

POLICY FOR THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY

The Eustis Memorial Library staff hopes that the children who use our library will perceive our facility as a **warm, inviting and fun place to be**. Many programs are offered to help children to enjoy their library visits and develop a love of books, reading and libraries.

But when children are left unattended, they often become bored and disruptive.

Young children are not safe when left unattended in the library. Library staff cannot know or be held responsible if children are leaving the building with parents or with strangers. For the protection and well-being of children who enjoy our library, the following policy has been established.

POLICY

Parents/guardians* are responsible for the behavior of their children while in the library and **cannot leave children under the age of 7 (0-6 years of age) unattended.**

**or responsible minor, age 12 or older*

Children are considered “unattended” if:

- Parents/guardians are **not in the library**.
- Parent/guardians are **in different areas of the library** than their children (i.e. main computers while the children are in the Children’s area, etc.)
- Parents/guardians are **unable to supervise** their children.

Are you struggling to work on a computer while also supervising your children?

We are happy to provide **Busy Bags in the Children’s area** for this exact purpose. Simply grab a fun, educational Busy Bag (or several) and bring it back when your child has finished playing. Our Busy Bag activities are great for a variety of ages and are **an ideal quiet playtime option**.

Some of our Busy Bag activities include:



Sweet Treats
Matching



Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions regarding this policy, a library staff member will be happy to assist you.

LOST CHILDREN

1. Library staff should comfort frightened or crying unattended children.
2. Lost or frightened children should be brought to the Librarian's desk in the Children's area, or to the main service desk. The staff should try to locate the parents.
3. Library staff will walk through the library with the child, looking for his/her parents.
4. If the parent cannot be located in the building, a library staff member shall stay with the child until the parent is located.
5. If the parent has not been located within the hour, the police may be called at the discretion of staff.
6. If parents cannot be located by closing time, the police will be called by library staff.
7. Under no circumstances shall a staff member take a child out of the building or transport the child to another location.
8. Children 8 years of age and older may be left unattended for a maximum of two hours in addition to attending a scheduled library program.
9. Children attending programs are supervised by the library staff and for the purposes of the policy are considered attended. Children 7 years of age and under must be met promptly by parents at the conclusion of library programs.
10. Staff will notify parents of the Library's policy when children are consistently left unattended for long periods of time. If children are consistently left unattended, the authorities may be called at the discretion of the staff.
11. Parents are strongly encouraged to come into the library with their child to confirm that the scheduled program is available for their child. Some library programs require preregistration due to demand and other constraints.

DISRUPTIVE CHILDREN

DISRUPTIVE ATTENDED CHILDREN

1. Staff will advise children who are being disruptive to behave. Staff may suggest alternative activities for the children.

2. If the disruptive behavior continues, staff shall inform the parents that their children are disturbing others.
3. The family will be asked to leave if parents refuse or are unable to control their children.

DISRUPTIVE UNATTENDED CHILDREN

1. Staff will advise children who are being disruptive to behave. Staff may also suggest alternative activities for the children.
2. If disruptive behavior persists, the children shall be asked to sit quietly while their parents are located.
3. Staff members shall attempt to contact parents by phone who cannot be located within the building. Parents shall be asked to pick up their children immediately.
4. If the staff member is unable to locate the parent, the child will be asked to sit quietly near the Children's Desk until the parent arrives, at which time the parent will be informed of the disruptive behavior.

UNATTENDED CHILDREN AT CLOSING TIME

1. Thirty minutes before closing, the staff shall urge all children to call their parents.
2. If parents cannot be located by closing time, the police will be called by library staff.
3. Staff members will stay with children until the police arrive.
4. Upon arrival of the police, a staff member will provide the officer with a copy of the Policy for SAFETY OF CHILDREN in the library to give to the parent(s).