

Canadian Charter of Rights for Persons with Autism

People with autism should share the same rights and privileges enjoyed by all citizens of Canada with appropriate consideration to the best interests of the person with autism. These rights should be enhanced, protected and enforced by appropriate legislation in each province and territory.

Whereas a Charter was presented at the 4th Autism-Europe Congress, Den Haag, May 10th, 1992. Whereas a Charter was adopted as a Written Declaration by the European Parliament, May 9th, 1996.

The Board of Directors of Autism Society Canada, inspired by the above mentioned documents, proposes a “Canadian Charter of Rights for Persons with Autism” as of March 1st, 2009 in celebration of World Autism Awareness Day April 2nd, 2010.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and other relevant declarations on human rights should be considered. In particular, for people with autism the following rights should be included:

1. The right of people with autism to live independent and full lives to the limit of their potential;
2. The right of people with autism to an accessible, unbiased and accurate clinical diagnosis and assessment;
3. The right of people with autism to accessible and appropriate education;
4. The right of people with autism (and their representatives) to be involved in all decisions affecting their future; the wishes of the individual must be, as far as possible, ascertained and respected;
5. The right of people with autism to accessible and suitable housing;
6. The right of people with autism to the equipment, assistance and support services necessary to live a fully productive life with dignity and independence;
7. The right of people with autism to an income or wage sufficient to provide adequate food, clothing, accommodation and the other necessities of life;
8. The right of people with autism to participate, as far as possible, in the development and management of services provided for their well-being;
9. The right of people with autism to appropriate counseling and care for their physical, mental and spiritual health; this includes the provision of appropriate treatment and medication administered in the best interest of the individual with all protective measures taken;
10. The right of people with autism to meaningful employment and vocational training without discrimination or stereotype; training and employment should have regard to the ability and choice of the individual;
11. The right of people with autism to accessible transport and freedom of movement;
12. The right of people with autism to participate in and benefit from culture, entertainment, recreation and sport;
13. The right of people with autism to equal access of all facilities, services and activities in the community;
14. The right of people with autism to sexual and other relationships, including marriage, without exploitation or coercion;
15. The right of people with autism (and their representatives) to legal representation and assistance and to the full protection of all legal rights;
16. The right of people with autism to freedom from fear or threat of unwarranted incarceration in psychiatric hospitals or any other restrictive institution;
17. The right of people with autism to freedom from abusive physical treatment or neglect;
18. The right of people with autism to freedom from pharmacological abuse or misuse;
19. The right of access of people with autism (and their representatives) to all information contained in their personal, medical, psychological, psychiatric and educational records.