

	THE CORPORATION OF THE COUNTY OF LAMBTON LAMBTON COUNTY LIBRARY POLICY MANUAL			
	Subject:	Children's Services Policy	Section R02	Index #06
	Effective Date:	November 1, 2023	Approved By: Lambton County Council	
	Revision Date:	September 6, 2023		
	Drafted on:	January 1, 2020		

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that children accessing the materials, programs and services of Lambton County Library are treated safely, consistently and fairly while providing an accessible, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all ages. The library endeavours to provide children's services based on the Ontario Library Association Position Statement on Children's Rights in the Public Library, 1998 (see Appendix A), which Lambton County Library endorses. Library staff are trained to assist children in using the Library but cannot assume responsibility for the safety and well-being of children left unattended.

POLICY

Lambton County Library endeavours to provide a welcoming and safe environment for patrons of all ages. Parents and caregivers are responsible for providing supervision and care of their children while a child is on the premises of any Lambton County Library facility. The responsibility for monitoring the whereabouts, welfare and behaviour of children using the Library ultimately rests with the parent or assigned caregiver while on Library premises. Library staff cannot care for nor take responsibility for children left unattended at the Library.

RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with the Manager, Library Services, Community Library Supervisor, Assistant Library Supervisors, Technical Services Supervisor, Public Services Coordinators, and front line Library staff.

DEFINITIONS

"Caregiver" is anyone thirteen (13) years of age or older to whom the parent has given

responsibility for the care of a younger child.

"Child / Children" are individuals from birth up to and including age twelve (12).

"Neglect" is when a child has not been provided with basic necessities: food or money to buy food, appropriate clothing, and / or a safe environment.

"Parent" is any person who is either the natural, adoptive, foster parent, or legal guardian of the child.

"Unattended" is a child left without visible supervision by a parent within any Lambton County Library facility.

REGULATIONS

1. General Principles

- 1.1. The unique needs of children will be taken into account in all areas of library services including, but not limited to; furniture, shelving, materials, programs, design of library space, rules, procedures, policies and staff training.
- 1.2. Parents and caregivers are responsible for their children's use of the library and its services.

2. Privacy

- 2.1. Children have the same privacy and access rights as adults, except that section 54(c) of MFIPPA provides that a person who has lawful custody of the individual may exercise the rights of access of an individual less than 16 years of age. Accordingly, if a child under 16 would be entitled to access, so would his or her custodial parent. Therefore a parent may request a list of their child's overdue materials, amount of overdue fees or lost items or have mail or email notifications sent in care of the parent.

3. Advocacy

- 3.1. The library will advocate for children's services in the community by:
 - 3.1.1. Collaborating with agencies to promote early literacy, love of reading, lifelong learning and children's health and well-being;
 - 3.1.2. Seeking support for children's services from community organizations;
 - 3.1.3. Networking with other agencies who provide service to children in the community, region and province;
 - 3.1.4. Communicating with principals, teacher librarians and teachers in the community;
 - 3.1.5. Promoting children's services and collections to groups who could benefit from them, such as schools, daycares, and homeschools;
 - 3.1.6. Welcoming class visits and orientations for school children, including home- schooled children.

4. Access

- 4.1. Children from birth may have a library card.
- 4.2. Parents are ultimately responsible for the fees (lost, or damaged items) of their children under 16 years of age.
- 4.3. Library staff will provide readers' advisory, and use professional knowledge to develop collections and programs for children.
- 4.4. Requests for advice on selecting books and for information will be answered by staff utilizing the full range of the collections and technology available to Lambton County Library, without judgment.
- 4.5. It is the responsibility of the parents to determine which materials they deem to be appropriate for their child. The parent or caregiver is responsible for supervising their child's access to all library resources including the internet and technologies.
- 4.6. Where possible, children will have a separate area in the library with shelving, furniture and collection formats that are designed for and accessible to all children. This area will be an interactive learning environment where controlled noise levels are tolerated. Access to this, or any Lambton County Library collection, is not limited by a specific borrower card type.

5. Programming

- 5.1. The library will provide programming for children and parents both in and out of the library to stimulate creative potential and to encourage and facilitate the habit of reading, independent learning and use of the library.
- 5.2. Children's programming will follow the Lambton County Library Programming Policy.

6. Child Safety and Supervision

- 6.1. Children under the age of ten (10) must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver while on Library premises.
- 6.2. Children aged 10 and over are welcome to use the library independently on a regular basis, but parents are still responsible for the behaviour of any children while in the library.
- 6.3. Children ten (10) to twelve (12) will be assessed by library staff for their competency related to being unsupervised in the library and staff will advise parents if their child needs supervision while on the premises.
- 6.4. Responsibility for the welfare and the behaviour of children using the library ultimately rests with the parent or an assigned caregiver.
- 6.5. Library staff are entrusted to ensure that children are not left unattended in the Library.
- 6.6. If a child is left at closing time or in the event of an emergency situation or closure, the staff person in charge will attempt to contact the parents or caregivers. If the parent or adult caregivers cannot be contacted within ten minutes after closing, staff will notify law enforcement.
- 6.7. Library staff are obligated by the Ontario Child, Youth and Family Services Act to take the appropriate action when children are left without adequate supervision

or they observe signs of neglect, which may include contacting the child's family, police services, or the Children's Aid Society.

6.8. The Library recognizes the following terms as stipulated in the Ontario Child, Youth and Family Services Act with regard to the supervision of children:

6.8.1. Section 136(3) "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."

6.8.2. Section 79(4) "Where a person is charged with contravening Subsection (3) and the child is less than 10 years of age, the onus of establishing that the person made provision for the child's supervision and care that was reasonable in the circumstances rests with the person."

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Lambton County Library Children's Services Policy Appendix A

Lambton County Library Circulation Policy

Lambton County Library Collection Development Policy

Lambton County Library Internet Services Policy

Lambton County Library Programming Policy

MFIPPA, Section 54 (c)

Ontario Library Association Position Statement on Children's Rights in the Library

Ontario Child, Youth and Family Services Act 2017, S.O. 2017, C. 14, SCHED. 1

POLICY HISTORY

REVISION	DATE	PREPARED BY
Revised	September 6, 2023	Manager, Library Services
Revised	December 30, 2021	Manager, Library Services
Created	January 1, 2020	Manager, Library Services

APPENDIX A

Ontario Library Association - Position on 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

Posted at http://accessola2.com/data/1/rec_docs/380_ola3.pdf