



Person(s) with a Disability Policy for Program Participants and Families

Applicable Audiences: All EDMO families and EDMO program participants

Policy Statement: EDMO is committed to fostering, cultivating and preserving a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging for individuals with a disability or disabilities, in alignment with EDMO's mission, DEIB Statement and Definitions, and core values.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, a person with a disability is defined as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Disabilities can vary widely and include, but are not limited to, intellectual or learning disabilities, autism, major depression or anxiety, mobility impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair, deafness, cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, bipolar disorder, missing or partially missing limbs, post-traumatic stress disorder, and obsessive compulsive disorder. At EDMO, we embrace, encourage, and support our employees and program participants with a disability or disabilities, ensuring they feel valued and included in our community.

Policy Objective: This policy strives to ensure inclusivity and belonging by providing all individuals with disabilities the opportunity to participate fully and authentically in our programs. We are committed to creating an accessible, supportive, and inclusive environment that accommodates the unique needs of each participant. This policy outlines EDMO's approach to fostering an adaptive and supportive environment that caters to the individual requirements of our participants, facilitating a collaborative partnership between EDMO staff and families to ensure a positive, inclusive experience for all program participants.

Policy Procedures and Guidelines:

1. **Creating an Inclusive Environment:** EDMO is committed to providing a safe, accessible, and supportive space for participants with disabilities. This includes:
 - **Confidentiality and Respect:** We prioritize maintaining confidentiality regarding any disclosed disabilities and ensuring all interactions are respectful and dignified.
 - **Adjustments and Accommodations:** Offering reasonable adjustments and accommodations to support the participation of individuals with disabilities, to the best of our abilities. The scope and nature of accommodations we can offer may vary by program location, depending on the resources and facilities available at each site. Therefore, we strongly encourage families of participants who require specific accommodations, to communicate with us well in advance of the program start date. This advanced communication allows us to coordinate effectively and explore all possible ways to support individuals with disabilities. It is an EDMO policy that any kid who has an

aide during the school day, has one provided during any EDMO programs. We will work with families and the school/district to find solutions when an aide is needed during after-school or summer programs.

- **Open Communication:** We encourage families to share any specific needs or accommodations required by program participants as early as possible to ensure a supportive and inclusive environment at our programs. This includes a participant who is accompanied by an aide at school, as we do request that the aide also be present during EDMO programs to provide consistent support. Early communication allows us to effectively coordinate and ensure all participants have a positive and inclusive experience..

2. **Accessibility and Adaptations:** Working to make our programs accessible and accommodating by:

- **Physical Accessibility:** Ensuring program sites are accessible for any program participant with mobility challenges, including those who use wheelchairs.
- **Inclusive Communication:** Using "People-First" language and ensuring that EDMO staff communicate directly with participants with disabilities, respecting their autonomy and preferences.
- **Adaptations to Program Content:** Modifying activities, where possible, to ensure full participation of all individuals while maintaining the integrity and objectives of the program.

3. **Awareness and Training:** All EDMO staff will receive training on disability awareness, inclusive practices, and how to effectively support participants with diverse needs. This includes:

- **Disability Etiquette:** Training staff to interact respectfully and effectively with participants with disabilities, including how to offer assistance appropriately.
- **Individualized Support:** Recognizing that accommodations and support need to be tailored to the individual, reflecting the diverse and multifaceted nature of our program participants.

4. **Feedback and Continuous Improvement:** EDMO values the feedback of participants and families to continually improve our programs and accommodations. We encourage open dialogue to better understand how we can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for everyone.