



Children and Youth 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.

Principles

Brantford Public Library endeavors to provide Children & Youth Services in alignment with the OLA position on Children's Rights in the Library, the OLA framework for Teen's Rights in the Public Library, and the Canadian Federation of Library Associations *Statement on Library & the Intellectual Freedom of Children & Youth*.

An inclusive environment, where diverse backgrounds, identities and perspectives are valued, is the heart of who we are and essential to the role the Brantford Public Library plays in the community. The Library's commitment to building and supporting a welcoming and inclusive space is foundational to children and youth services.

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.

This policy speaks to the activities of youth aged 0 – 18, but also considers groups that represent the interests of children and youth, including parents and guardians, educators, and third-party program leaders. While all aspects of this policy apply to both children (0 – 12 years old) and youth/teens (13 – 18 years old), it is acknowledged that developmental and social needs of customers under 18 years old vary, and these differences will be considered when developing programs, services, and spaces.

All Library policies, rules of conduct, principles, and values apply to children and youth. The *Safe Child* policy speaks to the responsibility of parents/guardians for youth under the age of 16 while accessing library collections, services, and spaces.

Policy

Collection

- Brantford Public Library will ensure the maintenance and organization of a comprehensive collection of materials for and about children, and a teen/young adult collection, based on the Collection Development Policy.
- These collections will meet best practice standards of quality and reflect the changing educational needs and personal interests of children and youth.
- Access to these materials will not be restricted by library staff but will be the responsibility of caregivers to determine suitability for their child or youth.

Reference and Reader's Advisory

- Library staff will draw from the full range of library collections and resources to answer a child or youth customer query, regardless of age and without judgement, with confidentiality and respect.
- Library staff should engage in meaningful and age-appropriate conversations to better understand the customer query.

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.

Programs & Partnerships

- The Library will provide programming for children, caregivers, and youth, both in and out of the Library, to stimulate creative potential and to encourage and facilitate the habit of reading, independent learning, and lifelong use of the library.
- The Library will cultivate partnerships with community organizations that focus on the needs of children and youth, allowing us to maintain a strong knowledge of local trends, resources, and service pathways.
- The Library will provide educational, entertaining, and literacy related programs for children and youth:
 - as part of a robust set of offerings to caregivers and families;
 - in various settings, such as in school classes or daycamp outreach;
 - and, at a variety of convenient times, including school break periods.

- When required by operational purposes, program registration requirements and capacity limits will be communicated to customers and maintained by the programming staff team.

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.

History

Supersedes: Not applicable

Background documents, related policies: Brantford Public Library Collection Development Policy, Brantford Public Library Safe Child Policy, OLA position on Children's Rights in the Library; OLA framework for Teen's Rights in the Public Library, Canadian Federation of Library Associations Statement on Library & the Intellectual Freedom of Children & Youth

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