



DENTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

UNATTENDED CHILDREN POLICY

Library Board approved revision, December 9, 2019
Reviewed by the Library Management Team, March 16, 2023

POLICY STATEMENT: The Denton Public Library encourages families and children to use our libraries. A child will be treated as a customer of the library and be provided the same standard of service and safety as an adult. The well-being and safety of children is a high priority. However, the library is a public building and any public place may be dangerous for a child who is left unattended even for brief periods of time.

Children, as library customers, are expected to behave appropriately. Parents, guardians, teachers, and other designated caretakers of children—hereafter known as caregivers—are responsible for the behavior and supervision of their charges while in the library. Library staff does not serve “in loco parentis” (in place of a parent.). Those using the library and its resources have the right to expect a reasonably clean, safe, and comfortable environment that supports appropriate library services. To protect these rights, all the users of the Denton Public Library are expected to comply with the Denton Public Library’s *Rules of Conduct* policy.

The *Rules of Conduct* applies to all library premises, including buildings, interior and exterior, and all grounds controlled and operated by the Denton Public Library. The *Rules of Conduct* applies to all individuals entering the library or who are on the library premises.

Unattended Children

- Denton Public Library is neither designated nor licensed to provide childcare.
- A caregiver may not exit the library and leave a child age ten (10) and under without required supervision.
- A caregiver must remain within sight and conversational distance of a child age eight (8) and under.
- Adult caregivers may entrust a teen to be a temporary caregiver while they are out of the building. The temporary caregiver must be at least thirteen (13) years of age and demonstrate that they are willing and capable of supervising the younger children.
- Library staff are not responsible for keeping children from interacting with or leaving the library with persons who are not designated caregivers.

- If approved by the librarian presenting the program, children age ten (10) and under may attend a library program without a caregiver in the room. However, the caregiver is expected to remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.
- Staff may refer to the Texas State Department of Family and Protective Services for those children who are left unattended in the library and all children whose basic needs for food, rest, supervision, or attention are not being fulfilled. The Denton Public Library is not responsible for any consequences of caregivers forfeiting their responsibilities.

Unattended Children at Closing

- Caregivers of children are expected to arrive before the library’s posted closing time. Children fifteen (15) and under cannot be left on library property unattended when the library is closed.
- Children who walk or rode (bicycles, skateboards, etc.) to the library on their own and who expect to go home the same way may be allowed to proceed unless circumstances make it unsafe to do so.
- If the caregiver has not arrived for a child fifteen (15) and under when all closing procedures have been completed, the librarian in charge will make an attempt to reach the child’s caregiver.
- If the caregiver is not able to be contacted or informs the staff they will not be there until 15 minutes or more after closing, the staff will contact the Denton Police Department to take custody of the child.

Child’s Age	Caregiver Responsibilities
8 and under	Caregivers must remain within sight and conversational distance within the library
10 and under	Caregivers may not exit the library without the child(ren)
13 and over	Teen caregivers may act as a temporary caregiver to a younger child while adult caregivers are out of the building
15 and under	If caregivers have not arrived 15 minutes after closing, the Denton Police will be called.