



Policy Name:	<b>Children and Youth in the Library</b>
Policy Type:	<b>Operational</b>
Policy Number:	<b>OP-10</b>
Original Adoption Date:	<b>December 2008</b>
Current Approval:	<b>September 2025</b>
Review:	<b>November 2028</b>
Motion:	<b>2025:66</b>

## **Children and Youth in the Library**

### **1. Purpose:**

This policy sets out to ensure that services are offered to children and youth in the Orillia Public Library that support their particular needs. The Library endeavours to provide this service based on the principles stated in the *Ontario Library Association's Children's Rights in the Library*, 1998 (See Appendix A) and its *Youth's Rights in the Public Library*, 2010 (See Appendix B).

### **2. Policy:**

The Orillia Public Library recognizes that the needs of children and youth are important in their own right: that their intellectual growth, cultural appreciation and recreational activities should be fostered through library services, delivered with consideration and respect. The Library will endeavour to offer services, materials and programs that are appropriate for the needs of children and youth.

The Library welcomes and encourages children and youth to use the Library and the full spectrum of services offered.

### **3. Definitions**

**"Caregiver"** means a person assigned by the parent or guardian of a child or youth



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to be responsible for their care, well-being, safety and supervision. Such a person could include, but is not limited to, the child or youth’s teacher or tutor.

“**Child**” means a person between the ages of 0-12 years.

“**Parent or Guardian**” means a person who is directly responsible for the care, wellbeing, safety and supervision of their child or youth (in the case of a parent) or of a child or youth who is their ward (in the case of a guardian).

“**Youth**” means a person between the ages of 13-17 years.

“**Unattended**” means a child or youth without visible supervision by their parent, guardian or caregiver.

#### **4. Procedure**

##### **Section 1 – Library Space**

- a. The Library will provide a well-planned area for children that is distinct from the adult area with signage that is clear and geared towards children and youth. These areas should be visually stimulating with furniture, shelves and equipment that are designed for children and accessible to all.
- b. The children’s area is understood to be interactive learning environments where controlled noise levels are accepted and where children are invited to explore Library materials and services in their own way.
- c. Recognizing that children may express themselves in many ways,



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they will not be required to be quiet unless their behaviour is causing a disruption or an unsafe situation.

- d. Children and youth will be expected to show courtesy and respect to all other library users and to adhere to the library's Code of Conduct

Policy (OP-02).

- e. The Library will collaborate with youth to determine their current needs and will do its best to meet these needs.

## **Section 2 – Collections**

- a. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will ensure the maintenance and organization of a comprehensive children and youth collection based on the OP-04 Collection Development Policy.
- b. The collections for children and youth will meet best practice standards of quality and reflect the changing educational needs and personal interests of children and youth.
- c. Collection development for children and youth materials will focus on, but not be limited to:
  - i. Canadian authors and content.
  - ii. award-winning titles.
  - iii. Formats geared towards children and youth.
  - iv. diversity and inclusion.
  - v. High-interest topics.



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- d. Access to adult materials will not be restricted by Library staff but will be the responsibility of caregivers to determine suitability for their child and/or youth.

**Section 3 – Reference and Readers’ Advisory**

- a. Library staff will utilize the full range of library collections, technology, and resources to answer all patron requests for advice on selecting books and for information, regardless of age and without judgment, with confidentiality and respect.
- b. Library staff will engage in meaningful and accessible conversation to better understand what each child/youth wants and needs.

**Section 4 – Programs and Partnerships**

- a. The Library will provide programs organized throughout the year for children and youth to stimulate creative potential and encourage and facilitate the habit of reading, independent learning and use of the Library.
- b. The Library will work with community organizations, agencies and schools in providing children and youth programs.
- c. The Director of Children and Youth Services will be responsible for the development, implementation and oversight of all children and youth programming, under the direction of the CEO and in accordance with the Library’s Programming and Outreach Policy (OP-06).
- d. The number of participants for all programs may be restricted based on size of the facility, fire department limits, staff capacity and resources, etc. and may result in requirements to pre-register for a program.



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- e. Some programs may limit the age of children and the number of children per accompanying adult. This limit may be enforced by the staff as the program is designed for maximum benefit to the child/caregiver through one-on-one interaction.
- f. Library staff will actively involve youth in planning and implementing programs for this age group.

### **Section 5 – Staffing**

- a. The Board will support a program of ongoing staff training and professional development in children’s and youth services.
- b. The CEO will ensure that all staff members assigned to children’s services receive appropriate training to provide knowledgeable library service.
- c. The Library staff will advocate for children’s services in the community by :
  - i. collaborating with agencies to promote early literacy, love of reading, lifelong learning, health and well-being
  - ii. seeking support for children’s and youth services from community organizations, fundraising, donations, etc.
  - iii. networking with other agencies who provide service to children and youth in the community, region, and province
  - iv. communicating with educators in the community
  - v. promoting the children’s and youth services and collections to groups who could benefit from them (schools, daycares, etc.)
- d. While Library staff will assist children and youth with finding materials, using the Internet or attending programs, parents, guardians, and caregivers are



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responsible for their children’s and youth ’s use of the Library and suitability of materials borrowed.

## **Section 6 – Safety of Children and Youth in the Library**

The Orillia Public Library staff recognizes that children and youth of all ages have the right to a welcoming, respectful, supportive, and safe environment when they visit the Library. As a public facility, the Library does not monitor the activities of its patrons unless there is a problem with conduct as outlined in Code of Conduct (Public) (OP-03), or a child is left unattended as outlined in this policy.

- a. Responsibilities of the Parent or Caregiver
  - i. Responsibility for the welfare and the behaviour of children and youth using the Library ultimately rests with the parent/guardian or an assigned caregiver.
  - ii. The Library is guided by the terms in the ***Ontario Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA)*** with regards to unattended children.
    - *Section 136 (3)* “Leaving child unattended. No person having charge of a child younger than 16 shall leave the child without making provision for the child’s supervision and care that is reasonable in the circumstances.”
  - iii. To this end, parents, guardians, caregivers and teachers must:
    - 1) not leave children under 16, requiring supervision, to be unattended in or about Library premises.
    - 2) monitor the use of services by children under their care.



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- 3) be responsible for the appropriate behaviour of children under their care.
- iv. In the Library:
  - 1) Children ages ten and over are welcome to use the Library independently on a regular basis, but parents, guardians, or caregivers are still responsible for the behaviour of any children to 16 while they are in the Library.
  - 2) Children 9 and younger must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or caregiver who is 12+ while in the Library.
- v. Where a responsible adult cannot be contacted, Library staff will:
  - i. not leave a child unattended at closing time.
  - ii. not give the child a ride home.
  - iii. contact local police or Children’s Aid Society (CAS).
  - iv. remain with the child until the proper authorities can take the child into their protection.

**Section 7 – Duty to Report**

- a. ***The Child, Youth and Family Services Act*** (Section 125) recognizes that each of us has a responsibility for the welfare of children and youth. It clearly states that members of the public, including professionals who work with children, have a legislated obligation to report promptly to the Children’s Aid Society (CAS) if they suspect that a child or youth under the age of 16 is, or may be, in need of protection. The ***CYFSA*** defines the phrase "child in need of protection" as including physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect, and risk of harm.



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- b. Library staff who are concerned that a 16- or 17-year-old is, or may be, in need of protection may make a report to Children’s Aid Society (CAS) and the CAS is required to assess the reported information.
- c. When Library staff members have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is, or may be, in need of protection, they will advise the Library CEO and together they will promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to the local CAS, as required in the **CYFSA**.

**Related Documents:**

- [\*\*\*Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017\*\*\*](#)
- [OP-10 Appendix A: The Ontario Library Association Position of Children’s Rights in the Library](#)
- [OP-10 Appendix B: Ontario Library Association’s Teen’s Rights in the Public Library](#)
- Orillia Public Library: Accessibility in the Library (HR-15)
- Orillia Public Library: Code of Conduct (Public) (OP-03)
- Orillia Public Library: Collection Development (OP-04)
- Orillia Public Library: Statement of Intellectual Freedom (FN-04)
- Orillia Public Library: Internet Services and Technology (OP-07)
- Orillia Public Library: Programming and Outreach (OP-06)
- Orillia Public Library: Safety, Security, and Emergencies (OP-02)