

BERNARDSVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
Policy & Procedure for Children in the Library

BERNARDSVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
UNATTENDED CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY POLICY

Approved by the Board of Trustees, March 17, 2015

The Trustees and staff of the Bernardsville Public Library hope that children and parents will find our library inviting and enjoyable and will visit often. However, in the interest of safety, no child under the age of eight years may be left unattended in the library. A child is considered unattended unless accompanied in the library by a parent/caregiver, other adult or adolescent of the age of fifteen years or more.

Except when noted, caregivers are required to remain with children during children's library programs. For programs that do not require the caregiver's attendance, the caregiver must remain in the library for the duration of the program. To ensure a smooth transition at the end of the program, the caregiver should return to the Youth Services area at least 10 minutes before the program is scheduled to end to pick up the child.

Parents/caregivers are reminded that unexpected events can occur: the child could wander out of the library, be approached by unsavory people who sometimes visit public buildings, or be physically injured. The staff attempts to ensure the safety of everyone in the building, but the staff is not licensed to perform child care and have primary duties preventing them from supervising each child.

Children eight or older are considered "on their own" as patrons and may use the library alone. All patrons are subject to the Library Use Guidelines-Patron Conduct Guidelines. Under these, if a patron is disruptive, rowdy, or is exhibiting rude or unsafe behavior, the patron will be reminded of the policy twice. If the unacceptable behavior continues after two warnings, the patron must leave the building. Caregivers, not library staff members, are responsible for the behavior and supervision of their children. Disruptive, as well as verbal or physical abuse of library staff or others will not be permitted. Additionally, damage or theft of library property is a crime and is punishable by law.

The Bernardsville Public Library assumes no responsibility for children left unattended on library premises or after closing. When the safety of an unattended child is in doubt, staff will contact the parent/ caregiver. If they are not readily available, staff will contact the Bernardsville Police Department. At time of closing, if a parent/ caregiver cannot be located, the Bernardsville Police Department will be called. No fewer than two library staff members will remain with the unattended child until the Police or parent/caregiver arrives.