



Youth and Child Services

Operational

Purpose

This policy outlines Brantford Public Library's principles and guidelines for providing service to children and youth. In keeping with the Library's mission, services for children and youth are accessible and help empower them. Age appropriate programs, events, and services will be part of daily operations and staff will work to meet the diverse informational and recreational needs of Brantford's children and youth. This policy also provides a framework for the Library's goals and strategic priorities when serving children and youth.

Policy

Principles

The Library Board has adopted the OLA position on Children's Rights in the Library and the OLA framework for Teen's Rights in the Public Library.

All Library policy, rules of conduct, principles, and values apply to children and youth. Library staff will take necessary action if children or youth are in breach of the Library's Rules of Conduct. In the case of children under the age of 12, caregivers are responsible for the behavior of the child in the Library.

Library services, events, and programs will contribute to and support lifelong learning in children and youth. While Library staff strive to provide equal services to each individual, the Library recognizes that certain groups and individuals have unique needs and will work to meet them.

Content

Scope

Children and youth ages 0 to 18 will be served.

Group	Ages
Early Years	0 – 6
School Aged	6 – 12
Youth	12 – 18

Groups to be served include:

- Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers – Often serves as the first access point to the Library for infants, toddlers and preschool children.
- Professional Groups – Professionals working with children, including teachers and staff members in day-care centres.
- Special Interest Groups – Persons working with children such as camp leaders, Girl Guide & Boy Scout leaders, homeschoolers, and those working with children with disabilities.

Services

The Library strives to provide equal services to all customers, including children and youth.

Space

Where possible the Library will provide spaces for children and youth that are:

- distinct from the adult area and distinguishable to children and youth as their own;
- visually and mentally engaging through the use of displays, posters, decorative elements, technology, furnishings, and toys;
- interactive learning environments with a flexible attitude toward noise;
- furnished with sturdy, washable, non-toxic, and age-appropriate furniture and toys, and take into consideration the height and size of shelves, chairs, and tables;
- accessible by assistive devices, wheel chairs, strollers, and baby carriages;
- labeled with clear, legible, and age-appropriate signage;
- inviting and encourage children and youth to explore the Library in their own way.

With the prevalence and severity of peanut allergies, the Library will strive for a peanut free environment during programs. As a public space, staff cannot guarantee a completely allergen free environment.

Collection

The Library offers various circulating and non-circulating materials to fulfill the informational and recreational needs of children and youth. Materials include:

- picture books;
- fiction and non-fiction in a variety of subjects;
- encyclopedias and standard reference works;
- periodicals specifically written for children and youth;
- pathfinders and reading guides to enrich the book collection;
- audiobooks, CDs, DVDs, games, equipment, and electronics;
- Maker materials and equipment;
- databases, ebooks, and computer access.

Library staff help children and youth locate and discover materials through:

Reference and Reader's Advisory

When responding to questions from children and youth, staff will:

- be patient and receptive;
- conduct reference interviews to understand specific wants and needs;
- point out the variety of resources available;
- consider the interests and educational needs, as well as the age, grade, and reading level.

Note: Research for school projects is expected to be part of the child and youth's learning process. Staff will give necessary assistance required to enable students to find their own materials while not completing crucial steps of the project for the child or youth.

Collection Development

The Library has a collection development policy that ensures adequate funding for children and youth collections, and considers the varied characteristics of those collections. The collection will be organized for easy access and findability for children and youth.

(Refer to Collection Development Policy for more details on purchasing, evaluating, weeding, and cataloguing of materials.)

Programs

Children and youth programs support the Library's mission, values, goals, and strategic priorities. The Library provides programming for children and youth for a variety of reasons, including: to inspire imagination and curiosity; to promote and encourage literacy, to develop an interest in lifelong learning; to enrich their lives.

Adequate funds will be made available to support all children and youth programs. Staff will work with schools, community agencies, and each other to incorporate current trends and practices in child and youth development when planning and executing programs. Programs will be offered throughout the calendar year with more programs during school breaks such as PA Days, March Break, and Summer Break. As best as possible, staff will develop programs that are unique, and not offered elsewhere in the community.

Content and Format

Programs will cover a wide variety of topics following the informational and recreational needs of children and youth. Examples of programs include: storytelling for young children; pre-school programs; summer reading programs; class or club visits; movie times; special guests such as performers and authors; volunteer opportunities for youth.

Location

Staff will run programs at both branches of the Library as well as externally. Off-site locations include schools, parks, Neighbourhood Hubs, Early ON Centres, clubs, and community centres.

School Visits

The Library recognizes school librarians as the primary service for providing children and youth with curriculum specific materials. The Library can deliver orientation visits for students, teachers and school librarians to inform them of Library resources and services. When possible, visits to schools by staff will reinforce the Library's informational and recreational relevance to children.

Ages

Based on content, format, and time of day, programs are designed for and encourage certain age groups to attend. Some programs will have an age requirement clearly stated when that will be of most benefit to participating children and youth. Leniency is given to caregivers of more than one child; Library staff will adapt to their needs as best as possible.

Registration and Attendance

Most programs will be offered on a first come, first served basis with no registration required. Programs may require registration depending on the format of the program, anticipated attendance number, or other limiting factors. The number of attendees to a program will depend on the format, size of the space, fire safety limits, staff supervision, and available materials.

Programmers will enforce attendance limits when required.

Fees

All programs for children and youth will be free of charge.

Marketing

Services for children and youth will be fully promoted using various channels of communication through community partners, local media, paid advertising, in-house publications and displays, including the Library's website, social media, and staff interactions with customers.

Staff

All staff working with children and youth will receive appropriate initial and ongoing training. While there is a Children and Youth team of programmers, all staff are expected to serve children and youth as required.

Supervision

Library staff are not responsible for the supervision of children or youth. Refer to the Safe Child Policy for further information.

Community Engagement

The Library communicates and works with other community groups and organizations serving children and youth. Overall, collaborations with community groups serve to promote literacy, lifelong learning, and health and well-being in children and youth. Community engagement activities include:

- encouraging schools and community groups in the use of the Library;
- providing expertise and support;
- participating in community collaborative efforts such as:
 - serving on multi-agency committees;
 - participating in school and community events.

History

Supersedes: Not applicable

Background documents, related policies: OLA position on Children's Rights in the Library;
OLA framework for Teen's Rights in the Public Library

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