

## Disability Concerns: January Update

By Sarah Chaudhery, Director of Disability Concerns



With a new year comes a fresh start and new resolutions. At Winning Kids Inc., we hope you will take a moment to consider the people in and around your programs and activities that have different abilities. Are you adequately prepared to provide service for people with special needs?

**As of January 1st 2012, the Accessibility for Ontarians with a Disabilities Act legally required all organizations, both public and private, that provide goods or services either directly to the public or to other organizations in Ontario (third parties) and that have one or more employees to provide accessible customer service to persons of all ability levels.**

Winning Kids® provides AODA training for your organization, and we can help you meet these requirements. As a member, you already have access to the training webinar, which can be found on the [Recorded Webinar page](#) of the member section of our website. Our on-line Plan to Protect® training also includes one module on Accessibility and working with individuals with Disabilities.

But what does it look like to practically include persons with disabilities? This year, we have just developed a form and an interview template to help you have this important conversation with parents and caregivers. Having an open and honest dialogue not only shows that you have the interests of these people at heart, but it will give you valuable insight on how to best support the person with a disability within the programs or activities your organization provides.

The [Information Form For Participants with Additional Needs](#) is designed to help parents/caregivers think through the information you may need to know to adequately support the participant within your program. It is intended that the parent/guardian fill out this form ahead of time, and return it to the program coordinator.

The [Interview Template for Participants with Additional Needs](#) is intended to be a guide for a follow-up interview with the parent/guardian to expand on the information they have provided. This is a great opportunity to set goals together to help the participant have the best experience possible in your program. Afterwards, we recommend condensing the information into a report that can be shared with other staff or volunteers within your program. This will help everyone to be on the same page. Furthermore, it will help you evaluate how well the strategies you are using are working.

Remember: open conversation is the beginning of creating a winning environment. At Winning Kids®, we look forward to supporting you in including all people in your programs and activities, regardless of ability. Wishing you all the best for a happy, healthy and safe 2014!