



The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids)

Annual Accessibility Report

2023 - 2024

SickKids®

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Purpose

The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) 2023-2024 Annual Accessibility Report shows progress made towards improving accessibility at SickKids. The report provides updates on the initiatives from the SickKids [2022-2024 Accessibility Plan](#) as of **October 2024**. Every year, an annual accessibility report must be shared publicly to meet the requirements of the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) (AODA).

Please note there has been an organizational change as recommended by the Health Care Standards Development Committee in the [Development of Health Care Standards – Final Recommendations Report 2022](#). SickKids now has a permanent, full-time accessibility staff member to help advance accessibility initiatives organization-wide. The role will continue to help build organizational capacity to comply with accessibility standards and support the ongoing work of the Accessibility Steering Committee (ASC).

Visit the [Alternative Format Request](#) page on the SickKids website for guidance on how to request this report in an alternative format.

Background

The ASC has been operational for over a decade and has diverse membership representative of the SickKids community, including senior leadership, staff, family advisors, volunteers, and people with lived experience with disability. The ASC is responsible for overseeing the development of multi-year accessibility plans, monitoring progress of those plans, and support compliance with AODA requirements and the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#).

Despite facing challenges, such as ongoing campus redevelopment, organizational changes, and resource limitations, the ASC is proactively tracking accessibility plan progress and adjusting timelines to ensure that accessibility improvements continue to be made. The accessibility plan aims to remove barriers for people with disabilities in the SickKids community.

For more details, refer to the [SickKids 2022-2024 Accessibility Plan](#).

Overview: 2022-2024 Accessibility Plan Progress

The SickKids 2022-2024 Accessibility Plan includes **22** accessibility initiatives to be completed between December 2023 and March 2025.

As of October 2024:

- **eight** are complete
- **11** are ongoing or in progress
- **three** are on hold or have not started

For more details, refer to the [SickKids 2022-2024 Accessibility Plan](#).

Completed 2022-2024 Accessibility Plan Initiatives

This section of the report highlights completed initiatives from the SickKids 2022-2024 Accessibility Plan.

Annual Status Reports (October 2024)

This report is SickKids 2023-2024 Annual Accessibility Report, which shares updates on progress made towards completing initiatives on the SickKids [2022-2024 Accessibility Plan](#) as of October 2024. This report itself is an annual AODA compliance requirement.

Elizabeth Street Ramp Design (September 2024)

The Elizabeth Street ramp, which is AODA compliant, was reviewed in consultation with individuals with lived experience with disability. The goal was to assess how its accessibility could be improved to better meet the specific needs of the SickKids community. The insights gained from this review will be taken into consideration during future campus redevelopment plans.

Outdoor Rooftop Patio – Patient Support Centre (July 2024)

Construction of the outdoor rooftop patio of the Patient Support Centre (PSC) is complete and the patio is now open to staff. The outdoor patio space is accessible and meets AODA standards. There are plans to do additional work to fix minor issues identified in an effort to go beyond AODA requirements.

Accessibility Support Available at Elizabeth Street Entrance (April 2024)

The Hospital Concierge and Navigation Team is present at the main entrances to the hospital. The team is available to assist patients and families with strollers, wheelchairs etc., and facilitate safe drop-off and pick-up at the main entrances to the hospital. When

scheduling appointments, families requesting assistance at the main entrance should be given contact information for the Hospital Navigation Team by their health-care provider.

Requesting Alternative Formats of Patient and Family Experience Surveys (March 2024)

The process for requesting alternative formats of patient and family experience surveys has been updated. On receiving the survey, patients and families are given information on how to request an alternative format of the survey. To request an alternative format, patients and families are advised to email accessibility.questions@sickkids.ca or visit the [Accessibility](#) page on the SickKids website, which includes an alternative format [request form](#) and a phone number for the Accessibility Contact.

Service Counters – Patient Support Centre (February 2024)

The Information Desk at the main entrance and the Information Technology (IT) Service Desk on Level 3 of the new Patient Support Centre (PSC) meet AODA requirements. They feature multi-level counters to improve ease of use for people using mobility aids, including wheelchairs. Signage and clear surrounding areas help ensure the desks can be approached with ease. There is also tactile flooring in the PSC lobby which leads to the Information Desk.

Accessibility Specialist Hired (February 2024)

In February 2024, an Accessibility Specialist was hired to help advance and provide support for accessibility initiatives organization wide. This includes, but is not limited to, coordinating and supporting the Accessibility Steering Committee in:

- AODA compliance, reporting, and other administration
- advancing accessibility initiatives, including proactively monitoring SickKids' accessibility plans and developing new accessibility plans
- ongoing identification and assessment of accessibility barriers within the organization
- advocating for accessibility best practices

Improving Accessibility of Entrances (February 2024)

Automatic door openers and access card entry points have been installed at the following entrances to SickKids' buildings to improve accessibility for staff:

1. Burton Wing staff entrance to the hospital
2. PSC entrances:
 - Elizabeth Street, Elm Street
 - Bridge entrance on PSC Level 3

- Peter Gilgan Centre for Research and Learning (PGCRL) connection - PSC Level 3

Additional Accessibility Successes

This section shares additional accessibility improvements made at SickKids in 2023-2024 beyond the 2022-2024 Accessibility Plan.

Atrium Universal Washroom Adult-Sized Change Table Covers (September 2024)

Families have shared concerns about the difficulty of cleaning the adult-sized change table in the universal washroom located in the Atrium. The ASC has secured funding, through the Family Centre, for a temporary cover for the change table that will be easier to clean and serve as a short-term solution. In the long term, the ASC plans to submit a proposal to replace the current change table with a new one that is easier to clean.

National AccessAbility Week 2024 Webinar (May 2024)

The SickKids Accessibility Steering Committee hosted a webinar during National AccessAbility Week in May 2024 featuring guest speaker Dr. Pamela Liao (she/her), Disability Health Researcher and Advocate.

Forward Together: Accessibility and Inclusion for All Forum (May 2024)

The Accessibility, Access, and Inclusion Employee Resource Group held a roundtable discussion during AccessAbility Week in May 2024 to raise awareness and foster dialogue around accessibility inclusion for all at SickKids. Staff with lived experience with disability discussed their experience navigating SickKids and where improvements could be made.

Approval of New Universal Washroom on Main Street (May 2024)

In May 2024, the ASC successfully presented a business case for the creation of another universal washroom on the main floor of the hospital. This initiative aims to address the needs of the SickKids' community, who have expressed a desire for more universal washrooms equipped with adult-sized change tables. Although the timing for this project has not been confirmed yet, it will be considered in future campus redevelopment efforts.

PGCRL (October 2023 to October 2024)

An external accessibility review of the PGCRL building was done in 2023 to identify areas where accessibility could be improved. The review was limited to the busiest areas of the building (main entrances, corridors, elevator lobbies, public washrooms and

kitchenettes) and did not include office suites, private offices, lab areas, and specialty rooms.

The following improvements have been made as of October 2024:

- additional accessible parking spaces have been added on P1 and P2
- painted surface markings have been added to show locations of access aisles
- hatch markings have been added to paths of travel in parking levels
- signage on washrooms and showers on the ground floor have been updated to be gender neutral
- main entry and vestibule power operated door controls have been replaced with high colour contrast control buttons

Inspire, Hire, Train, Retain Enabling Change Program (May-October 2024)

SickKids is proud to be a champion organization in the Inspire, Hire, Train, Retain (IHTR) initiative, an [EnAbling Change Program](#) led by Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital. This initiative aims to help health-care organizations in Ontario create more disability-inclusive workplaces. The program provides valuable resources and training to health-care managers, to support them in hiring, engaging, and retaining a diverse workforce. Organizations in the program, including SickKids, have helped co-create these resources to ensure they are practical and effective. SickKids' involvement in this initiative underscores the organization's commitment to creating a more inclusive workforce.

Continuing to Improve Accessibility at SickKids

SickKids will continue to make accessibility improvements over the next year, including the following initiatives from the 2022-2024 Accessibility Plan:

- **Multi-year Accessibility Plans:** We are working to identify and remove barriers to accessibility at SickKids by reviewing past data on accessibility issues, gathering feedback from the SickKids community, and conducting an accessibility audit. A working group, including people with lived experience with disabilities, is guiding this effort. The findings will help the organization with accessibility planning, including the next multi-year accessibility plan.
- **Project Horizon:** As the SickKids campus continues to undergo redevelopment, accessible design that meets and exceeds current building codes and standards will continue to be considered for new buildings and renovations.
- **Orientation for New Staff, Learners, and Volunteers:** The orientation program is continuously reviewed and updated as needed. Mandatory accessibility training on AODA, integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, and the Ontario Human Rights Code will be reviewed and updated.

- **Accessible Website and Web Content:** Websites managed by SickKids are regularly monitored for accessibility issues using monitoring software, and maintenance is done to fix potential problems.
- **Assistive Devices for Hearing Disabilities:** Exploration of assistive devices to help with phone calls for employees, learners, and volunteers with hearing disabilities is ongoing.
- **Engagement with Persons with Disabilities:** Increase diversity and remove barriers for patients and families joining the Family Advisor Network (FAN) and Children's Council.
- **Increase Awareness of Accessible Washroom Locations:** Efforts are underway to improve awareness of where universal and accessible washrooms are located at SickKids.
- **Waiting Areas Seating Options:** Exploring alternative seating options in waiting areas to give people who use wheelchairs the option to transfer to more comfortable seating.
- **Waiting Area Layouts:** Trialing different waiting room layouts that make waiting areas easier to navigate for people using mobility devices.
- **Review Timeliness of Employee Accommodations Process:** Considering ways to improve the accommodations process by identifying challenges in obtaining timely accommodations in consultation with employees.
- **Improve Accommodations Process for Students/Learners:** Creating clear guidance on the responsibilities of SickKids and universities when supporting student/learner accessibility needs.
- **Improved wayfinding:** An organization-wide wayfinding strategy is currently in development and will help inform accessibility improvements related to signage and tactile flooring.

For more details, refer to the [SickKids 2022-2024 Accessibility Plan](#).

Visit [Accessibility | SickKids](#) for more information on accessibility at SickKids or email accessibility.questions@sickkids.ca.