

JERVIS PUBLIC LIBRARY

UNATTENDED CHILDREN POLICY

Jervis Public Library welcomes children and strives to provide a safe, stimulating environment for their educational and cultural needs. The goal of the staff and trustees is to insure that children feel secure and enjoy visiting the library, without interfering with other patrons' use of library services and facilities.

Jervis Library, however, is not responsible for the welfare, or the whereabouts, of children who are left unattended in the library. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children rests with parents/caregivers. Parents are strongly urged to accompany their children, especially younger children, on their visits to the library. The Children's Library is not staffed at all times. Staff does not perform daycare or babysitting duties, nor is it licensed to do so. Staff is engaged entirely in circulation, information, and other library service duties.

*Parents are reminded that numerous unexpected events may occur if their children are here unattended. The child could wander out of the library on his/her own, be approached and/or harmed by untrustworthy people who sometimes frequent public buildings, or be physically injured. The child could be asked to leave if in violation of library rules and policies (refer to *Rules of Behavior, Unruly Patrons Policy, Internet Access Policy*). A child could be stranded at closing time or during an emergency closing. We advise that all children have an emergency contact telephone number with them at all times. However, if no parent or responsible adult is available or reachable by telephone, police assistance will be requested for the safety of the child.*

The library issues the following guidelines concerning the safety and behavior of children:

1. Children through age five shall be accompanied by a parent or responsible caregiver who is at least fourteen years of age. Parent or caregiver will remain in the immediate vicinity of the child at all times.
2. Children ages six through nine shall be accompanied by a responsible caregiver who is at least fourteen years of age, who will remain in the building, and will maintain responsibility for the child.
3. Children ages ten and older may use the library independently provided they follow the library's policies set for all patrons. Parents remain responsible for the actions of their minor children.
4. Additionally, the library advises parents/guardians/caregivers to accompany children of any age who have emotional, mental, or physical problems that render supervision necessary. The library staff will assist and accommodate those with special needs as much as it is able, but library staff cannot assist them to the degree that those familiar with their needs are able to do.

Library staff will maintain a record of incidents regarding unattended children. Repeated incidents may lead to restricted or suspended library access under the library's *Rules of Behavior* and/or *Unruly Patrons* policies. Parents/caregivers will be notified should restriction/suspension be invoked.

Approved by Board of Trustees: 5/9/91

Revised and approved by the Board of Trustees: 12/14/00