

Fort Dodge Public Library Unattended Child/Safe Child Policy

General Policies

Fort Dodge Public Library cannot ensure the safety of any library patron of any age. Library staff duties do not include babysitting or taking over any parental responsibilities for a child in the library. While the Library is concerned about the safety and welfare of all children, parents and caregivers are responsible for a child's safety and welfare and for monitoring a child's activities and behavior.

A responsible caregiver shall be defined as a person age fifteen (15) or older.

Children under the age of six (6) must be under direct visual supervision by a parent or caregiver at all times while in the library. Exceptions may be made for children age three (3) and older who are attending select library programs such as storytime. When an exception is made, the parent or caregiver is expected to remain in the library building and available during the program and to immediately join the child at the end of the program.

Children between the ages of six (6) and ten (10) must be attended by a parent or responsible caregiver while in the library.

Parents or caregivers cannot leave children unattended in the Children's Department or any other library department while using other parts of the library.

If a child is left unattended, is disruptive, or needs supervision, staff will locate the parent or caregiver responsible for the child and review expectations for supervision and conduct. If staff cannot locate the person responsible for the child, they will attempt to reach the parent or caregiver by phone. If the parent or caregiver is not located within one hour, or if the library is closing, the police will be called to assume responsibility for the child.

Although children age eleven (11) and older may use the library on their own, their actions and well-being remain the responsibility of their parents and caregivers. The library's **Conduct in the Library** policy defines unacceptable behaviors and states that some may result in a request for a person to leave the library and its property. A child who is not able to leave the library without an adult should not be left alone at the library.

Adopted 08/1997

Revised 02/2001; 06/28/2004; 10/26/2004; 08/28/2017; 09/27/2021