

<INSERT REGIONAL OFFICE LETTERHEAD>

Aug XX, 2024

MEMORANDUM TO: MCCSS-funded Adult Developmental Services (DS) Transfer Payment Recipients (TPRs)

FROM: Director, Regional Office
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

SUBJECT: Choking Hazards

This memo is to acknowledge and learn from the recent, unfortunate, choking-induced deaths in Ontario's developmental services sector.

It is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that every precaution is taken to prevent serious injury or death. In our sector, safeguards to protect the health and safety of a person are articulated in the Individual Support Plan (ISP) (O.Reg.299/10, 5(4)(j)). Our data shows us that the most cited non-compliance during service agency inspections in 2023/24 was related to the absence of written precautions. ISPs must **clearly** identify all of the safeguards and precautions required to ensure the health and safety of **each** individual and provide clear direction to staff.

Please remember:

- People with developmental disabilities may be at increased risk for choking and aspiration because of:
 - Decreased muscle coordination and/or tone which causes problems with chewing and swallowing,
 - Difficulty holding their head up or sitting straight,
 - Poor self-eating skills (such as food stuffing or rapid eating),
 - Diagnoses such as pica, neurological disorders, dysphagia or dental issues.

Reminder, in alignment with O. Reg. 299/10 (Quality Assurance Measures) and policy directives:

- a) Ensure staff are trained and understand the importance of each person's ISP safeguards around eating, food preparation, food texture and consistency,
- b) Ensure staff have up-to-date FirstAid/CPR,
- c) Individuals requiring 1:1 support during eating must never be left alone.

Please ensure that staff know that supervision is critical in choking prevention and to call 911 immediately and apply first aid when a supported person is in choking distress.

If your agency contracts with outside paid resources (OPRs), please ensure that this information is also communicated to them.

Please contact DSCCompliance@ontario.ca if you have any questions or www.gamtraining.net for additional compliance supports.

I know you join us in recognizing the lives lost this past year and supporting our teams in ensuring the safety of all residents.

Sincerely,

Signature
Regional Director

c. Community Program Managers
Program Supervisors