

# General Program Information

## What is the Program and Why is it Important?

Many people with disabilities require the assistance of a support person to help them with daily activities. Over the years, different ticketed venues have had varying policies on admission fees for someone acting as a support person. Often it ended up being left to an employee at the ticket counter to determine the validity of someone's disability, their need for an attendant, and the discount – if any.

Recreation and leisure activities are an important component of good health and well-being. Through education, businesses have begun to recognize that there are special needs for their customers with disabilities and that it's necessary to accommodate them in order to provide the best possible customer service. This makes a big difference to the community.

Not only does it make good business sense to provide quality service to customers with disabilities it's the law in Ontario. Ontario businesses will have until 2012 to comply with the requirements of the Accessible Customer Service Standard and ensure that they are providing accessible service to customers with disabilities.

## How Does It Work?



Launched in December, 2004, the Access 2 Entertainment program seeks to help businesses provide quality customer service to customers with disabilities. Through the program, people with disabilities who require a support person carry a personal Access 2 Entertainment card with them. The card indicates to the ticket seller that the individual does indeed require the support of an attendant. The card provides free admission (or a substantial discount) for the support person at all participating entertainment venues. The person with the disability pays the regular admission fee.

In order to obtain a card, an application form must be submitted by a person with a disability who requires the assistance of a support person. The application must be authorized by a registered health care or disability service provider.

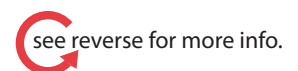
Easter Seals Canada administers the application and delivery of the card.



## Who Supports It?

Cineplex Entertainment and the Motion Picture Theatres Association are the founding business partners. They honour the card at their venues and support the management and promotion of the card through financial and in-kind contributions. The Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ontario Ministry of Culture has also provided financial support.

The nine national disability organizations that developed, and continue to promote the card, include: Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians, Canadian Abilities Foundation, Canadian Association of the Deaf, Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, Canadian Paraplegic Association, Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, People First of Canada and Easter Seals Canada who manages the program.



Partners in the disability community are the essential vehicle for promoting the program.

Without their participation, the program would lack crucial sensitivity to the issues addressed across all disability communities.

## About Easter Seals

Since 1922, Easter Seals Canada has been leading the way to opportunities for people with disabilities operating through a Canada-wide network of provincial affiliates. The National office's efforts are directed toward fully enhancing the quality of life, self esteem and self-determination of all Canadians with disabilities and to undertaking activities that fully support their total social and economic integration.

## Expanding The Program

The collaboration between disability service groups, the disability community and the corporate sector has produced such strong results that we are approaching other leisure and entertainment sectors with the hope that they will accept the card in their venues. Over the next couple of years, we are expanding the program to include access to a wider variety of entertainment, recreational, sporting and cultural venues as well as the transportation industry.

## Impressive Results

Acceptance by persons with disabilities has been outstanding.

Over 30,000 people with disabilities signed up for the card. The card is currently recognized in 95 percent of movie theatres across Canada.



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