

**Unattended Children Policy
Deerfield Public Library
Board approval 2-18-09**

Policy:

- * For the safety of all children who visit the Deerfield Public Library, children eight years of age and younger must be accompanied and directly supervised by a responsible caregiver who assumes full accountability for the children's safety and behavior in the Library. "Directly supervised" means the child and the caregiver must be able to observe one another at all times.
- * The library staff members do not serve as locum parentis for children in the library.

General Procedure:

- * If a child age eight years of age or younger appears to be left unsupervised, Library staff will attempt to locate the caregiver and have him or her return to the area. The individual will be advised of Library policy.
 - o Suggested Script: *For the safety of all children who visit the Library, we require that children eight and younger be accompanied and directly supervised by a parent or caregiver at all times.* This should be followed by a statement about what we would like the parent or caregiver to do immediately, such as: *Please stay with your child while they play in the Picture Book Room.*
- * If the situation occurs again and the caregiver is not the parent, the policy will be restated and the name and address of the child's parent or legal guardian will be obtained. A letter outlining the policy may be mailed to the child's parent or legal guardian, noting the safety concerns and possible consequences if not corrected.
- * If there are additional instances of the same child being left unsupervised on Library premises, the Library will act in the interest of the child by reporting the situation to the police and may pursue legal action to enforce the policy.

At Library programs:

- * Some library programs require the caregiver to accompany the child during the program. For all other library programs, caregivers of children eight years of age and younger must remain in the Library and be readily available.

At closing time:

- * Parents or guardians must pick up their children aged nine through twelve prior to Library closing time.
- * Children age twelve or under who are not picked up by closing time may be placed, for their protection, in the custody of the police.
- * At least two staff members will stay with unattended children at the Library for up to 30 minutes after the Library closes. The library staff members will attempt to contact the child's parents during this time. After that time, the police will be contact.
- * Staff members will never transport a child or children home.