

2.5 UNATTENDED CHILDREN

The Sayreville Public Library welcomes visitors of all ages to use its facilities, materials, programs and services. The *Rules of Conduct for Library Visitors* (Section 2.4) are enforced in order to create a safe, orderly and proper environment for all users. Service to children is an important part of the Library's mission, and the Library Board and staff are dedicated to providing a welcoming, safe, and comfortable place.

Parents should be aware that the Library is a public building *open to all individuals*.

It is not the function or purpose of library personnel to supervise or care for children while parents, guardians, or caregivers are outside the Library, or while the adult is occupied elsewhere in the Library.

The following guidelines will be followed concerning the care and behavior of young library users:

No child under the age of 9 may be left alone in the library or on the library premises for any reason. Even though some small children seem to be responsible and fairly independent, they are vulnerable. Children left alone may feel that they should not alert the staff if there is a problem, and may become frightened if approached by library staff or others. They may become anxious or worried waiting for a parent/caregiver to return.

The parent/caregiver should stay in the immediate vicinity of and in visual contact with the child. If a child attends a library program without a parent/caregiver in the room, the parent/caregiver is expected to remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.

- **If a child under the age of 9 is found unattended**, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the library and inform him/her of the rules. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, or if the child is found unattended again, the police will be called for assistance.
- **The parent/caregiver must supervise their child to comply with the Rules of Conduct for all library visitors.** If a child in this age group violates the Rules of Conduct, the child and the parent/caregiver will be informed of the rules. If inappropriate behavior continues, the family may be asked to leave the library.
- Parents should also provide caregivers with emergency contact information if there is a language problem or for transportation.

Children age 9 and older may use the library on their own. However, parents are still responsible for the actions and the well-being of their child. Children behaving inappropriately may be asked to leave the library, in accordance with the Rules of Conduct for Library Visitors. If a child requires close supervision or constant individual attention, the child should not use the library on their own.

- **If a child in this age group is not able to leave the library without an adult, he/she should not be in the library alone.** This is a particular concern in inclement weather and after dark.
- **All children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency.**
- **Teenagers** are treated as adult users. However, they are still legally the responsibility of their parents and should have an emergency contact available.

Closing Time: Parents/caregivers are expected to be aware of the opening and closing times of the Library. This information is posted on the library doors, on the website and is given on the telephone recording.

- **In case of an unanticipated closing of the building,** every effort will be made to contact the parent/caregiver prior to closing, if the child tells library staff that they do not have transportation. Again, all children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency.
- If transportation is not available and a child is left at the Library after the Library closes, the police will be called. Under no circumstances will library staff take a child out of the building or transport children to another location.