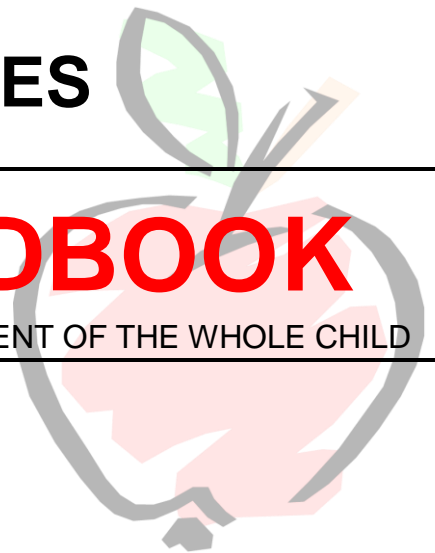


A l b e r t a
AdaptAbilities
A s s o c i a t i o n

ADAPTABILITIES

PARENT HANDBOOK

PROGRAMMING THAT PROMOTES THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WHOLE CHILD



Parent Handbook

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Director, Alberta AdaptAbilities Association

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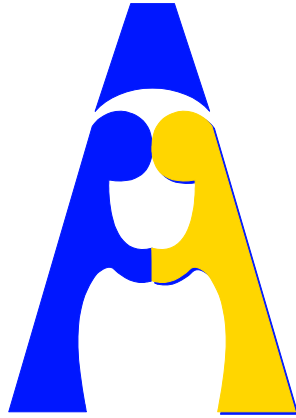
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Emergency contact: (C) (780) 887 - 8446

(This phone is in the possession of the Director at all times and is available for parents/guardians and staff to call only if there is an emergency.)

AdaptAbilities is a registered non-profit charitable organization dedicated to children and youth with special needs.

The Alberta AdaptAbilities Association board meets monthly. If you are interested in contributing to their efforts, please contact the main office.

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Welcome

Director's Message

Thank you for your interest in the Alberta AdaptAbilities Association.

We are a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to providing a variety of programs where children with special needs can grow, succeed and belong.

Our whole focus is on each individual child/youth. We are passionate about helping each child/youth develop abilities, achieve success and create a positive self-image through a structured learning environment.

For almost a decade AdaptAbilities has offered comprehensive programs that adapt to your child/youth's unique needs so they can grow socially, physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Through our goal-directed approach, each program is designed to enhance your child/youth's recreation and motor skills, essential life skills and creativity.

The key to much of the participant's success in our programs is that we work in small group settings.

Whether you are a parent/guardian needing regular respite, someone wanting sporadic care to give you a chance to run errands and/or have coffee with a friend, or an individual looking for an opportunity for your child/youth to meet new friends and work on individual skills, we welcome you to our centre.

We hope that you find your time with our organization a happy and rewarding experience as we strive to create success for life for your child/youth.

This handbook will provide detailed information about the our new Home Respite Centres, Out of School Care program, Hearts in Action day camps, Teen Nights and Specialized Programs. All of these care programs provide an opportunity for your child/youth to continue to benefit from programming after the school day.

Join hundreds of Edmonton area families who have participated in a variety of our programs and help your child/youth create success – for life!

Sincerely,



Michelle Hordal, B.P.E., P.D.A.D.
Executive Director

Parent Handbook

This parent handbook has been created to assist parents/guardians in understanding our entire organization, the programs we offer and the expectations we have for you and your child/youth and/or youth. **Please review our expectations for Personal Conduct with your child/youth prior to commencing with our programs and on a regular basis thereafter.** This handbook is provided to parents/guardians during the intake process and pertains to general information for all Alberta AdaptAbilities Association's programs.

Note: Additional shorter information packages may be provided specific to the program in which your child/youth is registered.

Program Packages

1. School Year – September to August

Alberta AdaptAbilities Association has two separate packages that accompany this parent handbook:

Centre Respite Fees and Billing Information Package

Centre Respite Registration Package.

2. Summer Holidays – July to August

During Summer holidays, Alberta AdaptAbilities Association runs Hearts In Action Summer Camps and also has separate information packages.

Hearts In Action Fees and Billing Information Package

Hearts In Action Registration Package.

*Note: If your child/youth is participating in both School Year and Summer Holiday programs, both program registration packages must be completed and note there may be different fees and billing structures.

A: Overview

1. Introduction

Alberta AdaptAbilities Association provides one of a kind programs, adapting every day experiences to allow children and youth with special needs to reach their full potential. Through our goal-directed respite care programs, out of school care, Teen nights and Hearts In Action camps, participants learn and grow in a caring and developmentally appropriate setting.

2. Mission and Vision

Alberta AdaptAbilities Association provides families with goal directed respite programs and services that target the development of the whole individual.

Individuals with special needs grow, succeed, and belong.

3. Background

Due to the increased demand by families for out of school care, the founder envisioned a respite centre where multiple participants can engage in purposeful activities with their peers enhancing each participants respite experience.

In October of 2004, the Out of School Care Program was our first project as a non-profit charitable organization, making our program the first of its kind. In the City of Edmonton, there was no known after school care facility for individuals over the age of 12 with special needs. Two years later, the decision was made to move the centre into the founder's family home. The organization retains this facility as our McKernan Centre and Head Office. It turned out to be a wonderful outcome and a unique centre providing respite programs and services in a home environment.

September 2007 a second respite home was opened in Meadowlark to provide an alternate location more convenient for west end families. Our Respite Centres are now offering Drop In Respite evenings and weekends for children and youth of all ages, morning and afternoon respite for children not in school and evening teen night programs.

Our successful Hearts In Action camps are located off site to accommodate a larger numbers of participants and have been in operation since the year 2002.

Our belief is that "everyone can succeed" when they participate in an environment that is established with the success of the participants in mind. We want to provide children with special needs a place where they can learn and grow within an environment that is developmentally and age appropriate.

4. Goals and Objectives

- a. Clients are provided a safe and caring environment.
- b. Clients receive high quality care that is stimulating and intrinsically satisfying, through goal directed activities.

- c. Families are positively impacted by enhanced respite programs and services, throughout every interaction with AdaptAbilities.

5. Statement of Principles

We Believe

- a. Every person, regardless of the nature or severity of his/her disability, has the right to:
 - i. Access services in his/her community,
 - ii. Dignity and respect,
 - iii. Goal directed skill development to meet individual needs, and
 - iv. Experience healthy relationships, increase independence and build community capacity.
- b. The best available strategies, technologies and environmental interventions should be used to maximize an Individual's success and development of a positive self-image.
- c. Our environment should be designed to create a successful experience by adapting equipment, layout and expectations in order to accommodate the varying needs of every Individual.
- d. Our responsibility is to advocate with and for persons with special needs and to educate and increase awareness in the community about each Individual's strengths and abilities.
- e. Our services should be flexible and responsive to the individual needs of all families, respectful of the ethnic, cultural and geographical differences of families and individualized to respond to each family's changing needs.
- f. Our services should support the clients' ability to make positive choices and increase their decision making skills.
- g. We should retain the quality, individuality and flexibility of these services as we expand or change our services.
- h. Family participation is essential in the process of Creating Success – For Life!

6. Quality Improvement /Evaluation

Alberta AdaptAbilities Association continually assesses the quality of the services we provide and has improvement strategies in place that will ensure services are meeting the needs of the family and comply with professional standards of practice. The services that AdaptAbilities provides have an ongoing, systematic evaluation plan that considers the family and their child/youth in various environments as well as program objectives and actual outcomes.

B: Description of Services

1. Drop In Respite Centres - McKernan and Meadowlark

Our new McKernan Respite Centre provides participants and their families the opportunity to receive high-quality care when parents/guardians need to run errands, take a break or go to an appointment. Our knowledgeable relief care specialists give families peace of mind knowing their child/youth is having fun and participating in specialized activities. Respite available 7 days a week.

2. Out of School Care

AdaptAbilities' Out of School Care offers a number of structured activities in a safe and supportive environment. Each day clients have the opportunity to do homework, play games, and keep active. Through planned activities participants continue to have fun and meet new friends.

3. Hearts In Action Camps

Hearts In Action is a unique day camp that provides enjoyable, goal-directed activities during the summer, school holidays and professional development days. The small group settings foster the growth of the whole child/youth - socially, physically, mentally and emotionally. Hearts In Action is much like a typical school day and participants rotate through the three components within their designated age group.

4. Teen Nights

Each week we offer youth the chance to hang out and meet new friends. Teens plan a variety of recreational activities and our relief care specialists guide participants in making appropriate and fun choices. The aim is to improve teen's decision making skills, independence and increase their participation in the community.

5. Specialized Programs

AdaptAbilities' recognizes the need for specialized programs that aim to develop fine and gross motor skills and/or speech language development. Our programs offer a unique and cost effective opportunity to receive therapy from a registered therapist in a small group setting and/or respite opportunity led by students studying in a rehabilitation field.

C: Program Components

Each of our unique programs adapts every day experiences to allow participants to reach their full potential. Everyone can succeed when they participate in an encouraging atmosphere with the needs and goals of the individual in mind.

Our programs are designed to enhance each individual's recreation and motor skills, life skills and creative talents. Participants and their families choose goals to be accomplished and we work toward achieving those goals throughout the duration of the program.

Activities are presented in a positive, structured learning environment and may be adapted to help each participant succeed.

1. Recreation and Motor Development

All AdaptAbilities' programs focus on creating healthy and active lifestyles while having fun through a wide variety of adapted leisure activities. Participants also have the opportunity to refine their movement, increase their confidence and achieve new skills.

2. Essential Life Skills

At AdaptAbilities, our programs enhance the life skills of clients with special needs. We aim to increase participants' independence at home and in the community. By working together through role-playing, cooperative games, and critical thinking exercises, participants are better able to succeed in real life situations.

3. Expressive Arts

Another vital piece in a child/youth's development is their ability to express themselves. All AdaptAbilities' programs expand a child/youth's imagination and creative talents. Participants take pride in working with friends to complete projects designed to encourage their senses through music, arts, crafts and theatre sports.

D: Hours of Operation

Note: Parents/Guardians can request additional hours, evenings, and days outside set times but we can not guarantee that your request will be accommodated.

1. Drop In Respite Centres

McKernan and Meadowlark Centres:
2:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Friday, and
9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Saturday

*Note: Includes: last two weeks of August. Hours outside of the above may be accommodated based on staff availability.

2. Out of School Care

2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Monday to Friday

*Note: Includes: Days during the academic year where schools are closed to the students i.e.: PD days, exams, etc. Care beginning at 7:00 a.m. and ending at 6:00 p.m. may be accommodated on days parents/guardians require work related care.

3. Hearts In Action Day Camps

*9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Winter Camp, Teacher's Convention, Spring Break and Summer

*Note: Before and after care beginning at 7:00 a.m. and ending at 6:00 p.m. may be accommodated on days parents/guardians require work related care.

4. Teen Night:

One evening per week from 6:00 p.m - 9:00 p.m.

5. Specialized Programs

Varies throughout the year; based on therapist availability and student placements.

E: ACCESS AND ELIGIBILITY FOR PROGRAMING

1. Intake Procedure

All new clients of AdaptAbilities are required to pay a one-time non refundable intake fee. This fee covers the intake process, information gathering, family orientation, file set-up and maintenance.

All new clients are required to attend a pre-placement visit where parents/guardians will meet the staff, tour the facility and bring a completed registration form that must be filled out prior to orientation.

The client is officially registered and can partake in programs when:

- registration forms are completed
- payment for intake fee has been received
- contract is signed
- copy of client funding contract on file
- Signed Consent for Release of Information form (FOIPP)

The contract with AdaptAbilities will remain active until a parent/guardian decides to terminate services. One month written notice must be given when terminating services. Families are welcome to utilize other service providers in addition to AdaptAbilities for their respite needs.

2. Referrals

Referrals are mainly directed from Social Workers; however, many come from satisfied clients, doctors and other professionals in community agencies.

3. Advocacy / Family Needs

Alberta AdaptAbilities Association supports and recognizes the need for individualized program services for a child/youth with special needs and their family. In recognizing individuals with special needs, we strive to assist families in their quest to find and access the services they require.

In addition, AdaptAbilities strives to meet the full range of a family's need for flexibility.

4. Funding and Eligibility

We provide services to clients aged infant to young adulthood who have language and learning delays, disorders and or physical and developmental delays.

AdaptAbilities' coordinates the access to services by working with the family and a community funding agency. Planning and funding of services can, in some cases, be modified to meet service and budget allocations provided by another individual and/or agency.

Various funding budgets can include but are not limited to hourly respite, work-related care and camp. Once funding has been determined with clients, the eligibility for service is based on the requests of the family, with particular attention given to the special needs of the child/youth.

Parents can purchase services privately.

5. Client Complaints, Grievances and Appeals

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that complaints, grievances and appeals are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner, as well as to ensure that families are aware of their rights in this area. The policy describes the route families may take to address any concern they may have with service delivery.

Process for Complaints, Grievances and Appeals:

1. Parent/guardian may complete and return a Complaints, Grievance and Appeal form which can be obtained at the main office.
2. AdaptAbilities investigates all allegations of family and child/youth rights violations and complaints or grievances relating to its service delivery.
3. AdaptAbilities will meet with the parent/guardian to address the concerns and create an action plan that fulfills the needs of parent/guardian, client and organization.

F: Facilities

1. McKernan & Meadowlark Respite Homes

Alberta AdaptAbilities Association is privileged to have use of residential homes for our respite programs. This is a unique setting where parents/guardians who are not able to find quality respite in their own home have the next best thing – a home away from home.

2. McKernan School

We are fortunate to have a strong relationship with the McKernan Elementary-Junior High School. This enables us to increase the number of participants in our day programs and provides us with the opportunity to provide a greater range of activities.

3. Commitment to Excellence

We work hard at keeping the facilities in the same, if not better, condition than we found them. Our conduct and the conduct of our participants is a reflection of our programs and organization's commitment to excellence. Thank you for understanding our pursuit to respect the facilities and the people who allow us to utilize their facilities.

G: Staffing, Practicum Students and Volunteers

At AdaptAbilities we match the education and/or life experiences of our employees with the needs of the child/youth to provide quality programs. We recruit staff in fields such as education, physical education, occupation therapy, speech language pathology, disability studies, early childhood development, physical therapy, mental health, nursing, child and youth care, and special needs educational assistant etc.

Through the year AdaptAbilities provides practicum placements to post secondary students studying in a related field and utilizes volunteers to enrich our programs.

The staff, practicum students and volunteers at AdaptAbilities are referred to as Relief Care Specialists (RCS).

Individual client rights are important and all staff and volunteers must sign a Statement of Confidentiality and adhere to AdaptAbilities' Code of Honour.

Staff and volunteers are required to have a Criminal Record Check, an Intervention Record Check and obtain First Aid and CPR training. Once a year, AdaptAbilities offers Non-Violent Crisis Intervention and Risk Management training.

AdaptAbilities respite programs and camps operate in a group setting with ratios varying from 1:1 to 1:5 staff to client ratio.

The Centre Coordinator, Program Manager, and Executive Director oversee the programming.

H: Respite Service Request

1. Booking and Confirming a Request

Parents/guardians request for respite must be submitted by the 15th of each month for the following month to ensure staff availability. The Program Coordinator will confirm all requests with the parent/guardian. AdaptAbilities will make every effort to accommodate all requests pending staff availability.

When a parent/guardian books a shift, it is important to specify as close as possible to the correct arrival time. Often parents/guardians provide a time for drop off ranging from 9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. We will confirm with the parent/guardian only one time (ie. 9:00 a.m.) to ensure a staff member is scheduled and available when a child/youth is dropped off.

2. Timesheets

Parents/guardians are required to sign a yellow timesheet at the beginning of each month. This confirms the hours requested by a parent/guardian match the confirmed booking completed by administration.

Invoices are processed on a monthly basis and parents/guardians will be given a copy after each month end.

I: What to Bring

1. Meals and Snacks

Individuals participating in full day programs and/or hourly respite if booked during a meal time are to bring a bag lunch daily. No food or drink purchases will be permitted during this time unless planned as a part of programming. Microwave, hot water, etc. is only available at our respite homes and not during camps.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for providing their child/youth nutritional meals and snacks for the duration of the booking request due to allergies and special diet requirements.

We do provide during certain programs an essential life skills component where individuals participate in the preparation and enjoyment of a cooking activity. Do not count on this as your child/youth's nourishment for the day. In most programs, a light snack and refreshment are provided as covered through parent/guardian program fees.

It is essential that each participant bring a water bottle/drink container to help maintain adequate hydration.

2. Allergies and Special Dietary Requirements

Parents/Guardians are required to inform AdaptAbilities of any specialized dietary requirements or allergies your child/youth may have. For the safety of all the participants in the program, **no nuts or nut products are allowed at AdaptAbilities' programs.** The restriction also applies to products that may contain trace amounts of peanuts or nut residue.

3. Clothing

Participants should be dressed in clothes that are appropriate for physical activity and the weather. Participants must come with a pair of running shoes in order to participate in recreational activities. We ask that each participant have an extra set of clothing in their backpack just in case they get wet, soiled or excessively dirty. Please note we do not have extra clothing available at our Centres and due to limited space, we are not able to store an extra set of clothes for each child/youth that participates in our program.

*Note: If your child/youth is in need of a change of clothes and none has been provided, a phone call to parent/guardian will be made to drop off a clean set of clothes and/or pick up your child/youth.

Participants should wear "old" or "play" clothes. We use non-toxic, washable paints and materials in most circumstances however the odd art activity may require materials that do not wash out and clothing can become stained.

Your child/youth must bring a labeled backpack with contents clearly labeled including an extra set of clothing.

4. Personal Care

If your child/youth wears diapers or disposable training pants or requires feminine hygiene products, please send diapers, wipes, and appropriate feminine hygiene products in your child/youth's backpack. We do not provide these items.

5. Label

Label all of your child/youth's belongings with his/her first name (and last name initial, if necessary). In order to prevent lost or misplaced items, it is vital that everything be labeled: bags, drink container, lunch box, swimming suit, towel, extra clothes, etc.

Although our staff and volunteers will do our best to ensure your child/youth goes home with everything they came with, we suggest that you check to ensure everything has been placed in your child/youth's bag prior to leaving. AdaptAbilities assumes no responsibility for loss or damage to your child/youth's personal property.

6. Toys or Electronic Devices

We discourage participants from bringing toys or electronic devices from home as they often get lost or broken. AdaptAbilities assumes no responsibility for loss or damage to your child/youth's personal property.

7. Leisure Access Pass

To reduce field trip costs for community based activities we encourage parents/guardians to send their leisure access passes with their child/youth.

J: Program Details

1. Accessibility in the Community

Alberta AdaptAbilities Association operates within the communities of the families it serves. Participation in community programs is a priority and accessibility is researched prior to the implementation of all programs and activities.

2. Arrival and Departure

Parents/Guardians can drop-off and pick-up their child/youth five (5) minutes before and after programming/scheduled respite without cost.

Parents/Guardians who drop off earlier than scheduled can be accommodated only if a staff member is available. Do not rely on chance. Please arrive at the correct time or call to confirm a staff member is available and ratios are acceptable to accommodate an early arrival.

Drop off times for specific programs like Teen Night and Hearts In Action cannot happen after a scheduled start time. Due to programmed activities we are not able to stagger drop off times later than the start of the program.

3. Before and After Care

Parents/guardians can choose to arrange before and after care supervision for all programs at an additional hourly fee. Our program does not offer care before 7:00 AM. Day programs do not offer care after 6:00 PM.

4. Late Pick Up Policy

Please be advised, parent/guardian who are late picking up their child/youth the funding agency will be billed at 15 minute increments.

A parent/guardian will be billed all cost share relating to each 15 minute increment and a flat late fee.

5. Sign In/Out Procedures

In order to ensure your child/youth's protection and safety we ask that you drop off your child/youth at the designated doors where a staff will meet you. Every parent/guardian **MUST** sign their child/youth in and out of their program on the sign in/out form to account for safety and hours of attendance.

6. Daily Schedule

At AdaptAbilities, a daily "schedule" is followed. Whether it is a day camp or scheduled respite, there is a plan for the time we will be spending with your child/youth. As outlined early in this parent handbook, we focus on planning activities around our three components; Recreation and Motor Development, Essential Life Skills and Expressive Arts.

7. Washroom Policy

While in our respite centres, clients (if able) may go to the washroom independently. When away from the Centres, all clients will be accompanied to the washroom.

If your child/youth needs prompting to flush toilet and/or wash hands or requires assistance in wiping or full personal care, parents/guardians must specify details of a child/youth's routine in the registration form. It is always good practice to pass on the information in person to the staff on shift when you drop off your child/youth.

If a child/youth wears diapers, pull-ups, or is menstruating, parents/guardians are required to bring ample supplies. If possible, AdaptAbilities uses same sex staff to carry out toileting needs of child/youth however; it may not always be possible.

8. Additional Sibling Care

Families requiring child care for a sibling can book this care for an additional hourly however; we cannot guarantee this care unless ratios and staff levels are appropriate. A health care number and brief description of any specific care requirements must be on hand for any additional siblings receiving care.

K: Transportation

1. Field Trips

Edmonton Transit and/or an Edmonton contracted bus company will provide transportation for all off site field trips planned by Alberta AdaptAbilities Association.

2. Transportation Requests

Transportation to and from our programs is a parent/guardian responsibility however, in some cases, AdaptAbilities may be able to coordinate and/or provide transportation.

- a. There will be a charge to parents/guardians for transportation requests.
- b. All transportation requests must accompany the initial booking program request.
- c. Transportation will be confirmed once a staff has accepted the request or taxi service has been approved.
- d. There is no guarantee that transportation will be provided.
- e. Parents/guardians must be flexible in pick up and drop off times due to staff scheduling and taxi wait times.

Billing respite hours will begin at the time a child/youth is picked up from home and will end at the time of drop off at home.

3. Behaviour Guidelines and Expectations

The expectation for our client's personal conduct while receiving transportation to and from our programs and/or during field trips is the same as outlined in Personal Rights and Conduct while in attendance at our programs.

4. Transportation Delays or Cancellation

In the event AdaptAbilities is delayed in transporting a child/youth communication will occur immediately. In the event AdaptAbilities must cancel a transportation request due to unforeseen circumstances a parent/guardian is responsible for making alternate arrangements for their youth/child.

L: Health

1. Sick Child/Youth

Sick participants should be kept at home. Participants are too sick to attend AdaptAbilities if they have any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 38 degrees Celsius or higher
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- An obviously infected nasal discharge (thick or coloured, green or reddish brown)
- A persistent cough
- Persistent pain
- An undiagnosed rash or skin condition

If your child/youth has a cold, the following needs to be taken into consideration before your child/youth attends:

- Discharge from their nose must be clear and manageable in a group setting.
- Coughing and sneezing must have subsided.
- Would you want your child/youth to be exposed to another child/youth displaying early to middle stages of a cold?

If your child/youth is too ill to participate then he/she is too sick to attend. If you hesitate about sending your child/youth he/she is probably too ill to come. This way, all participants receive the benefit of the healthiest environment possible.

If your child/youth should become ill while at our program, staff will call you at the numbers listed on the emergency contact list to come and pick them up. The staff will make the decision to call you based on the best interests of both your child/youth and the other participants in the program. For this reason and for true emergencies, it is important that your phone numbers and the alternate emergency contact information be kept up to date.

2. Medication

Staff can administer medications as long as:

- a medication form has been completed by the parent/guardian which includes the name of child/youth, name of medicine, dosage, date/time(s) to be given, and instructions for administration; and
- medicine is in its original container with the original labelling.

Medication will remain locked in a lock box and if staff and clients are going to be off site, medication will be transferred to a portable medication backpack.

M: Emergencies

1. Emergency Information

Each client must fill out an application form upon entering our program and thereafter annually. This form including detailed health information must be completed before a client can be left at one of our centres/programs. Medical information, emergency numbers, allergies, medications, etc. are to be listed. If information changes during the year (ie. contact information, allergies diagnosed), please contact the office to update your child/youth's file.

2. Emergency Pick Up

Parents/guardians must be able to be reached and available to pick up their child/youth immediately at anytime during an AdaptAbilities' program due to emergency situations, sickness, or behaviours.

3. First Aid Policy

In the event your child/youth has had a minor accident while at AdaptAbilities, staff will comfort the child/youth and provide first aid treatment. Staff will advise a parent/guardian only if it is necessary to come and take your child/youth for professional medical treatment. Otherwise, staff will advise the parent/guardian at the end of the day.

4. Emergency Procedures

If your child/youth has an accident that requires immediate medical attention, an ambulance will be called. A staff person will go with the child/youth in the ambulance, taking the child/youth's medical information provided. Staff will contact you as soon as possible. Any expenses incurred for treatment, including ambulance fees, are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

5. Incident Report Form

Within 24 hours of an incident or accident taking place, the staff involved will complete an Incident Report Form. A parent/guardian will be asked to review and sign the report. A supervisor will also review the report and may call a parent/guardian to follow-up. After a supervisor signs the report, it will be placed in the child's/youths file.

N: Rights of Adult Individuals Receiving Service

The following rights are specific to Individuals who are eighteen years of age or older as they have reached the legal age of majority and should be treated in kind.

As an adult with special needs and as a client of AdaptAbilities, I have the right to:

1. Be treated as an adult
 - Have freedom to pursue my own interests
 - Choose my own goals
 - Choose my friends
 - Make mistakes
2. Be treated fairly and with dignity and respect
 - Be treated equally and consistently by staff
 - Not be labelled
3. Access the laws that protect me
 - Not to be discriminated against because of gender, the country my family comes from, my skin colour, my beliefs, my friends, or my disability.
 - Have the same rights as everyone else
 - Access legal help or advice
4. Make informed choices
 - Make decisions based on my feelings, beliefs and what is important to me
 - Takes risks once I know what might happen
 - Change my mind
 - Decide what I do with my own things
 - Get help from staff or parents/guardians with making decisions
5. Feel safe and protected
 - Learn to take care of myself
 - Feel safe when I use services
 - Feel safe out in the community
 - Not be threatened, ridiculed, hurt, attacked or have my things taken from me
6. Speak for myself and be heard
 - Speak my mind and give my opinion
 - Show my feelings
 - Make complaints if I am not happy
 - Say 'no'
 - Disagree with people
 - Have people try to understand me
 - Have people listen when I talk
7. To Privacy
 - Privacy of my personal space and belonging
 - Have people get my OK before they go into my belongings
 - Use the phone without someone listening to what I am saying
 - In the bathroom (unless assistance is requested/required)
 - Sexuality
8. To give or withhold consent
 - Be able to ask questions if I need to know more

- Accept or turn down a service
 - Direct my guardian in a desirable direction
 - Have decisions respected
 - Give my consent without fear of peer pressure, retaliation, or loss or change of services.
9. Freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression
- Express thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and opinions
 - Speak freely without censorship
 - Protest
 - Have my feelings and emotions recognized and valued
10. Freedom of association and movement
- Free range of bodily motion
 - Choose who I want to spend time with
11. Access to all public and generic services
- Public services and facilities (e.g. library)
 - Services in my community
 - Adaptive equipment and technology to enable me to be successful.
 - Equal and full community participation
12. Quality service that is fair and equitable
- Appeal any change or removal of services
 - Have service providers I can count on
 - Access programming that meets my individual needs
 - Make a complaint or lodge a grievance when I think I am being treated unfairly or my rights are not protected
13. Obtain support and advocacy
- Have support that helps me grow succeed and belong
 - Get a referral to information or a professional that can support me
 - Know that my service provider advocates for me in the community.
14. To have the least restrictive methods of intervention
- be told or cued, not forced
 - Experience natural consequences when safety and security is not compromised
 - Have alternate choices to my behaviour
 - Give informed consent before any approaches, positive or restrictive, to my anticipated behaviours
15. Own and enjoy personal property and belongings
- Purchase Items of choice
 - Access my belongings at any time
 - Enjoy my belongings
 - Dispose of personal property
 - Choose with whom to share personal belongings.
16. Engage in healthy relationships
- Have friends
 - Date
 - Get married
 - Have children
17. Exercise my rights as a citizen
- Vote

- Obtain a license
- Hold membership in an organization
- Hold office
- Exercise treaty rights

Adapted in part from the Charter of Rights drawn up by Individuals with developmental disabilities at the 1994 *Open Doors* conference (VRRRI) and the *Rights of Individuals Receiving Service – South Region Document* (ARRC).

O: Informed Consent

The following informed consent guidelines are specific to Individuals who are eighteen years of age or older as they have reached the legal age of majority and should be treated in kind.

AdaptAbilities believes that you have the right to make your own decisions about your life and daily matters. At times making a decision involves giving your informed consent.

Staff will explain and demonstrate all options and choices in order to assist Individuals in making good, informed decisions to any activity or aspect of programming.

1. Informal Consent

Informed consent is not always given in a written form. Informed consent is a daily process that gives Individuals autonomy and protects their individual rights. For example an Individual should be informed of and be able to give their verbal/ physical consent to any activities planned within a program.

Gaining an Individual's views and desires can require staff to use creative ways of providing information and alternative means for them to express their thoughts. Informed consent should be a component of every program plan.

Staff can use the following to assist Individuals with making informed decisions:

- Inform Individuals about their options and the implications (risks, benefits) of each option in a simple manner that is easily understood.
- To ensure understanding, ask the Individual to repeat the options in their own words.
- Look for signs that the Individual is agreeing out of fear or perceived social pressure and take action to amend the situation.
- Support the Individual to uphold their rights and express their autonomy.
- Ensure that they understand that it is O.K. to say 'no'.
- Give the Individual time to consider their options and give or deny consent.

2. Formal Consent

In many cases, written consent is required.

- Program registration forms have numerous waivers that must be signed before an Individual may attend our programs;
- Photo disclosure, audio-visual material and advertising purposes;
- Personal information;
- and/or assessments.

Individuals and their parents/guardians should be involved in the consent process in proportion to the Individual's competence to weigh the risks and benefits.

AdaptAbilities understands that Individuals may need additional time to process information prior to giving consent.

If the Individual's parent or guardian is giving consent, the Individual should also indicate in some manner that they do not object to the activity or process.

P: Abuse Prevention and Response Protocol

The Abuse Prevention and Response Protocol is a PDD Provincial policy that addresses both the prevention of abuse and the response to any form of mistreatment toward an individual supported by PDD (Persons with Developmental Disabilities).

The purpose of the protocol is to provide a policy framework that identifies processes and accountability measures related to abuse prevention and response. Everyone has a role and through a focus on education and corrective action together we can make a difference.

AdaptAbilities has mandated that this protocol be used for all individuals using our services. The protocol is divided into three sections:

1. Context for Addressing Abuse

The approach to addressing abuse is founded on a strong value base of citizenship and self-determination.

2. Focus on Prevention

Focus on prevention supports inclusion and the belief in the capacity of communities to include individuals with developmental disabilities. The inherent vulnerabilities of individuals with developmental disabilities are addressed along with strategies for reducing risks.

3. Reporting and Response Considerations

AdaptAbilities will share the ethical responsibility to take reasonable action to reduce the risk of mistreatment and will follow the protocol identifying what needs to be reported, when and to whom.

Q: Procedures Supporting Challenging Behaviours

AdaptAbilities is aware that some individuals can experience challenging behaviours as a means of coping with their environment and/or stress. Some challenging behaviours can pose as a hazard to the individual's safety, safety of others around and/or property. Some other challenging behaviors can impinge on the individual's rights and quality of their life. At the same time they can affect the rights and quality of life of others around.

Whenever a person places themselves or others at risk of immediate physical harm or engages in significantly inappropriate, socially unacceptable, illegal or socially risky behaviour that may limit their ability to safely participate in the community or engages in actions that may cause significant property damage.

Adaptabilities identifies that challenging behaviours do not occur without a reason and can be:

- triggered and maintained by something in the person's environment.
- a way of the person communicating their wishes and/or unmet needs.
- an expression of frustration due to lack of certain skills, ineffective communication etc.
- the only way the person knows of how to deal with the situation (ex. feeling crowded and pushing people to create space etc).
- a side effect from the medication taken of mental or physiological origin.

Adaptabilities does not promote the uses of Restrictive Procedures, as we first concentrate on the use of planned positive approaches, logical and natural consequences based on positive reinforcement, respect and dignity. However, if the person's behavior:

- meets the criteria of a challenging behavior and,
- does not cease after the use of natural and logical consequences, and positive approaches,

behavioral support to help the person manage their challenging behavior will be considered and developed.

AdaptAbilities permits the use of restrictive procedures as means of:

- **Crisis intervention:** where the person's challenging behaviour poses a threat to their immediate safety, the immediate safety of others around and/or the property.
- **Planned approach:** a last resort, where the person's challenging behavior is significantly inappropriate, socially unacceptable, illegal or socially risky and impedes on their ability to safely participate in the community as well as impinging on their quality of life.

The use of any restrictive procedures by staff must be carried out as a last resort. Any Restrictive Procedure must not be derogatory or harmful to the person's health and well being. All staff will use the least restrictive, unobtrusive procedures to reduce the behavior and risks associated with it.

All staff are strictly forbidden from using Corporal Punishment and Prohibited Procedures under any circumstances. It is abusive, cruel, illegal and inappropriate as per PPC Act and PDD Abuse Protocol. Any employee that does not abide by this rule will be immediately terminated and prosecuted accordingly.

Prohibited Procedures include:

- Forced hand over hand guidance: applying physical force to make someone complete a task against their will: forcing to eat etc;
- Locked confinement: physically locking someone in a room as a result of behavior;
- Corporal Punishment: any action meant to humiliate, exploit, infringe on person's human and legal rights (not providing necessities of life) or pose as a hazard to their health and safety;
- Use of mechanical restraints: handcuffs, straight jackets, tying someone up;
- Use of any mechanical restraints for other than safety reasons;
- Body searches: patting someone down, physically searching the person;
- Extended Isolation;
- Any action which purposely causes pain;
- Food deprivation; and/or
- Presentation of noxious substances.

1. Restrictive Procedures

Restrictive procedures are **only used when required for the protection of the client, employee or any bystander that has been physically threatened.** Any action or physical or chemical restraint that limits the rights or freedom of an individual is a restrictive procedure.

Restrictive procedures are defined as any action in response to a situation or behaviour of concern that:

- restricts a client's rights, freedoms and choices;
- restrains a client's normal range of movement;
- involves the use of medication, such as PRN or ongoing sedation – medication that is used to address a client's behaviour which is not required to treat the client's medical or psychiatric diagnosis; and/or,
- limits a client's access to events, relationships, privileges or objects that would normally be available to them.

Restrictive procedures should be implemented as a component of a positive procedure and only in high risk cases should a planned restrictive procedure stand alone.

2. Planned Restrictive Procedures

This is defined as predictable and foreseeable behaviour, events or situations. In situations where positive procedures alone have not adequately addressed an individual's behaviour or interim safety concerns must be addressed, restrictive procedures, which may include verbal or physical interventions, or consequences for behaviour, may be considered as part of a planned response.

Where the use of restrictive procedures is permitted, it is essential that staff be trained before being expected to carry out the intervention. Training includes instruction pertaining to the implementation of the intervention and documentation requirements.

During the development process the following must be considered

- Will any of the individual's rights be limited by the procedure?

- What are the risks associated with the intervention?
- Do the staff have the proper training to carry out the procedure? If not can they be provided with the proper training?
- Are planned positive procedures included in the plan in order to develop appropriate behaviour?
- Are restrictive procedures limited and only used when absolutely necessary.

The following documents should be considered when developing the plan

- Client profile
- Medical history
- Service Plans and/or IPP
- Incident reports
- Contact Notes

3. Review Process

AdaptAbilities promotes a review process for the requirement, development, amendment and implementation of positive and restrictive procedures. The review process helps to protect client rights, ensure that ethical and professional interventions are employed and support staff in their efforts to provide quality service.

The Review of planned restrictive procedures takes place after 3 months and 6 months. Three main areas are evaluated:

- Impact
- Effectiveness
- Implementation

Three courses of action are considered:

- Continue
- Discontinue
- Change

The Review Process for Restrictive Procedures involves the Executive Director and Program Coordinator to carry out the following:

- monitor the use of interventions;
- review the appropriateness of specific interventions and recommend alternatives;
- provide or deny authorization for the use of restrictive procedures, including previously approved procedures that have been amended;
- ensure the approved interventions are documented and available to staff; and,
- identify needs as they relate to behavioural interventions, i.e. training and resources.

Restrictive procedures should also be reviewed for their effectiveness, and whether or not they should be continued, or changed.

R: Personal Rights and Conduct

Please review this section with your child/youth prior to attending any AdaptAbilities' program. Staff are familiar with the rights and responsibilities of both staff and clients.

1. Rights and Responsibilities

- a. Participants and staff shall treat other participants and staff with dignity, respect, and fairness.
- b. Participants shall be provided with an environment that is free from physical, emotional, and social abuse.
- c. Participants and parents/guardians shall be informed of the program expectations for participant behaviour within the program, the program grounds, and during program activities.
- d. Participants shall exercise their responsibilities to:
 - Use their abilities and talents to gain maximum benefits from their program experiences;
 - Contribute to a climate of mutual trust and respect conducive to effective learning, personal development, and social living; and
 - Attend programs regularly and punctually.
- e. In the event of participant misbehavior, participants and parents shall have the right to offer an explanation, and will be informed of consequences of misbehavior.
- f. Appropriate opportunities for participant consultation and involvement in participant related matters shall be provided.

2. Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination

Harassment, bullying or discrimination will not be tolerated in any form. As per the *Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act*, all individuals have the right to be free from discrimination based on race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, ancestry, place or origin, family status, source of income, family status, source of income and sexual orientation.

3. Complaint Policy

If you have a complaint regarding harassment, bullying, discrimination, or the general conduct of a person involved in our programs (staff or client) please inform the Program Coordinator or the Executive Director and complete and return a Complaints, Grievance and Appeal form.

4. Participant Behaviour and Conduct

Alberta AdaptAbilities Association supports the endeavours of staff, participants, parents/guardians, and the community to ensure positive participant behaviour and conduct. Participants must behave in a manner that does not compromise the safety of oneself and/or others. In addition, parents/guardians and participants must recognize their responsibility in developing participant self-discipline.

- a. Accountability

Participants shall be responsible and accountable for their behaviour and conduct. Participants will show respect for:

- Program property, rules and regulation;
- Ethnic, racial, religious and gender differences of staff and other camp participants

b. Parental Role

Parents/guardians play a vital role in developing participant behavior and conduct. It is expected that parents/guardians:

- Will be called and asked to pick up their child/youth if behavior is destructive and beyond the capabilities of staff interventions. Behaviours of this nature include, but are not limited to, hurting themselves or other participants and staff, destruction of property and severe defiance.
- Work with the program to resolve participant behavioural issues when they affect their child/youth; and
- Co-operate with the Alberta AdaptAbilities Association recommended course of action prior to re-admission of the participant following a participant suspension.

c. Consequences

Failure to meet the expectations for behaviour and conduct shall result in some or all of the following consequences:

- Problem solving, monitoring or reviewing behaviour expectations with participant and reprimand;
- Parental involvement;
- Behaviour contract with participant;
- Suspension;
- Expulsion from a program and/or all Alberta AdaptAbilities Association programs for severe behaviours or activities; and,
- Involvement of police if warranted (carried out as a last resort).

5. Suspension

a. One Day Suspension

A participant who displays an extreme behavior will be given a one day suspension from our program and parents/guardians may be asked to pick up participant early. The one day suspension is done as a cooling off period and allows both the participant and staff to reflect on the incident and better prepare for a successful return. The supervisor will discuss the behavior and its circumstances with a parent/guardian immediately.

b. Multiple Suspension

A participant who continues to display extreme behavior may be given a longer suspension from our program. This is done to accommodate the time required to meet with the parents/guardians, liaison with social worker, and develop a behavior contract and/or Support and Safety Plan for participant.

6. Alleged Criminal Conduct

Any behaviour that results in spitting, assault, and/or attempting to destroy property is considered a criminal offence and results in an immediate suspension as explained above. In addition to the suspension:

- The parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up child/youth immediately;
- 911 may be called if staff or participant's safety is at risk;
- Police Witness Statement form will be completed by staff involved; and,
- Staff may choose to submit a Witness Statement form to the nearest police station.

7. Expulsion

In extreme cases where Alberta AdaptAbilities Association has exhausted every other remedy to manage the participants' behavior and conduct, we reserve the right to terminate services to any participant for a determined or undetermined amount of time.

Billing for a booked respite session will remain the same even if a participant is asked to leave the program due to severe behaviour.

S: Duty of Care

1. Child/youth in Need of Protection

All AdaptAbilities' employees are guided by the regulations for a child/youth in need of protection, as set out in The Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act, (2004).

2. Reporting Regulations

a. Duty to Report

Any person, who has reasonable and probable grounds to believe a child/youth is in need of protective services, is legally required to report the matter to an *Intervention Services* authority. The Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act (2004) prescribes penalties for those who fail to report such situations, and provides protection from legal action against a person making a report unless the reporting is done with malicious intent or without reasonable cause.

b. Reporting Procedures

An employee who suspects a child/youth is in need of protective services, shall seek advice as to whether or not the facts constitute reasonable and probable grounds for that belief. Advice may be obtained from a supervisor.

c. Responsibility for Investigations

The investigation of child/youth protection complaints is the responsibility of authorized *Intervention Services* workers from Ma'Mowe Child and Family Services Authority, who may, where appropriate, be assisted by the police. An employee should not assume this responsibility. AdaptAbilities employees should offer support to the child/youth, **but refrain from seeking further information to confirm suspicion or clarify disclosures.**

d. Facilitating Investigations at a Program

Intervention Services workers appointed under The Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act (2004) are empowered to enter programs, obtain information about participants and apprehend participants. All approaches by *Intervention Services* workers are to be referred to the Program Coordinator and/or Executive Director.

e. Post-Investigation Procedure

The Program Coordinator and/or Executive Director shall share information with employees on a 'need to know' basis and as relevant to the participant's continued need for program services.

f. Threats

If threats are made against program staff or the child/youth, a supervisor shall call the police.