

UNATTENDED CHILDREN POLICY

Children are an important part of the Lake Agassiz Regional Library (LARL) community. The Library encourages children of all ages to visit the Library, enjoy storytimes and other programs, learn from the information available in a variety of formats, ask questions, borrow books and other materials, use the computers, and become lifelong Library users. Children and their parents/guardians must respect the rights of other customers and behave accordingly. Library staff members are not child care providers, and will not be responsible for monitoring children's behavior. Public places, including libraries, may not be safe places for unsupervised children. Parents/guardians are expected to supervise their children's use of the Library.

LARL cannot assume responsibility for children left unattended on Library premises. In order to prevent undue disruption of normal Library activities, provide for the general welfare of all persons using the Library and for the safety of children using the Library, the following policy has been adopted.

1. Children 7 years old or younger shall be attended and adequately supervised by a parent or other responsible person. A child under age 11 should not have the responsibility to supervise younger children.
2. School-age children may use the Library unattended, subject, of course, to appropriate behavior. Children 8 to 10 years old should not be left alone for more than three hours.
3. Persons responsible for children who have special needs shall remain with their children at all times.
4. If a preschool aged or special needs child has been left alone; there are situations indicating problems with unattended children; or any child is left at closing time, Library staff will attempt to contact a family member. If a family member cannot be contacted, the staff member in charge will call local law enforcement.
5. Except for fire or other extreme emergency, no staff member will take a child out of the building.

Failure to provide necessary supervision or child care arrangements is considered child neglect. [Minnesota Statute 626.556, subd. 2 (f)(3)]. Failure to provide for necessary supervision or child care arrangements occurs when a child is unable to provide for their own basic needs or safety, or the basic needs or safety of another child in their care.

Minnesota Statute 626.556 requires certain people and allows others to voluntarily report any maltreatment of minors to law enforcement. While Librarians are not mandated reporters, they are expected to report if they know of or suspect that maltreatment has occurred.

Situations that should trigger enforcement of the Unattended Child Policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An unattended child is found frightened or crying in the Library
- An unattended child is perceived to be endangering him or herself
- Another person in the library poses a perceived threat to the unattended child

- An unattended child is disruptive to other Library users
- An unattended child is 7 years old or younger
- An unattended child is 8 to 10 years old and has been alone for more than 3 hours
- A child 10 years old or younger is being attended by another child under 11 years old
- An unattended child has not been met by a responsible adult at closing time

Approved, Lake Agassiz Regional Library Board: September 20, 2007, January 19, 2012