



Children & Youth Services Policy

Policy Number: 18-15

Policy Approval Date: February 12, 2018

Policy Review Date: November 2021

Definitions

Child or Children: children ages 0 to 12 years.

Youth: any person between the ages of 13 and 18 years.

YA: Young Adult

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the criteria and guidelines of Huntsville Public Library in providing service to children and youth to support and foster a life-long love of reading and learning. All programs, events, and services will provide age appropriate content and experiences to meet the diverse informational and recreational needs of Huntsville's children and youth. This policy also provides a framework for how the Library achieves its goals and strategic priorities when serving children.

Guidelines

Spaces for Children & Youth

Children

Huntsville Public Library shows its commitment to exemplary library service for children by providing dedicated areas for children and their collections. These areas strive to be interactive learning environments that, where possible, include children-specific furnishings, age-appropriate technologies, educational toys and manipulatives, and offer a friendly, inviting atmosphere that encourage exploration and learning.

Youth

The Library strives to dedicate a flexible area for youth and their respective collections with a friendly, inviting atmosphere that promotes communication, respect and acceptance. Youth are actively encouraged to use all spaces in the Library for both leisure and study, either independently or in groups. Furthermore, the Library will consider the needs of youth in the planning of public spaces, including areas such as the Hub, computer spaces, and quiet zones.

Staff

The Library employs qualified staff dedicated to the provision of excellent service for children and youth, and who are committed to ongoing training and professional development. Library Staff seek to engage with children and youth in Huntsville, and to work collaboratively with them to provide programming, materials and services that meet their own needs, as well as those of the community.

Collections

The Library provides a wide range of materials in all formats and reading levels to fulfill the informational, cultural, learning and leisure needs of children and teens:

1. The CEO/Chief Librarian will ensure the maintenance and organization of comprehensive children and youth collections based on the Materials Selection Policy.
2. The children and youth collections will meet high standards of quality and reflect the changing educational needs and personal interests of children and teens as well as trends in society.
3. The staff will develop profiles of the collections to define the scope and ensure they complement the local school curriculum and include age appropriate formats.

Programs

Children

The Library provides activities, events, and programs for children to enrich their lives, invoke curiosity, stimulate the imagination, and encourage life-long learning and literacy through the incorporation of current trends in early childhood research and education. All children and youth programs support the Library's mission, values, goals, and strategic priorities by:

- Making the Library a hub for discovery and experience;
- Developing a strong community presence;
- Cultivating and fostering a culture of innovation.

In addition to these key objectives, children's programs support the use of library collections and resources, promote services, and share knowledge and expertise where appropriate.

Youth

The Library will strive to provide relevant activities and programs for youth which support the Library's mission, values, goals and strategic priorities. Programs for youth will encourage the use of library collections and resources, promote services, facilitate collaboration, and enable the sharing of knowledge and expertise, when appropriate. The Library will proactively engage youth in the co-creation of program based on their passions and interests.

Registration & Attendance

- Most library programs will require advance registration and the number of participants is restricted based on the format of the program, the size of the facility, fire safety limits, staff supervision available, etc. and will be enforced by the programmer in charge of the program.
- Programs are tailored to developmental stages to best meet the needs of all children. Children must therefore have reached the minimum age requirement for the program by the end of the program session for which they are registered. Proof of age is required for some registrations and may be requested at any time by a Staff Member.
- Some children, regardless of age may not be socially prepared for a program. The children's programmer will determine this and will work with the parent/guardian/caregiver to provide a course of action which may include removing the child from the program.
- Some programs limit the number of children per accompanying adult. This limit may be enforced by the program as the program is designed for maximum benefit to the child/parent/care-giver through one-on-one interaction.
- Consistent attendance at all registered programs will result in optimum benefit. Participants who miss two consecutive weeks without advising the programming Staff in advance may be asked to forfeit their spot to someone on the waiting list.

Charging for Programs

- It is a priority for the Library to offer low or no-cost programs, and the majority of programs are free to attend. Any fees associated with programs are charged to offset the cost of specialized supplies. Should registrants be concerned about their ability to pay program fees, they are encouraged to speak with the programming staff to explore options. The Library places a high priority on serving residents regardless of their financial situation.
- If a participant attends a program with an associated cost with a support person, there will be no charge for the support person to attend.

Marketing

- Programs will be fully promoted using various channels of communication through community partnerships, local media, in-house publications and displays, including the Library's website and social media.

Information Services and Readers Advisory

Library staff working with children and youth:

- Connect them with the materials they require.

- Utilize the full range of collections, technology and methods to answer all users' requests for advice on selecting materials and information, regardless of age and without judgment, with confidentiality and respect.
- Conduct customer service interviews to determine what the user wants and needs.
- Provide an opportunity to assist children and teens in the development of information literacy and research skills.
- Assist in finding materials but they do not act in place of a parent, guardian or caregiver. Parents, guardians, or caregivers are responsible for supervising all aspects of their own children's library use.
- The Library offers free internet access to children and youth in accordance with the established Board approved Technology @ HPL Policy.

Advocacy & Outreach

The Library Board is committed to providing the best possible services for children and youth and has adopted the Ontario Library Association's *Position on Children's Rights in the Library (Appendix A)* and the *Teen Rights in the Public Library (Appendix B)*.

Children

Youth Services at Huntsville Public Library will take an active role in child advocacy through community outreach partnerships with schools and other community organizations serving children, providing educational, entertaining, and literacy based programs which support children, families, parents/guardians, caregivers, and educators. These programs share the goals and priorities of in-house programming.

Where appropriate, programs including parents/guardians, teachers, and caregivers will focus on the importance of early childhood literacy, current trends in education and technology, and the role of the Library in supporting their needs. The Library will continue to develop a high profile in the community and increase partnerships through:

- Collaborating with local service agencies to emphasize the importance of fostering a love of reading and life-long learning in children;
- Actively seeking support for children's services from community organizations, including fundraising, donations, etc.;
- Networking with others who provide services to children locally, provincially and beyond; Encouraging communication with principals, teacher librarians, and teachers in our community, as well as with those staff at the school board;
- Promoting services and collections to groups who could bring them to larger audiences of children – schools, daycares, etc.;
- Class visits for local school children and home schooled children;
- Participating in local events, i.e. parades, fairs, 'Ready for Kindergarten', Canada Day events, etc.
- Local business contacts.

Youth

The Library will take an active role in youth advocacy by engaging with youth to better understand their needs, interests and passions, discovering opportunities to involve youth in community wide initiatives, and promoting youth as key community stakeholders.

Partnerships and outreach opportunities support the Library in identifying appropriate options for youth to become engaged, and effective approaches to connecting with youth and supporting their needs/desires. The Library will:

- Collaborate with local service agencies to emphasize the needs of youth;
- Actively seek support for youth services from community organizations, including fundraising, donations, etc.;
- Network with others who provide services to youth locally, provincially and beyond;
- Communicate and collaborate with principals, teacher librarians, and teachers in our community, as well as with staff at the School Board;
- Provide class visits for local school classes and home schooled youth;
- Participate in local events, i.e. parades, fairs, Youth Tech Extravaganza, Muskoka Robotics Fair, etc.
- Develop local business contacts, including agencies that support youth employment.

Intellectual Freedom/Access to Information

Children and youth have the right to intellectual freedom and are entitled to open access to all information and services throughout the Library.

- All children and youth will have equal access to the full range of services and materials available to other users.
- Any child or youth from birth forward, who live or attend school in the Town of Huntsville, are eligible for a Huntsville Public Library card. Parents/guardians may apply on behalf of their child, up to and including the age of 12. Once the user is 13 years of age and can provide their own identification, they may apply without parental consent.
- Any child or youth with or without a library card may use the services and collections within all library facilities, unless use of the service or space specifically requires a card (i.e. the Hub, public computer use, etc.).
- The full range of qualified staff skills, collections, equipment and methods will be utilized to answer all user requests, regardless of age.
- In accordance with the Ontario Library Association's Children's Rights in the Public Library, 1988 (See Appendix A) and in the Ontario Library Association's Teen Rights in the Public Library, 2010 (See Appendix B), library staff will assist a child or youth in finding materials, they do not act in place of a parent.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for the materials borrowed by the children in their care and for supervising all aspects of their children's use of the Library.

- All requests will be answered without judgment, with respect and according to the Library's confidentiality guidelines.
- The Library provides unfiltered Internet use for children and youth in accordance with the Huntsville Public Library Board's *Technology @ HPL Policy*.

Behavior

The Children & Youth Services Policy on noise levels and behaviour follows the Huntsville Public Library Board's current Code of Conduct.

Rights and Responsibilities of the Parent/Caregiver

The Library expects parents/caregivers to monitor the use of services and collections by their children, including computer use. While the library tries to make computer terminals visible, staff cannot always monitor their usage

The Library expects parents/caregivers to be responsible for borrowed materials and fines incurred by their children.

The Library expects parents/caregivers to not leave unattended children requiring supervision, in or about Library premises.

Unattended Children

Parents, caregivers, and legal guardians must comply with the Unattended Children Policy adopted by the Huntsville Public Library Board on February 12, 2018 ((Motion 18-14).

Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

The entire staff of the Huntsville Public Library, as members of society, as members of the public and as professionals who work with children, is obligated under the Ontario Child and Family Services Act to report suspicions of physical, emotional and sexual abuse to children and youth under the age of 16. The reporting must be done promptly and immediately by the individual who witnesses or suspects that a child has experienced harm or is at risk of being harmed.

Related Documents:

Materials Selection Policy
Technology @ HPL Policy
Unattended Children Policy
Borrowing Policy
Library Code of Conduct
Procedures – Unattended Children
Programming & Outreach Policy

Policy History

Approved by the Huntsville Public Library Board February 12, 2018 | Motion: 18-15

Children & Youth Services Policy | November 13, 2017 | Motion: 17-87.

Youth Services Policy | August 28, 2014 | Motion: 14-54

Appendix A: Ontario Library Association's *Children's Rights in the Public Library*, 1988.

Children in Public Libraries have the right to:

1. Intellectual freedom
2. Equal access to the full range of services and materials available to other users.
3. A full range of materials, services and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their needs.
4. Adequate funding for collections and services related to population, use and local community needs.
5. A library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages.
6. Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in children's services.
7. Welcoming, respectful, supportive service from birth through the transition to adult user.
8. An advocate who will speak on their behalf to the library administration, library board, municipal council and community to make people aware of the goals of children's services.
9. Library policies written to include the needs of the child.

Appendix B: Ontario Library Associations *Teen Rights in the Public Library*, 2010

The goal of library services for teens is to assist with the transition from children’s services to adult services and to provide access to both resources and an environment that meets the needs of young people for intellectual, emotional and social development. Specifically these needs are based on the unique seven developmental needs of adolescents and the five core values of quality service to teens:

7 Developmental Needs of Teens	5 Core Values of Services to Teens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical activity, • Competence and achievement, • Self definition, • Creative expression, • Positive social Interaction with Peers and Adults, • Structure and Clear Limits, • Meaningful Participation <p>Excerpted from: Dorman, G. (1981). <i>The Middle Grades Assessment Program: User’s Manual</i>. Carrboro, NC: Center for Early Adolescence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respecting and responding to unique YA needs, • Providing equal access, • Empowering Youth through participation, • Engaging Teens in active collaboration, • Supporting healthy youth development. <p>Core Values excerpted from Jones, P. (2002). <i>New directions for library service to young adults</i>. Chicago: American Library Association.</p>

Teens in Ontario Public Libraries have the right to:

1. Intellectual freedom

The library establishes clear policy statements concerning the right to free access by young adults to library resources and information sources; and respect for the rights of young adults to select materials appropriate to their needs without censorship. The library’s teen collection, policies and services should be consistent with the concepts of intellectual freedom defined by the CLA, OLA and Ontario Human Rights code.

2. Equal access to the full range of materials, services, and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their unique needs.

The Library integrates library service to teens into the overall plan, budget and service programs for the library. Library service to teens is integrated with those offered to other user groups.

3. Adequate funding for collections and services related to population, use and local community needs.

The Library incorporates funding for materials and services for teens in the library-operating budget and ensures there is equitable distribution of resources to support

programs and services for young adults.

4. Collections that specifically meet the needs of teens.

The Library provides a wide spectrum of current materials of interest to young adults to encourage lifelong learning, literacy, reading motivation, and reader development. The library endeavors to develop collections that encourage leisure reading, support homework and school success and responds to gender and cultural diversity. The library provides unfettered access to technology including social networking, licensed databases, and other online library resources for teens.

5. A library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages.

The Library provides identifiable spaces for teens that are separate from children's spaces where possible, reflects their lifestyle and allows for teens to use this library space for leisure or study, either independently or in groups.

6. Welcoming, respectful, supportive service at every service point.

The Library promotes friendly, positive, non-biased customer interactions with teens, providing staff development and training and ensures that services for teens embrace cultural and gender diversity and economic differences. Library staff will endeavor to respect the teen's need for privacy and nonjudgmental service and assist young adults in acquiring the skills to effectively access all library resources and become information literate.

7. Library Programs and Services appropriate for Teens

The Library fosters youth development by providing programs for teens that contribute to literacy, life-long learning and healthy youth development. The library endeavors to provide volunteer opportunities for helping others through community service hours including participating on Library Advisory Boards, and other projects that help develop a sense of responsibility and community involvement. The library's teen services initiatives are effectively managed according to best practices in the field of Youth Services.

8. Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in teen services.

Library staff is knowledgeable about adolescent development and age appropriate resources for young adults inclusive of those with special needs. The library provides services by teen specialists as well as by others who are trained to serve teens.)

9. An advocate who will speak on their behalf to the library administration, library board, municipal council and community to make people aware of the goals of teen services.

The Library works in partnership with other community agencies and organizations to support all aspects of healthy, successful youth development.

10. Library policies are written to include the needs of the youth.

Adopted at the Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting (June 2010).