Smiths Falls Public Library

Policy Type:	**Operational**	Policy Number:	**OP-07**
Policy Title:	**Children's Services**	Policy Approval Date:	**December 2019**
		Last Review Date:	**November 25, 2025**

To ensure that the needs of children are met, this policy discusses services and materials available for children up to grade 8 as well as parents, guardians, caregivers and adults working with children.

The Smiths Falls Public Library provides library service for children of all ages to assist in developing the full potential of each child. The Smiths Falls Public Library Board endorses the *Children's Rights in the Public Library* adopted at the Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting, November 1998 (see Addendum A).

All children without a library card will have equal access to the full range of services and materials available to other users (with the exception of checking materials out).

Children's Spaces

The Library provides a pleasant and welcoming atmosphere for children by:

- designating an area of the library specifically for children and supervisory adults
- adults who are unaccompanied by children will not be permitted to loiter in the Children's Department
- providing furnishings in the Children's Department that have been designed with children in mind
- ensuring that the height of shelves, chairs, and tables corresponds to the height of the users.
- ensuring that signage is clear and legible for children
- providing displays, posters, and other decorative elements that define the children's area, promote library materials and programmes and make the library inviting.

Staffing

The Library provides trained staff enthusiastic about serving children by:

- employing trained children's staff
- identifying and pursuing an active program of ongoing staff training and professional development in children's services
- ensuring that staff receive ongoing training in children's services in order to provide knowledgeable library service

Collection

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

- ensuring a materials selection policy that reflects the characteristics inherent to children's collection
- evaluating the children's collection on an ongoing basis
- ensuring that adequate funds be made available to support the development of a children's collection that is up-to-date, in good condition and generally attractive
- ensuring that the children's collection is organized for easy access and with children's capabilities in mind
- promoting an inclusive environment

Programming

The Children's Librarian shall be responsible for developing a well-planned set of programmes for the children's library throughout the calendar year. Such programmes shall be conducted with the intent of bringing children and their parents into the library, promoting library services and fostering a love of reading.

It is a priority for the Library to offer programs accessible to all children. We strive for programs to be cost-free but we reserve the right to request a contribution to offset extraordinary costs.

Examples of programmes include:

- babytimes
- activities for pre-schoolers
- summer reading activities
- class or club visits
- reading and/or book clubs
- special events such as puppets shows, musicians & magicians
- literacy programs
- activities for school-age children

Outreach/Advocacy

Library staff will:

- encourage the continued cooperation of schools and other community groups in the use of the Library
  - provide expertise and support for community groups and organization serving children
  - participate in community collaborative efforts and events
  - advocate for children's services
  - collaborate with agencies to promote and foster early literacy, love of reading, lifelong learning and children's health and well-being

Rights and Obligations of Parents/Guardians

The Library is a public place and parents/guardians are responsible for their children's supervision at all times. Children are expected to follow the Library's Rules of Conduct.

The Library expects parents to:

- monitor the use of services and collections by their children
- be responsible for borrowed materials and fees incurred by their children
- follow the Unattended Children in the Library (OP-13) policy

Library employees are required to notify the appropriate authorities if they have reason to suspect that there is evidence of child abuse and/or neglect. Ontario Child Youth Family Services Act, Section 125(1).

ADDENDUM A

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

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.

Adopted at the Ontario Library Association
Annual General Meeting
November 1998