

# Children and Youth Services Policy

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## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to outline East Gwillimbury Public Library services specific to children and youth, including topics of unattended children and rights and responsibilities of parents. This policy provides a framework for how the Library achieves its core purpose in serving children, youth, and in outlining parental responsibilities.

## **Scope**

The Library services outlined in this policy pertain to children and youth, including their parents, guardians, and/or caregivers. The Library supports the Ontario Library Association's *Position on Children's Rights in the Public Library* (Appendix A) and its *Position for Teen's Rights in the Public Library* (Appendix B).

## **Space**

The Library offers inviting areas for children and youth that promote library materials and programs and are accessible to the specific needs of children, youth, and their families.

## **Staff**

The Library employs qualified staff to deliver and manage children's services and supports their professional growth to develop services, collections, and programs.

## **Programs**

The Library delivers relevant programs for children and youth by:

- Providing a variety of programs that foster literacy, stimulate the desire to learn, and promote the use of the Library's collection for all ages.
- Remaining accessible to all residents by offering programs at different rates of cost.
- Ensuring that adequate funds are available to support all children's and youth programs, which may involve offering programs on a cost recovery basis.
- Providing programming both in the library and a variety of external sites including at home learning support.
- Conducting regular evaluations of current programs.

## **Community Outreach**

The Library partners with community groups, including schools, daycares, and other child and youth organizations to support children and youth services by:

- Fostering ongoing relationships with local schools and community groups through regular visits and library event updates.
- Partnering with local community groups to host and run programming related to children and youth services.

- Participating on local community committees that support children and youth initiatives.
- Advocating for the Library at local events and within community groups.

### **Collection**

The Library maintains and develops a collection that supports children and youth by purchasing and evaluating materials that represent the goals outlined in the Collection Development Policy while considering needs unique to children and youth.

### **Intellectual Freedom**

The Library provides access to resources for children and youth by:

- Endorsing policy statements pertaining to customer rights in the Library.
- Allowing children and youth access to all materials other than those prohibited by legislation.
- Providing library service to children and youth without judgement and respecting confidentiality, as offered to all customers.

### **Rights & Responsibilities of Parents**

The Library expects parents to comply with the following protocols:

- Accepting responsibility for materials borrowed on their child's library card.
- Assuming responsibility for their child's choice of library materials and use of services, including public computers.
- Abiding by the Library's Confidentiality of Library Customer Information Policy.
- Assuming responsibility for the safety of their children while on Library premises, respecting the standards for Unattended Children.

### **Unattended Children**

The Library is governed by the terms in the Ontario *Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)* with regards to supervision of children, specifically:

Section 79(3): "No person having charge of a child less than sixteen years of age shall leave the child without making provision for his or her supervision and care that is reasonable in the circumstances

Section 79(4): "Where a person is charged with contravening subsection (3) and the child is less than ten 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."

Children nine (9) years old and younger must be accompanied by a responsible caregiver while in the Library. Caregivers must remain in the Library during programs which their child attends. Children aged ten (10) and over can be considered caregivers for younger siblings (aged nine (9) and below) but parents are still responsible for the behavior of any children

while they are in the Library.

The Library is a public place and staff cannot assume any responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of children left unattended in the Library. According to the Ontario *CFSA*, staff have a legal duty to report children who are inadequately supervised. Staff are obligated to contact York Regional Police or Children's Aid Society when an unattended child is found in the Library and the caregiver cannot be found.

# Appendix A

## **OLA 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.

# Appendix B

## OLA Position on Teen Rights in the Public Library

Goals for Library Services for Teens:

Young people are valuable members of our library community who deserve the same respect, dignity and human rights as all library members. This document provides a framework for developing library services to teens that meet the educational, informational, and cultural and leisure needs of young people in ways that are developmentally appropriate. Each public library has a different community to serve and therefore different priorities and needs.

Although specific services for teens have not been well established in all libraries, these goals are created in the belief that young adulthood is a unique life stage and that young adults are entitled to the same quality of library services offered to other age groups in the population. (Adapted from the International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) Guidelines for Library Services for Young Adults, 2006, and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Guidelines for Library Services to Teens, Ages 12-18, 2006.)

The goal of library services for teens is to assist with the transition from children’s services to adult services and to provide access to both resources and an environment that meets the needs of young people for intellectual, emotional and social development. Specifically these needs are based on the unique seven developmental needs of adolescents and the five core values of quality service to teens:

7 Developmental Needs of Teens	5 Core Values of service to teens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical activity</li><li>• Competence and achievement,</li><li>• Self definition,</li><li>• Creative expression,</li><li>• Positive social Interaction with Peers and Adults,</li><li>• Structure and Clear Limits,</li><li>• Meaningful Participation</li></ul> <p>Excerpted from: Dorman, G. (1981). The Middle Grades Assessment Program: User’s Manual. Carrboro, NC: Center for Early Adolescence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Respecting and responding to unique YA needs,</li><li>• Providing equal access,</li><li>• Empowering Youth through participation,</li><li>• Engaging Teens in active collaboration,</li><li>• Supporting healthy youth development.</li></ul> <p>Core Values excerpted from Jones, P. (2002). New directions for library service to young adults. Chicago: American Library Association</p>

Teens in Ontario Public Libraries have the right to:

1. Intellectual freedom.

The Library establishes clear policy statements concerning the right to free access by young adults to library resources and information sources; and respect for the rights of young adults to select materials appropriate to their needs without censorship. The Library's teen collection, policies and services should be consistent with the concepts of intellectual freedom defined by the Canadian Library Association (CLA), Ontario Library Association (OLA) and Ontario Human Rights code.

2. Equal access to the full range of materials, services, and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their unique needs.

The Library integrates library service to teens into the overall plan, budget and service program for the library. Library service to teens is integrated with those offered to other user groups.

3. Adequate funding for collections and services related to population, use and local community needs.

The Library incorporates funding for materials and services for teens in the library operating budget and ensures there is equitable distribution of resources to support programs and services for young adults.

4. Collections that specifically meet the needs of teens.

The Library provides a wide spectrum of current materials of interest to young adults to encourage lifelong learning, literacy, reading motivation, and reader development. The library endeavors to develop collections that encourage leisure reading, support homework and school success and responds to gender and cultural diversity. The library provides unfettered access to technology including social networking, licensed databases, and other online library resources for teens.

5. A library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages.

The Library provides identifiable spaces for teens that are separate from children's spaces where possible, reflects their lifestyle and allows for teens to use this library space for leisure or study, either independently or in groups.

6. Welcoming, respectful, supportive service at every service point.

The Library promotes friendly, positive, non-biased customer interactions with teens, providing staff development and training and ensures that services for teens embrace

cultural and gender diversity and economic differences. Library staff will endeavor to respect the teen's need for privacy and nonjudgmental service and assist young adults in acquiring the skills to effectively access all library resources and become information literate.

7. Library Programs and Services appropriate for Teens.

The Library fosters youth development by providing programs for teens that contribute to literacy, life-long learning and healthy youth development. The library endeavors to provide volunteer opportunities for helping others through community service hours including participating on Library Advisory Boards, and other projects that help develop a sense of responsibility and community involvement. The library's teen services initiatives are effectively managed according to best practices in the field of Youth Services.

8. Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in teen services.

Library staff is knowledgeable about adolescent development and age-appropriate resources for young adults inclusive of those with special needs. The library provides services by teen specialists as well as by others who are trained to serve teens.)

9. 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 teen services.

The Library works in partnership with other community agencies and organizations to support all aspects of healthy, successful youth development.

10. Library policies are written to include the needs of the youth.