

Children and Libraries

Public libraries have a special responsibility to support the process of learning to read, and to promote materials for children. These materials should be developmentally appropriate and in a variety of formats. The library must provide special events for children, such as storytelling and activities related to the library's services and resources.

Children should be encouraged to use the library from an early age. By providing a wide range of materials and activities, public libraries provide an opportunity for children to experience the enjoyment of reading and the excitement of discovering knowledge and works of the imagination.

Children of all ages should find the library an open, inviting, attractive, challenging, and non-threatening place to visit.

Unattended Children

In order to provide for the general welfare of all persons using the library system and in order to provide for the general safety of children using the library, responsibility and accountability for the general welfare of any child rests with the parent (or guardian or care giver assigned by the parent) and not with the library's personnel. The safety of all children left alone in the library is a serious concern. No public institution, including the library, can guarantee the safety of children.

All children under the age of 10 years shall, at all times, be attended to and adequately supervised by an adult. During some/select story times or programs, adults do not have to attend the program with the child; however, the care giver must remain in the children's area during the program.

If parents or guardians cannot be located in the building or by telephone the appropriate authorities, law enforcement or child services, will be called. A staff member will remain with the child until authorities arrive.

If children are left unattended at closing time, a staff member will call the parents or guardians. After fifteen minutes, if staff are unable to reach the parents or guardians by telephone a staff member will contact the appropriate authorities.

The library assumes no responsibility for anyone left in the library or on library property.

Library staff may not provide transportation to library patrons.

Children and Libraries Policy

Children and Library Materials

Libraries are family-oriented public institutions charged with making a broad selection of materials available to everyone. Ascension Parish Library has collections of materials for children and teens that appeal to various ages and interests.

The library has a selection policy that defines the criteria used in selecting materials. The majority of books and other materials selected have been reviewed and recommended by professional librarians or reviewers. Purchases are also sometimes made at the request of library patrons. Selection is an inclusive process, in which librarians seek materials providing a broad range of viewpoints and subject matter. The library has a responsibility to all taxpayers including those whose opinions may differ from each other. Because an item is selected does not mean an item is endorsed by the library. This means that while library collections have thousands of items families want, like, and need, they also will have materials that some parents may not want for their children.

Children mature at different rates. They have different backgrounds and interests, different reading levels and abilities. A parent may feel a particular library item is unsuitable for their child, while the same item may be a favorite of another family. These factors make it impossible for librarians to set criteria for restricting use based on age alone. To do so would keep others who want and need materials from having access to them.

Decisions about what materials are suitable for particular children should be made by the people who know them best—their parents or guardians. Each parent or guardian is responsible for their own child’s supervision. It is the right and responsibility of parents to guide their own family’s library use while allowing other parents to do the same.

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