



Unattended Child Policy

The Marion County Public Library welcomes children of all ages and strives to provide a safe and appropriate environment for all library users. Libraries are public places, however, and may become unsafe for a child who is left unattended.

Libraries are not intended or licensed to provide childcare and should not be used for this purpose.

A child left alone at the library may become bored or frightened, which may lead to behavior that disrupts library services.

It is not the library's purpose to seek out unattended children, but rather to have guidelines in place when this occurs. The library encourages parents to consider the safety and well-being of their children, as well as the needs of other library users.

Ages Birth to Eleven

Children aged five and younger must be in close proximity and within sight of the adult accompanying them. Children aged nine and younger must be supervised by a responsible caregiver in the same service area--except when the child is participating in a library program.

Responsible caregivers (**age thirteen and older**) must be able to effectively supervise young children and be willing and able to provide contact information for a parent or guardian upon request. Caregivers using computers are still responsible for the behavior of the child accompanying them and should remain aware of where their children are and what they are doing.

If a parent/guardian/caregiver cannot be located, staff will call the police to pick up the child.

Ages Twelve and Older

Children aged twelve and older may use the library's resources unattended, provided that their behavior is not disruptive and they are mature enough to follow library rules, otherwise they should be supervised by a responsible caregiver.

Parents/Guardians are still responsible for the actions and the well-being of their children.

Children exhibiting inappropriate behavior may be asked to leave the library. If a child in this age group is not able to leave the library unaccompanied by an adult, they should not be in the library alone.

Children of any age with mental, physical or emotional disabilities which affect decision making skills or render supervision necessary must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver at all times.

If a situation arises that jeopardizes the safety or welfare of an unattended child, library staff may take action they deem appropriate and necessary to provide for the welfare and safety of that child.

This action may include any or all of the following:

- Locate the parent or caregiver in the library
- Attempt to contact a caregiver not in the library to come and pick up the child
- Call the local police to pick up the child if the caregiver cannot be located
- Request that an unattended child contact their caregiver within 20 minutes of closing Library staff may not transport any child from the library to another location.