Physical Challenges with Signing Documents
Some adults with physical or sensory disabilities may have difficulty physically signing their name on documents despite having the cognitive and legal capacity to make decisions. For example, some people have difficulty holding a pen or coordinating their arm movements to sign on paper. Finding a reliable alternative signature method is important for participating in adult life activities e.g. for completing application forms, banking, signing housing leases, completing legal documents etc.

Alternative Methods to Signing
In Ontario, alternatives for people who have the capacity to make their own decisions yet are unable to make a traditional signature with pen and paper may include:

- Making a mark e.g. X, finger print, toe print
- Electronic signatures
- Signature agents
- Signature stamps (replica of signature for progressive conditions)

Each method above has pros and cons, which a person should consider before selecting. For more information, please see this article from Arch Disability Law Centre and/or speak to your legal professional before selecting an option. Holland Bloorview also has a free, onsite legal consultation program for existing clients.

The information provided in this handout is for reference only. It is not intended as a recommendation or endorsement of specific programs, or as a comprehensive resource list.

This handout is brought to you by Holland Bloorview’s Transitions Team
Contact: Laura Thompson, OT Reg. (Ont.), Team Lead & Occupational Therapist
416-425-6220 ext. 3686, lthompson@hollandbloorview.ca

Last updated: 07/07/2022