



AODA Training for Educators

LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

In 2005, Ontario passed into law the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The stated purpose of the Act is: to benefit all Ontarians by

- (a) developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025; and
- (b) providing for the involvement of persons with disabilities, of the Government of Ontario and of representatives of industries and of various sectors of the economy in the development of the accessibility standards. (2005, c. 11, s. 1.)

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

Ontario Regulation 191/11, "Integrated Accessibility Standards" (IASR), made under the AODA, sets out and establishes the accessibility standards for each of Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation and Design of Public Spaces.

GENERAL DISABILITY TYPES

Physical disabilities include a range of functional limitations from minor difficulties in moving or coordinating one part of the body, through muscle weakness, tremors, and paralysis. Physical disabilities can be congenital such as Muscular Dystrophy or acquired, such as tendonitis.

Hearing loss can cause problems in distinguishing certain frequencies, sounds or words.

Vision disabilities range from slightly reduced visual acuity to total blindness.

Deaf-Blindness is a combination of hearing and vision loss. The result for a person who is deaf-blind is significant difficulty accessing information and performing daily activities.

Mental Health disabilities include a range of disorders, however there are three main types of mental health disability: anxiety, mood, behavioral.

Speech disabilities involve the partial or total loss of the ability to speak.

Learning disabilities include a range of disorders that affect verbal and non-verbal information acquisition, retention, understanding and processing. People with a learning disability have average or above average intelligence, but take in and process information and express knowledge in different ways.

Intellectual disabilities affect a person's ability to think and reason.



Sensory (Smell, Touch, Taste)

- **Smell** disabilities can involve the inability to sense smells or a hypersensitivity to odors and smells.
- **Touch** disabilities can affect a person's ability to sense texture, temperature, vibration or pressure.
- **Taste** disabilities can limit the experience of the four primary taste sensations: sweet, bitter, salty and sour.

Other disabilities result from a range of other conditions, accidents, illnesses and diseases including ALS, asthma, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDs, environmental sensitivities, seizure disorders, heart disease, stroke and joint replacement.

Temporary disabilities result from a range of other conditions, accidents, seizure disorders; heart disease, stroke and joint replacement are a few examples.
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Following is some helpful information for educators to facilitate making classrooms and programs accessible for students with disabilities.

Classroom Environment

- Reduce visual distractions in the classroom, declutter and keep only what is needed in view.
- Provide a specific place for turning in assignments.
- Provide a quiet setting for test taking, allow tests to be scribed if necessary and allowing for oral responses.
- Arrange a designated safe place that student can go to.
- Have an agreed upon cue for student to leave the classroom.
- Allow for flexibility in seating, i.e. tables for group work, quiet areas etc.
- Pay close attention to lighting, glare, temperature.

Inclusive Teaching

- Modify expectations based on students' needs.
- Provide written and verbal direction with visuals if possible.
- Provide outlines, study guides, copies of overhead notes.
- Explain learning expectations to students before beginning a lesson.
- Allow for the use of tape recorders, computers, calculators and dictation to obtain and retain assignment success.
- Limit the number of concepts presented at one time.

Common Accommodations for Students with disabilities

- Try ability grouping. Have a few peers who can support the students experiencing weaknesses.
- Provide photocopied notes to avoid having these students copying from the board or chart paper
- Make use of Graphic Organizers.
- Provide organization tips and let parents know about the organization tips they can use to support these students at home.



- Provide time management tips and skills. Sometimes it helps to have sticky notes on the student's desk to remind the student of how much time he or she has to complete tasks.
- Tracking sheets. Provide a tracking sheet of expected assignments for the week/day.
- Use assistive technology when available.
- Provide a buddy and let the buddy know what his or her role is - supportive.
- Keep instructions and directions 'chunked'. Provide one step at a time; don't overload the student with too many pieces of information at once.
- Color code items. For instance, put some red tape on a math text book along with red tape on the math note book. Color code items that help the child with organization tips and that provide information about what is needed.
- Provide extra time for the processing of information.
- Larger size font is sometimes helpful.
- Provide auditory supports to avoid the student having too much text to read.
- Give repetition and clarification regularly.
- Provide proximity to the teacher.
- Seat the child away from distractions whenever possible. Think critically about seating arrangements.
- Provide reminders on the desk - taped 100s charts, number lines, vocabulary lists, word bank lists taped alphabets for printing or writing etc.
- Provide a study carrel or alternate place to work for specific tasks.
- Provide scribing or a peer for scribing when necessary or utilize the speech to text software applications.
- Give ongoing feedback.
- Let the child provide oral responses instead of written where appropriate to demonstrate understanding of concept.
- Provide time extensions as necessary.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Inclusive Classroom Checklist

<http://specialed.about.com/od/integration/a/checklist.htm>

The Teachable Project

<http://theteachableproject.org/>

Including Students with Exceptionalities

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/bennett.pdf>

Making Ontario Accessible

<http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/accessibility/index.aspx>