

The North Little Rock Public Library System welcomes children and their families. We are committed to providing a safe, engaging, and supportive environment that encourages a love of books, reading, and learning. To help make the Library an enjoyable place for all visitors, we offer designated children's areas, programs, and services, as well as spaces and services specifically for teens and young adults. We encourage parents, guardians, and caregivers to help children make effective use of the Library by assisting them in selecting materials, using computers and equipment, and participating in programs and events. Working together, we can create a positive and enriching Library experience for everyone.

#### **Access to Children's Areas**

The Children's Area is designed to meet the needs of young Library visitors. Adults who are not using children's materials or participating in children's activities will be asked to use other areas of the Library. Staff prioritize child safety at all times. Only adults accompanying children may use the restrooms located within the Children's Area.

#### **Parent Expectations and Responsibilities**

Because the Library is a public place, children's safety cannot be guaranteed. Children may encounter hazards such as stairs, elevators, doors, furniture, electrical equipment, or interactions with other visitors. The conduct, safety, and supervision of children are the responsibility of parents, guardians, and caregivers, who must determine their child's supervision needs and provide appropriate oversight.

While staff care deeply about the well-being of children, they cannot assume responsibility for supervising them. Appropriate supervision by parents, guardians, and caregivers helps ensure a safe and pleasant environment for all Library visitors.

If a child appears insufficiently capable or mature to be in the Library without supervision, staff will make every effort to locate the parent, guardian, or caregiver in the building to express concern for the child's safety and explain the Library's Child Safety Policy. If the responsible adult cannot be located in the Library, staff will attempt to contact them to pick up the child. If contact cannot be made within a reasonable time, staff will notify the North Little Rock Police Department, who will then assume responsibility for the child.

#### **Staff Role**

Staff members are available to assist children with Library materials and services. However, the Library is not equipped to provide long- or short-term childcare, and visitors should not expect Library staff or facilities to serve as an alternative to childcare or supervision.

#### **Unattended Children**

For the safety and comfort of all visitors, any child who appears insufficiently capable or mature to be in the Library without supervision must be accompanied by a responsible adult or caregiver at least sixteen (16) years of age. Parents, guardians, and caregivers are responsible for monitoring children in

their care, guiding their behavior, and ensuring compliance with Library policies.

Staff members may need to intervene when:

1. A child is frightened, crying, or appears distressed.
2. A child seems at risk of harming themselves.
3. Another person poses a perceived threat to the child.
4. A child exhibits behavior that violates the Visitor Behavior and Code of Conduct Policy.
5. A child is not picked up at closing time or during an emergency.

Staff will evaluate the situation and attempt to locate the responsible adult. If the parent, guardian, or caregiver cannot be located, staff will contact the North Little Rock Police Department to assume care of the child.

This policy is used in conjunction with the Visitor Behavior and Code of Conduct Policy, Behavior Policy Non-Compliance procedures, and the Security Incident Policy. Library staff will complete a written incident report whenever action is taken concerning an unattended or disruptive child on Library premises.