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| <b>Home Modification Policy</b> |   | <b>DATE APPROVED</b>    | January 2003                   |
| <b>BRANCH/DIVISION:</b>         | Children’s disABILITY Services (CDS)/<br>Community Service Delivery | <b>APPLICABLE TO</b>    | Children’s disABILITY Services |
| <b>RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY:</b>   |   | <b>NEXT REVIEW DATE</b> |                                |
|                                 | ADM, Community Service Delivery<br>Department of Families           | <b>DATE REVIEWED:</b>   | March 2019                     |
| <b>POLICY OWNER:</b>            |   | <b>DATE REVISED</b>     | March 2019                     |
|                                 | Director, CDS   |                         |                                |

**1.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

Children’s disABILITY Services supports families raising children with developmental or lifelong physical disabilities, to meet the additional disability-related needs they may have.

**2.0 BACKGROUND/CONTEXT**

Built environments are often constructed without considering the needs of persons with disabilities. To assist children with disabilities in safely accessing and functioning in their homes, modifications may be required to their primary residence.

**3.0 PURPOSE**

Disability-related modifications may be funded to the primary residence of children open to Children’s disABILITY Services to assist them in safely accessing and functioning in their home.

Eligibility for Children’s disABILITY Services does not mean that all requests for home modifications will be approved. Requests are subject to the criteria outlined in this policy and the availability of program resources.

**4.0 DEFINITIONS**

**ASSESSMENT OFFICER:** DHSU staff person responsible for assessing, reviewing, prioritizing and processing home modification requests on behalf of Children’s disABILITY Services

**COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION:** Non-governmental organization such as a charitable foundation that may fund home modification requests for children with disabilities.

**DISABILITY AND HEALTH SUPPORTS UNIT (DHSU):** Unit responsible for assessing and processing all home modification requests for children enrolled in Children’s disABILITY Services.

**MATERIALS DISTRIBUTION AGENCY (MDA):** The Manitoba government agency responsible for arranging contractors to complete the approved home modifications.

**QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL:** For the purposes of this policy, qualified professionals refers to registered health professionals qualified to make recommendations regarding the necessity of the home modification. This role is performed by registered occupational therapists and physiotherapists.

## 5.0 POLICY

### 5.1 ELIGIBLE MODIFICATIONS

Modifications must directly relate to housing and the disability-related needs of the child.

Eligible modifications include, but are not limited to:

- accessibility ramps or porch lifts;
- door widening to enable access to residence and to key rooms in residence; and
- bathroom modifications.

### 5.2 INELIGIBLE MODIFICATIONS

Ineligible modifications include, but are not limited to:

- modifications carried out before written approval by the DHSU;
- modifications not related to the child's disability; and
- modifications or renovations of an aesthetic or convenient nature.

### 5.3 ASSESSMENT BY QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL

Requests for funding of home modifications require a written assessment and recommendation from a qualified professional. The home modification must be related to the child's disability and allow the child to safely access and function in their family's natural environment.

A qualified professional is limited to registered occupational therapists and physiotherapists qualified to make the recommendation.

### 5.4 DEFINING "BASIC AND ADEQUATE SUPPORT"

Children's disABILITY Services' objective is to provide basic and adequate support to families to assist them in covering some of the extraordinary costs of caring for a child with a disability.

"Basic and adequate" means the minimum required to meet the assessed disability-related need in a satisfactory manner. The assessed need addresses the functional limitations resulting from the child's disability.

Choices of an aesthetic or convenient nature that raise the price of the modification with no demonstrable benefit in addressing the child's functional limitations do not fall within the definition of "basic and adequate". These "enhanced" modifications are not funded by Children's disABILITY Services.

### 5.5 DEFINING "HOME"

Children's disABILITY Services will only fund eligible modifications to the child's primary residence. This is the home where the child spends the majority of their time.

The primary residence must be situated within the Province of Manitoba in a community served by Children's disABILITY Services.

Where parents share joint custody of the child, the Assessment Officer must work with the family to determine whether funded modifications are required in both houses. Factors to be considered include the amount of time the child spends at each house, whether portable home modifications can be used, and what supports the family can provide.

## **5.6 RENTAL PROPERTY**

Modifications to rental accommodations may be eligible for funding if the landlord provides written consent and if the family will be living there for some length of time.

Tenants must provide Children's disABILITY Services with the landlord's written approval of the proposal to modify the rental accommodations. The written approval must include a list of the modifications to be funded by Children's disABILITY Services. The written approval should be provided at the beginning of the assessment process.

Responsibility for returning the premises to their original state when the tenancy ends and the family moves out must be determined before any modifications are approved and undertaken.

## **5.7 BUILDING A HOME**

Families building a new home may be able to incorporate accessibility features into the house design to meet its unique needs with little or no cost. Universal design incorporates accessibility into the design of a home so that it can be used by everyone. Families should consider incorporating universal design and accessibility features into their home to meet their needs.

The cost difference between a typical house feature and an accessible house feature may be eligible for funding from Children's disABILITY Services. The accessible house feature must be recommended by a qualified professional.

## **6.0 STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES**

### **6.1 FAMILY FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS HOME MODIFICATION**

Financial contribution by families towards the funding of home modifications is not required. While financial contribution is not required, families are expected to use their private insurance to cover some of the costs of the modification.

Families who choose to upgrade or enhance the modifications are responsible for the difference between the basic and adequate cost and the upgrade or enhancement. Families must sign a funding agreement with the DHSU prior to entering into such an arrangement.

### **6.2 FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Families are responsible for:

- performing regular maintenance on the modification;
- the costs of repairs;
- the costs of returning the house to its original condition; and
- maintaining adequate insurance on the home.

### **6.3 REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE**

Whether modifications are made to a family-owned or rental property, families are responsible for repairs and maintenance of the modification.

Maintenance issues to the home that are discovered by contractors during the completion of the modification are the responsibility of the property owner, unless other arrangements have been made.

Repairs to any equipment installed as part of the home modification are the responsibility of Children's disABILITY Services. Families are responsible for notifying the DHSU of the need for repair to equipment.

#### **6.4 FAMILY MOVES / RETURNING PREMISES TO ORIGINAL STATE**

Families are responsible for all costs of returning their homes to their original state.

When moving, families are expected to take movable items for installation in their new home. Families are also responsible for ensuring these items are not fixtures or, if items are considered fixtures, that they are not included in the sale price of the home.

#### **6.5 OBTAINING QUOTES**

The DHSU will arrange for contractors to visit the home to provide necessary quotes for the approved modifications from approved vendors.

Families are not responsible to obtain quotes for the approved home modification.

#### **6.6 ACCESSING COMMUNITY SUPPORTS**

Some community service organizations may provide support for home modifications. Families are encouraged to discuss options for accessing support from community service organizations with the qualified professional or an Assessment Officer, and to contact organizations to determine the availability of support.

If community service organization supports are accessed, the family and the community service organization should collaboratively determine who is responsible for maintenance, insurance and repairs of the modification, and for returning the premises to their original state.

#### **6.7 INCOME TAX**

Disability-related home modifications may qualify as eligible medical expenses with the Canada Revenue Agency when they are purchased without the use of government funds. More information is available from the Canada Revenue Agency.