Door replacement project

Weather, wear and tear and environmental conditions had deteriorated the mechanical components. This project aimed to enhance the safety, functionality and aesthetic of our building. These are key accessibility features of our building and failure to replace could result in mechanical failure and impact safety of employees, volunteers, clients and families. Both the interior and exterior sliding doors were replaced at the main entrance, the Bloorview School Authority and the Conference Centre which reached their end of life.

## Advocating for inclusive school environments (September 2023)

This fall, Holland Bloorview launched its [Inclusion Resolution anti-stigma campaign](#) for kids and youth with disabilities and developmental differences, challenging Canadians to make a resolution by thinking of at least one meaningful action or change in order to help everybody feel welcome and included at school. *Inclusion Resolution* builds on the success of our award-winning [Dear Everybody](#) campaign that brought widespread attention to the importance of disability inclusion.

To support educators, Holland Bloorview, together with the [Bloorview School Authority](#), developed online learning modules to combat ableism in the classroom, on the playground and beyond. Funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education, [Project Inclusion](#) includes the voices and expertise of students, parents, educators, school

leaders, as well as community organizations.

## **Accessible Fundraising Events Guide (November 2023)**

The initiative was led by the [Holland Bloorview Foundation](#) as part of the hospital's ongoing commitment to disability inclusion and knowledge sharing to help build a world where everyone's abilities and contributions are valued. The [Accessible Fundraising Guide](#) is a resource targeted at fundraising professionals on how to include accessibility elements to create an event experience that meets the needs of all participants. The guide was reviewed by clients, families, volunteers and people with lived experience of disability.

## **Employment (February 2023 – October 2023)**

### **Ready to Work anti-stigma campaign**

Holland Bloorview launched its [Ready to Work anti-stigma campaign](#) in October 2023, in support of youth and young adults with disabilities and developmental differences who want to find meaningful employment.

### **Project SEARCH Toronto job hires**

Holland Bloorview continues to be the co-site host for the [Project SEARCH Toronto](#) program, now in its fourth year. This is an internationally recognized transition to work training program for high school students with intellectual disabilities. It combines hands-on work experience with an employment life skills curriculum, employment planning and support. Our Toronto partners include Community Living Toronto (employment support provider), Ontario Disability Employment Network, Toronto Rehab-UHN (co-site host), Toronto District School Board (education lead), and United Way Greater Toronto.

Going forward, it is anticipated that this experience could inform changes to Holland Bloorview's employment practices. For example, there is potential for Holland Bloorview to adopt similar Project SEARCH approaches to recruitment, onboarding and job carving/role creation, all of which have been utilized in the past to successfully accommodate Project SEARCH graduates.

### **Increasing workplace neurodiversity**

[Specialisterne](#) is a not-for-profit company which aims to help Canadian businesses increase the neurodiversity of their workforce through the adoption of more effective methods for candidate recruitment, selection, onboarding, employee education, and management. Collaboration with Specialisterne is part of IDEAA's identified goal to support the organization's work to support employees with disabilities by expanding our understanding

about their work experiences. It will also serve to uncover exclusionary barriers within the designs of healthcare environments, services and systems, as well as potential solutions.

### **Accessibility Training: Resource Development**

The IDEAA office shared their branded accessibility training resources with colleagues at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health over the period of March – April 2023. The revamped presentations and resources can be accessed on the staff portal. The accessibility coordinator compiled resources on administrative accessibility training for commonly used computer programs such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Zoom; as well as providing input on AODA compliance around the standards of Information and Communication; Employment; Transportation; Design of Public Spaces; Customer Service; Education and Healthcare.

### **Meeting transit needs for clients and families**

To address urgent transit needs and reduce financial barriers to timely and safe transportation to Holland Bloorview for clients and families, the hospital launched an Emergency Transit Fund (ETF) in November 2023. A reliable and accessible source of transportation is the key to ensuring that our clients and families have freedom to connect and access the medical care they need.

The ETF aims to address the current barriers that significantly impede accessibility for our clients and their families' including poor access to public transportation, characterized by limited routes and coverage. Additionally, the high costs associated with vehicle operation and unexpected transfers from medical facilities create financial burdens that hinder individuals from securing reliable transportation. These barriers not only limit daily activities but also isolate individuals from crucial resources like healthcare.

### **Inclusive Research: Creating Inclusive Playgrounds**

Playgrounds are important to children's health, development, and overall well-being. Yet many playgrounds are still inaccessible for children and adults with disabilities, creating exclusionary experiences that are deeply problematic. To help address these barriers, our team (**Tim Ross**, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, University of Toronto; **Kelly Arbour-Nicitopoulos**, University of Toronto; **Ingrid Kanics**, Kanics Inclusive Design Services, LLC; **Jennifer Leo**, University of Alberta) prepared a report titled, "*Creating Inclusive Playgrounds: A Playbook of Considerations and Strategies*." The considerations and strategies have emerged primarily from an international environmental scan of practice-oriented materials concerning inclusive playgrounds. This playbook offers municipalities, community groups, practitioners (e.g., designers, developers, builders), and families living with disability a comprehensive resource for creating inclusive playgrounds.

## Looking Ahead: 2024 and Beyond

For more details, please reference Holland Bloorview's [Multi-year Accessibility Plan 2021 - 2026](#), p. 27 – 30 *Future Accessibility Plans*

Other key highlights we want to continue exploring in 2024:

- **Web Content & Website Changes** – With the new accessible website features in place, we will be focusing on compliance of web content requirements and refreshing of web pages to reflect the changes of legislation and provide resources, tools and education.
- **Continuing to be top employer and to model best practices** – to explore integrating current accommodation and accessibility planning practices that have been in place for students.
- **Continued recruitment for new members APAC and updating the terms of reference** - to continue building capacity organizationally and to ensure appropriate representation and prioritizing of voices and expertise.
- **Evolving the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEAA) lens** – to strengthen this resource tool for employees in order to maximize feasibility for utilization in their roles.
- **Up-to-date Accessibility policies** – efforts will be made to ensure that policies continue to be up-to-date so that they can be implemented in ways that are not just in compliance, but also allow for Holland Bloorview to continue to be one of the best leaders on the work of accessibility and being a model employer.

Please let us know if you have any questions or feedback about activities, initiatives, and programs highlighted in this report and in the 2021-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, as well as accessibility matters in general.

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