

RAINY RIVER PUBLIC LIBRARY		
Category: Services		Number: SE4
<i>MANDATORY</i>	Topic: Children's Services	Page: 1 of 7
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The purpose of the policy is to establish minimum qualitative standards for children's services.

Library services for children and parents have never been more important than they are today. Access to the knowledge of and the multicultural riches of the world, as well as lifelong learning and literacy skills, have become the priority of our society. "Literacy skills" embrace functional, visual, digital and media literacy, not only the printed word. The Library recognizes growing up is a local community activity, not a global activity, for children. However, it is an activity affected by global issues.

A quality children's library helps each child experience the enjoyment of reading, the excitement of discovery and the exercise of imagination. A quality children's library also equips children to contribute to the community. Children's library services should constantly respond to changes in the society, and meet the information, cultural and entertainment needs of children. Every child and parent should be familiar and comfortable with the library, and possess the skills to find their way around libraries in general.

Public library service should provide ready access to sources of information, knowledge and the creative imagination for all people. The intellectual growth of children, their cultural appreciation and recreational activities should be fostered through quality service, with consideration and respect equal to that assured to adult patrons.

The Library supports the "OLA Position on Children's rights in the Public Library."

http://www.accessola.com/data/5/rec_docs/319_Children's_Rights_in_the_Public_Library.pdf

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In formulating our policy, the Library has also drawn on the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) *Guidelines for Children's Library Services* (2003). Some sections have been adapted from the former Frontenac County Library children's services policy (1996).

1. TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience of our children's services policy includes:

- babies and toddlers
- pre-school children
- school children up to age 13
- parents and other family members
- caregivers

- special needs groups
- other adults working with children, books and media

2. MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION

To realize the purpose of our children's services, staff providing those services will participate in the overall administration of the Library. This involves planning, decision-making, organizing, and budgeting to offer a service that fulfils community needs. The Library budget shall view children's services as a core component.

Reliable performance information is a necessary tool for evaluation and improvement. The Library shall collect statistics on children's services to provide data for planning, to show accountability and to make informed decisions.

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3. STAFFING

All children have the right to the services of a trained children's librarian. The Library believes children's services staff should have and/or acquire an understanding of child psychology and development, the theories of reading development, artistic and cultural opportunities for children, and literature for children in books and related media. The Library supports training for children's staff in these areas.

4. RESEARCH

Staff are encouraged to initiate, recommend and participate in research into children's services.

5. ADVISORY SERVICES

Children's services are available to the public during all regular business hours.

Effective library service is provided by trained staff familiar with the full range of the children's collection. Age levels, interests and reference needs are essential consideration in providing these services.

Children are entitled to open access to information and facilities throughout the library.

Each child is assured the confidentiality of circulation records (subject to parental consent as required in the Membership policy (SE5)) and the carefully-considered selection of materials.

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Where resources permit, the Library provides services to exceptional groups and individuals in the community, including the mentally and physically challenged, exceptional or gifted children, and those requiring advocacy or counselling.

6. OTHER SERVICES

The Library provides programming for children and parents, both in and out of the library, to stimulate the creative potential of the child and promote the use of the collection. Storytelling shall be a cornerstone of that programming.

The staff of the children's department communicate with community agencies and groups devoted to serving children. Investigating the information and cultural needs of the community and matching those needs with library resources helps ensure local institutions co-operate – rather than compete – to the benefit of children. Healthcare centres, day-care centres, kindergartens, and other caregiving places are welcome partners, especially in reading promotion activities for children, parents and professionals. Provision shall be made for organized group visits from these community partners.

A public relations campaign – including advertisement of activities, displays of library materials and booklists – is a regular function of the library.

7. MATERIALS

Children are entitled to:

- A separately-purchased and -administered collection designed to meet their needs from infancy to the end of childhood;

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- A catalogue with author, title and subject access to the children's collection; and,
- Appropriately-sized furniture, shelves and equipment in a physically separate section of the facility

The collection is balanced to serve both a wide variety of users and special community needs.

The collection should be current, in good condition and generally attractive. The collection should be organized for easy access and with children's capabilities in mind.

The collection includes high-quality literature to satisfy the wants and needs of children and to develop their human potential.

In selecting materials, children's staff shall include:

- Canadiana;
- Multicultural and multilingual literature to meet the needs of the community;
- Traditional literature, including folklore and myths, to convey cultural heritage;
- Popular and ephemeral literature that changes to reflect the environment of children;
- Literature designed to serve special groups, including the physically and mentally challenged, gifted children, and beginning, reluctant and slow readers; and,
- A variety of values and opinions that introduce children to the global community.

The collection includes a variety of formats and resources:

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- Books: picture books, fiction in both hardcover and paperback; non-fiction on a variety of subjects; and a non-circulating reference collection;
- Periodicals written specially for children, and adult periodicals appropriate for them;
- Pamphlets;
- Audio-visual materials, including music CDs, DVDs and talking books;
- Computers, software and connectivity; and,
- Realia, such as learning games (both electronic and traditional), puppets and toys.

8. CHILDREN'S SPACE AND SAFETY IN THE LIBRARY

Children of all ages should find the library an open, inviting, attractive, stimulating, and non-threatening place to visit. To that end, we encourage children to make full use of library services. However, the Library does not encourage young children to come to the library alone, to remain for a disproportionate length of time or for parents to leave young children alone at the library. This concern is in keeping with Ontario's *Child and Family Services Act* (RSO 1990, c. 11), which prohibits children from being left alone and which states society's obligation to report cases of parental neglect or abuse.

Under no circumstances will library staff operate *in loco parentis*. To determine if a child is in the Library in contravention of our policy, staff shall use the following age categories to govern their actions:

- 1. Children up to age 8** must be accompanied by an adult at all times. We expect parents or caregivers to remain in the library during programs.

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2. Children age 9 to 11 can use library services (except internet services) without adult supervision for up to one hour, so long as the child is engaged in appropriate library activities.

3. Children age 12 and up do not require adult supervision.

If staff determine a child is present in contravention of policy, the appropriate course of action is:

1. Contact the parent or caregiver, requesting that the child not be permitted to go to the library alone, or that the parent not leave the child alone in the library again.
2. If the same family is negligent again, call the Rainy River detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police so that they can make an initial contact with the Children's Aid Society.
3. Subordinate staff shall submit a report in writing to the CEO/Librarian detailing the incident.

9. REVIEW

The board shall review this policy at least once every four calendar years.