

CHILDREN'S ROOM ACCESS POLICY

UNATTENDED CHILDREN

The Thayer Public Library welcomes children. The staff endeavors to create a comfortable and safe environment so that time spent in the library fosters a positive attitude toward reading and libraries in general. Responsibility, however, for children in the library rests with their parents or caregivers and not with the library staff.

Public libraries are not completely safe places for unattended children. An "Unattended child" is defined as not with, or supervised by, a parent, caregiver or responsible older sibling. The library is open to the public and the staff does not know everyone who enters. There can never be enough staff to keep an eye on all patrons at all times. Additionally, accidents and emergency situations can occur that require the actions of a responsible party.

The following policy and procedures address the safety of children in the library:

1. Children eight and under should not be left unattended in any area of the library. If the parent/caregiver is working in the adult area, picture books or a toy may be borrowed from the children's area for the child to use while with their caregiver.
2. Children age nine to twelve can be left in the Children's Area for up to half an hour at a time if the parent/caregiver remains in the building and children know how to reach the parent/caregiver.
3. Children age thirteen and older may remain as long as they wish, as long as they are not disruptive.
4. The staff can take no responsibility for noting attendance or absence, or for monitoring material and equipment used in the library. Children should know how to reach their parent/caregiver.
5. Parents should plan to pick up children at least 15 minutes before closing time. It is the parent's/caregiver's responsibility to know library hours.
6. If the library is about to close and no parent/caregiver has arrived, a librarian will ask the child to phone home. If no one responds, the police will be called. Two staff members will wait until the police arrive. Under no circumstances will a staff member take a child home.

ADULTS IN CHILDREN AREA

The Children's Room, and areas that may be designated from time to time for children's programs within the Library, are reserved for use by children, their caregivers and those accompanying them. Patrons not accompanying children may retrieve/return material and permission may be granted to access collections for a specific purpose to them. Patrons not included in these categories are not permitted in these areas and are encouraged to use other library services and spaces.

The Library Board reserves the right to modify the "Children's Room Access Policy" at any time in response to changing conditions.