

LP 117 Children's Services Policy

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1. Building

The Library provides a pleasant and inviting atmosphere for children by:

- Assigning an area specifically designed for children.
- Having an area specifically designed for children's programming separate from daily library service areas.
- Having furniture, shelves, and equipment that are designed for and accessible to all children.
- Ensuring that signage is clear and legible for children.

2. Staffing

The Library provides trained staff with a rapport with children, by:

- Employing a children's librarian as a specialist.
- Ensuring that all staff in children's services are eligible to serve on committees and attend workshops, courses and conferences related to the entire library field.
- Identifying and pursuing an active program of ongoing staff training and professional development in children's services.
- Ensuring that staff receive training in children's services in order to provide knowledgeable library service.
- Ensuring that advancement is not restricted for children's services staff.

3. Resources

The Library provides a wide range of materials in all formats to fulfill the informational, cultural, learning and leisure of children by:

- Ensuring a material selection policy that reflects the characteristics inherent to the children's collection.
- Evaluating the children's collection on an ongoing basis.
- Ensuring that adequate funds be made available to support the development of a children's collection that is up-to-date, in good condition and generally attractive.
- Ensuring that the children's collection is organized for easy access and with children's capabilities in mind.
- Providing materials representing Canadiana, multicultural, and bilingual literature, traditional literature, literature designed to serve special groups and popular and ephemeral materials, keeping in mind the needs of the children in the community.

4. Intellectual Freedom

The Library provides children with open access to information and facilities throughout the Library by:

- Providing library service for children with the respect and consideration assured to all patrons.
- Ensuring that library procedures support the Children's Services Policy.
- Ensuring that the public has access to policy statements.

5. Programmes

The Library provides programmes for children, both in and out of the library, to stimulate the child's imagination and to learn and to promote the use of the collection by:

- Ensuring that adequate funds are made available to support all children's programmes.
- Providing a variety of programmes furthering the informational, cultural, learning and leisure interests of all ages.
- Co-operating with community agencies and schools in providing children's programmes.

6. Promotion

The Library actively promotes a variety of formats of Library services to children by:

- Publicizing Library activities and services for children on a regular basis utilizing local media.
- Producing publications related to children's services and activities as a regular and ongoing part of the County of Prince Edward Public Library's publicity programme.
- Posting information on the website.

7. Community Outreach

The Library communicates and cooperates with other community groups and organizations devoted to serving children by:

- Actively encouraging the continued cooperation of schools and other community groups in the use of the Library.

- Providing expertise and support for community groups and organizations serving children.
- Participating in community collaborative efforts as appropriate opportunities arise.

8. Rights and Responsibilities of the Parent

The Library expects parents to:

- Monitor the use of services and collections by their children.
- Be responsible for borrowed materials and replacement fees incurred by their children.
- Not leave children requiring supervision unattended, in or about the Library premises.
- While the Library tries to make all Internet terminals visible, staff cannot always monitor Internet use.

9. Unattended Children

The Library welcomes children of all ages, and encourages and promotes children's use of the library. However, parents and caregivers should be aware that the Library is a public place that is open to all members of the community. Furthermore, as in all public facilities, emergencies can occur. It is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to monitor the whereabouts and behavior of their children. Library staff, though concerned about the safety and well-being of children, cannot be responsible for their safety or supervision. Child protection in Ontario is legislated under the Ontario Child and Family Services Act, under the responsibility of local children's aid societies.

10. **Regulations**

- In accordance with the Ontario Child and Family Services Act, children under the age of 10 must be accompanied, and adequately supervised by a parent or responsible caregiver of at least 13 years of age.
- A child under 10 who is attending a library program need not be accompanied into the program by a parent or caregiver unless otherwise indicated. However, the parent or caregiver must remain in the building during the program.
- As a public place, the Library does not monitor the activities of its users unless there is a problem with conduct or a child is left unattended. Truancy is a school and parent issue, not a library one. The Library cannot act in the role of either parent or police. If a parent, caregiver or school representative telephones to enquire if a child is in the Library, staff will attempt to locate and bring the child to the phone to speak to them.
- If staff suspect child abuse, they are required by law to contact the police or Children's Aid Society.
- Procedures for dealing with unattended children will be implemented in the following or similar situations: an unattended child is under the age of 10, is alone and frightened, is doing something dangerous, seems to be in danger from another person, is not following the Library rules after reasonable warnings, or is alone in the Library at closing time.
- Endorsement of OLA's Children's Rights in the Public Library



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Children in Public Libraries have the right to:

1. Intellectual freedom.
2. Equal access to the full range of services and materials available to other users.
3. A full range of materials, services and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their needs.
4. Adequate funding for collections and services related to population, use and local community needs.
5. A library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages.
6. Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in children's services.
7. Welcoming, respectful, supportive service from birth through the transition to adult user.
8. An advocate who will speak on their behalf to the library administration, library board, municipal council and community to make people aware of the goals of children's services.
9. Library policies written to include the needs of the child.

*Adopted at the Ontario Library Association
Annual General Meeting, November 1998*

