

Unattended Children and/or Disruptive Behavior

Policy Statement: The safety of children in the Urbandale Public Library is a serious concern of the library staff. However, the responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent, guardian, or responsible childcare provider and not with library staff. Children under the age of 9 must be attended by a parent or a responsible child care provider while in the Urbandale Public Library. Disruptive children of any age will be asked to leave for the day after receiving one warning. Children under the age of 9 attending a library program must be brought into the building by a parent or responsible child care provider who must remain in the building until the conclusion of the program when they again resume supervision of their charge. Children under the age of 4 must be attended at all times unless attending a library program. It is not the library's intention to seek out unattended children but rather to have a reasoned response prepared as problems present themselves.

Child Left Unattended

A. Child left unattended (under the age of 9)

1. Children left unattended are often frightened and crying and should be comforted by the staff.
2. If it is determined that a child is lost or left unattended, a staff member should bring the child to the person on duty at the youth services desk.
3. The Youth service staff should try to identify and locate the parents or responsible adults.

B. Child left unattended at closing (any age)

1. If the parent is not found in the building, a staff member should stay with the child attempting to locate the parent through searching the library's records, phone book, city directory, etc. If the parent arrives within 15 minutes of closing, they will be informed of the library's policy and asked that the child be picked up in a more timely manner in the future.
2. If the parents have not been located within 15 minutes of closing, the youth services staff shall call the police who will assume responsibility for the child.
3. Under no circumstances shall a staff member leave a child alone outside after closing or take them in their car.

Disruptive Behavior

A. Disruptive attended children (under the age of 9)

1. Children who are misbehaving or requiring constant attention will be asked by staff to correct his/her behavior.

2. If the disruptive behavior continues, a staff member should inform the parents that their child is disturbing others.
3. If the parents refuse or are unable to correct the behavior of the child, the family will be asked to leave for the day.

B. Disruptive unattended children (under the age of 9)

1. If a child is unattended and is misbehaving or requiring constant attention, the staff member will ask the child to correct the behavior.
2. If the child persists, he/she will be told to sit quietly at the table closest to the youth services desk.
3. The staff will obtain the child's and parents' names and attempt to locate the parents or child care giver within the building. If located in the building, explain that the child is being disruptive and inform them of the library policy. If the parents refuse or are unable to control the child, the family will be asked to leave.
4. If the parent cannot be located within the building, the staff member will attempt to contact the parent through searching the library's records, phone book, city directory, etc. When the parent is contacted, he/she will be told that the child is being disruptive, will be reminded of the library's policy, and will be told he/she must pick up the child immediately. If he/she is unable to come immediately, he/she will be told the child may stay this time, but that the police will be called next time.
5. If the parent cannot be contacted or if the library is closing, the police will be called upon to take responsibility for the child unless the child is being picked up in which case the staff member will give the parents' name, address and an account of the disruptive behavior to the Youth Services Librarian and the Library Director who will then write the parent, describing the incident and informing him/her of the library policy.

C. Disruptive children (9 and over)

1. If the child is misbehaving or requiring constant attention, the staff will tell the young person that he/she is causing a disturbance and this is a warning. The next time he/she will be asked to leave for the day.
2. If a parent is present, the staff will explain the circumstances of the problem. If the disruptive behavior continues, the staff will tell the youngster to leave for the day. Staff will follow through to insure that he/she does leave the building.
3. If the child needs a ride and a parent or responsible person is unable to come immediately, they will be told the child may stay until they arrive, but that the police will be called upon to take responsibility for the child at the next occurrence.

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees 11/1992
Revised 02/2007