

# **DCF Non-Discrimination & Disability Policy Notice**

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is committed to protecting the rights of parents and caregivers with disabilities under state and federal laws.

DCF does not discriminate against people with disabilities. In all our work with families, DCF will:

- Treat people with disabilities as individuals based on their abilities and needs;
- Communicate with people with disabilities in a way they understand; and
- Accommodate the needs of people with disabilities.

You can find the full [DCF Disability Policy](#) on DCF's [website](#) or ask for a copy from your social worker.

## **Does This Policy Apply To Me?**

Under the law, many things may be called a “disability” that you may not expect. Some disabilities you can see and some you cannot. Some examples of disabilities include:

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| • Learning Disabilities such as dyslexia or dysgraphia                               | • Sensory Disabilities such as hearing loss or low vision                               | • Mobility Disabilities such as those requiring use of a walker or cane                            |
| • Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) | • Mental Health Disabilities such as PTSD, major depression, or substance use disorders | • Some Medical Conditions such as cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, traumatic brain injury (TBI), or HIV |

There are many other disabilities not listed here. If you think you may have a disability and need some form of accommodation from DCF, you can discuss your needs with any of the people listed below.

## **What Are Accommodations & Communication Aids?**

A reasonable accommodation is a change in a policy or practice that DCF will make to help a person with a disability use its services. A communication aid or service is a method of communicating with people with certain disabilities (such as hearing, speech, or vision impairments).

These are examples of possible changes, aids, and services you can ask for if you have a disability:

- a sign language interpreter or CART services;
- written reminders of meetings or appointments;
- visual aids, like a calendar of upcoming visits, meetings, or your child's appointments;
- a parent aide or coach to provide you with hands-on training of parenting skills;
- changing how often, for how long, or where you have visits with your child so you can practice and show the parenting skills you have learned; and
- writing your action plan in shorter and simpler language you can understand.

There are many other changes, aids, and services you can request depending on your disability-related needs and the circumstances. Additional examples are provided in the [DCF Disability Policy](#).

## **How Do I Request an Accommodation or Communication Aid?**

If you think you might need a reasonable accommodation or communication aid due to a disability, you can talk to any of the following people:

- your DCF social worker, your social worker's supervisor, or your social worker's manager;
- the Regional Disability Liaison for the area where you live (see the DCF [website](#)); or
- the Statewide Disability Coordinator (see below).

Before making a request, you can talk to your attorney or advocate, if you have one. If you are not sure what you need, you can also ask for someone outside of DCF to assess what you might need.

DCF will review your request and let you know within 10 work days whether they can provide the accommodation. If the request can be resolved quickly, DCF will put it in place as soon as possible.

DCF may have questions for you or may need more information from you to find the best accommodation for your needs. If you have questions about this, you can speak to any of the people listed above. More information about this process is explained in the [DCF Disability Policy](#).

## **How Can I Make a Complaint Related to Disability?**

You may file a complaint with DCF if you have concerns about an accommodation request, or if you think DCF has discriminated against you or someone else because of a disability.

To file a complaint, you can contact any of the people listed above or you can call the [DCF Office of the Ombudsman](#) at (617) 748-2444. DCF will review your complaint and work with you to make sure you get the help you need.

DCF will not retaliate or take action against you if you ask for an accommodation or file a complaint. Retaliation is a violation of civil rights laws. If you believe that someone at DCF has retaliated against you because of your accommodation request or complaint, you can contact any of the people listed above.

## **Contact Information**

**Statewide Disability Coordinator**  
Julia Bell Andrus  
Office of General Counsel  
Department of Children and Families

**Mail:** 600 Washington Street, 6th Floor  
Boston, MA 02111  
**Email:** [DCF.Disability.Coordinator@mass.gov](mailto:DCF.Disability.Coordinator@mass.gov)  
**Tel:** (617) 748-2020

The Regional Disability Liaisons are listed on our [website](#). You can contact them all at (617) 748-2020 or [DCF.Disability.Coordinator@mass.gov](mailto:DCF.Disability.Coordinator@mass.gov). You do not need to know their name to reach them.

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, contact us at (617) 748-2020 by VRS or captioned telephone or through MassRelay by dialing 711.

If you reach our voicemail or send us an email, please tell us your name and the best way to reach you.