



Cambridge Policy Plan for Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities in Out-of-School Time Programs

The Coordinating Council for Children, Youth and Families (Cambridge Kids' Council) hereby presents the **Cambridge Policy Plan for Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities in Out-of-School Time Programs**.

Under this policy plan, the following definitions shall apply:

- An "individual with a disability" refers to an individual within the ages of 3 to 22 who has a disability which effects one or more major life activity as defined under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (504) or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and is eligible to receive special education services under federal and state law.
- "Inclusion" refers to supportive, safe and nurturing opportunities for individuals with disabilities and their families to participate within the same programs as their non-disabled peers in age and development.
- "Out-of-school time activities and/or programs" refers to any activity and/or program that provides recreation, enrichment, social and/or educational opportunities and services to children and their families that are generally not in operation during the regular school schedule.

Policy Statement

All out-of-school time activities and programs that are operated by or receiving funds from the City of Cambridge will include any qualified individual with a disability as defined by the above statutes with supports and reasonable accommodations in the same program as a non-disabled individual, in any program, at any program site, and at any time.

Guiding Principles

In order to ensure that all individuals, including individuals with disabilities, receive a high quality out-of-school time experience, access to all activities, and full participation in the community, this policy plan sets forth the following principles:

- Inclusion is a fundamental civil right.
- Cambridge is committed to compliance with the federal laws and regulations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- Providing a welcoming, supportive, safe and nurturing out-of-school time environment for individuals with

- disabilities shall be the responsibility of the City of Cambridge (City), Cambridge Department of Human Service Programs, Cambridge School Department and other pertinent City entities and departments, not just programs specifically designed to meet or serve individuals with disabilities.
- Individuals with disabilities are entitled to the same level of out-of-school time program choice and recreation options as their non-disabled peers.
- Provision of services will be determined by the individual needs of the program participant, not by the availability of programs or resources.
- Properly conceived and implemented, out-of-school time programs and recreation activities that are inclusive of individuals with disabilities can provide significant benefits to all program participants, staff, administrators and the community.
- The diversity of Cambridge youth voices shall be represented in the development and implementation of this policy plan.

Policy Rationale

1. While the City administers a general ADA/504 nondiscrimination policy which applies to out-of-school time activities and programs, there is no citywide policy on inclusion of individuals with disabilities in out-of-school time activities and programs.
2. The City is committed to providing equitable services and opportunities in out-of-school time activities and programs that exist citywide for inclusion of individuals with disabilities ages 3 to 22.
3. The City is committed to having a comprehensive, systematic professional development plan for administrators and staff to include individuals with disabilities in out-of-school time programs.
4. Parents of individuals with disabilities have a lack of comfort and/or understanding about the out-of-school time opportunities in the city for their children.
5. Coordination and collaboration between the Cambridge School Department, its Office of Special Education, and the out-of school time programs in the city need to be strengthened in order to achieve a seamless system of services to better address the total development of individuals with disabilities in our city.
6. Core competencies and standards need to be consistent and clearly defined throughout all the out-of-school time activities and programs in the city.

Action Step 1:

- 1.1 *The Cambridge Kids' Council will establish and recommend to the Cambridge City Council and Cambridge School Committee for adoption the Cambridge Policy Plan for Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities in Out-of-School Time Programs.*
- 1.2 *The Cambridge Kids' Council will contact all non-City out-school time programs located in Cambridge to request their voluntary participation in the Cambridge Policy Plan for Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities in Out-of-School Time Programs.*

Action Step 2:

- 2.1 *The City will systematically increase the capacity of all out-of-school time programs to be inclusive by providing training to program staff and actively recruiting individuals with disabilities for program participation in accordance to the below schedule:*
 - (a) *Within one year of the creation of this policy plan, a minimum of three program sites will achieve inclusion to serve each of the following age groups: ages 3 to 5, ages 6 to 8, and ages 9 to 13.*
 - (b) *Within one year of the creation of this policy plan, two inclusion programs serving the high school age group of 14 to 22 will be established.*
 - (c) *In each subsequent year, two or more additional program sites for each age group as referred in 2.1(a) and (b) of this policy will receive training until all program sites have received initial training on inclusion.*
- 2.2 *The Cambridge Kids' Council will monitor each program yearly with the assistance of a consultant with demonstrated expertise in the area of inclusion programming to assure implementation of this policy and assess program effectiveness for inclusion of individuals with disabilities.*

Action Step 3:

- 3.1 *The City will engage a non-City agency to assess program needs and to provide the training for staff and administrators to facilitate out-of-school time programs.*
- 3.2 *The City shall provide and require mandatory training on inclusion for all staff and administrators of out-of-school time programs at the time of their hiring and yearly thereafter.*

Action Step 4:

- 4.1 *The Cambridge Kids' Council will develop and implement a comprehensive public awareness plan to educate the community about this policy and the City's efforts on program development for inclusion. The plan will include, but not be limited to:*
 - (a) *Disseminating to all families with children residing in Cambridge announcements of this policy and about programs receiving training on inclusion.*
 - (b) *Holding parent information meetings with out-of-school time agencies to explain the implementation of, and receive comments on, this policy and to provide outreach through disability advocacy agencies that work directly with families.*

Action Step 5:

- 5.1 *The Cambridge School Department through its Office of Special Education will create a "profile" of out-of-school time accommodations for each individual with disabilities based on that student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The "profile" shall be developed in coordination with the yearly preparation of the student's IEP.*
- 5.2 *The City will engage a non-City agency with demonstrated expertise in the area of disabilities to provide training to staff and administrators of out-of-school time programs on use of the "profiles."*
- 5.3 *For program planning and development purposes, the Cambridge School Department and out-of-school time agencies shall jointly develop and institute interagency procedures for release and exchange of pertinent information on individuals with disabilities who are residents of Cambridge and participants in their programs, with the approval of their parents or legal guardians, in order to achieve effective program delivery for inclusion. The pertinent information should include the IEPs of the individuals with disabilities.*

Action Step 6:

- 6.1 *The City will engage a non-City agency with demonstrated expertise in the area of disabilities to define core competencies and standards for each out-of-school time program and program site.*
- 6.2 *The City will engage a non-City agency with demonstrated expertise in the area of disabilities to identify the appropriate training needed for the staff of the out-of-school time programs at each program site based on the type of disabilities of the program participants at that site. Specific training should be identified from a comprehensive set of trainings available to address the full range of disabilities relevant to the participants of the programs.*
- 6.3 *In order to assure a "natural proportion" of program participants who are individuals with disabilities at each program and program site, the Cambridge Department of Human Service Programs will collect and analyze the following:*
 - (a) *Number of program participants who are individuals with disabilities.*
 - (b) *Type of training for staff required at each program site.*
 - (c) *Physical and programmatic accessibility at each program site.*