

OP 10 Children & Young Adult Services

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1.0 BACKGROUND

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library recognizes that the needs of young people are important in their own right: that their intellectual growth, their cultural appreciation and recreational activities should be fostered through quality library service delivered with consideration and respect.

This policy sets out the services to be offered for children and young adults by the Library. The services described in this policy are intended to meet the needs of children and young adults, as well as parents, guardians and adults who work with children or are interested in children's literature.

2.0 RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Children in public libraries have the right to:

- intellectual freedom;
- equal access to the full range of services and materials available to other users, with the exception of restricted items;
- a full range of materials, services and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their needs;
- adequate funding for collections and services;
- a library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages;
- trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in children's and young adult services;

- welcoming, respectful, supportive service from birth through the transition to adult user; and
- library policies written to include the needs of children and young adults.

3.0 COLLECTION AND ADVISORY SERVICES

The CEO will ensure the maintenance and organization of a comprehensive children's and young adult's collection based on the Collection Development Policy OP-04.

The children's and young adults' collections will meet high standards of quality and reflect the changing educational needs and personal interests of children and young adults as well as trends in society.

Library staff will utilize the full range of collections, technology and methods to answer all users' requests for advice on selecting books and for information, regardless of age and without judgment, with confidentiality and respect. Library staff should pursue what each child and young adult wants and needs.

4.0 PROGRAMS

The library will provide programming for children, young adults and parents, both in and out of the library, to stimulate the creative potential and to encourage and facilitate the habit of reading, independent learning and use of the library.

Some programs may limit the age of children or young adults and the number of children per accompanying adult. This limit will be enforced by the staff as the program is designed for maximum benefit to the child/parent/guardian through one-on-one interaction. Leniency is given to parents of more than one child.

5.0 LIBRARY SPACE

The library will provide well-planned areas for children and young adults that are distinct from the adult area.

These areas should be visually stimulating so that children and young adults are able to readily distinguish their own space from the rest of the library.

These areas will have furniture, shelves and equipment that are designed for and accessible to the designated age group.

The library will ensure that signage is clear and age appropriate.

The children's and young adult's areas are interactive learning environments where controlled noise levels are tolerated and where young users are invited to explore the library materials and services in their own way.

6.0 STAFFING

The Board will support a program of ongoing staff training and professional development in children's and young adult's services. The CEO will ensure that all staff members assigned to children's and young adult's services receive appropriate training to provide knowledgeable library service.

While library staff will assist young people with finding materials, using the Internet or attending programs, they do not act in "loco parentis". Parents or guardians are responsible for their children's use of the library in accordance with Board policy.

7.0 ADVOCACY

The library will advocate for children's and young adult's services in the community by:

- collaborating with agencies to promote early literacy, love of reading, lifelong learning and children's and young adult's health and well-being;
- seeking support for children's and young adult's services from community organizations, fundraising, donations, etc.;
- networking with other agencies who provide service to children and young adults in the community, region and province;
- communicating with principals, teacher librarians, and teachers in the community;
- promoting the children's and young adult's services and collections to groups who could benefit from them (schools, daycares, etc.); and
- welcoming class visits and orientation for school children and homeschooled children.