

RACINE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Safe Child Policy

Adopted by the Library Board, November 17, 2005

Children seven years of age or younger must be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or caregiver who acknowledges responsibility for the child, during their entire stay in the library. A person under the age of twelve will not be considered a responsible caregiver; this includes siblings. This person, who will henceforth be referred to as the child's guardian, is responsible for the child's behavior while in the building.

Children attending preschool storytimes will be supervised by the storyteller. The guardian must, however, remain in the Children's Department during the session. Children attending a family program must be supervised by a guardian. Children participating in a class visit must be supervised by the accompanying teacher and the teacher must remain with the students at all times.

Children over the age of eight may remain in the library unattended, provided they follow all library rules as listed in the Policy on Patron Behavior.

Children with special needs and/or problems must be accompanied and supervised by a guardian at all times.

Philosophy behind the Safe Child Policy

The Racine Public Library welcomes children of all ages. It is a doorway through which life-long learning takes place. The public library is, however, just that, a public building. As such anybody can come into it, law-abiding or otherwise.

Library staff have many duties to perform in order to serve all citizens of Racine. They cannot monitor the behavior or whereabouts of each patron, including children. Staff do not take over parental responsibilities for children who come into the library.

A child could be tempted to go off with a stranger. A child could become ill. A child could get mixed in with a school group and become lost. Any of these or other emergencies could take place in a public building. It is for the safety of each child that the Racine Public Library has adopted this Safe Child Policy.

Safe Child Policy Procedures

All youngsters are subject to the Policy on Patron Behavior, copies of which are posted throughout the library. Library staff or security will intervene when a child is violating library rules and take whatever action is considered appropriate including - but not limited to – notifying the guardian, summoning the police, and/or restricting library privileges.

Child left unattended

- If a child is left unattended and the staff is unable to find the guardian, the security guard will be called.
- The security guard will try to identify and locate the guardian, including walking the child around the building, if necessary.
- When the guardian is located the staff or security guard will firmly explain the Safe Child Policy.
- If a guardian is not found in the building, law enforcement officials will be contacted and the child will be taken to the Children’s Department to await the arrival of officers.

Child left unattended at closing

- At closing, if a child who is fifteen-years-old or younger is left unattended in the library and a guardian cannot be contacted or does not arrive within fifteen minutes, law enforcement officials will be contacted and a note will be left on the door of the library for the guardian. The security guard and another staff member will wait with the child until law enforcement officials arrive.

Child becoming ill or injured

- If a child becomes ill or injured and a guardian cannot be contacted, law enforcement officials or, if appropriate, a rescue squad will be called.

Child discovered to be truant

- If a child is discovered to be truant, a truancy officer or law enforcement officials will be called to deal with the truancy in the proper manner.

Adopted by the Library Board January 20, 2000; Revised August 19, 2004; November 17, 2005.