

# Child Supervision Policy:

Newton Public Library encourages children to visit and use the library, to encourage a lifelong love of books, reading and libraries.

The library staff works to ensure the safety of children in the library; however, their duties prevent them from being able to supervise individual children left in the library facility. When children are using the library, it is the responsibility of the parents or guardians, not the library staff, to supervise their children. Parents may designate a responsible person (age 14 or older) to act as their representative for a child in the library. This representative must carry emergency contact information.

## Supervision:

“Supervise” means that a parent or responsible parent’s representative is with the child in the library and is ensuring:

1. That children act in accordance with library rules.
2. That children’s behavior does not present a safety hazard to themselves, other users, or library property.
3. That children’s behavior does not interfere with the use of the library by others.

Parents or caregivers of children 5 and younger must remain in the library while attending library programs. Parents of children 6 and older are not required to remain in the building during a library-sponsored program supervised by library staff.

## Age guidelines:

The following age guidelines have been established to ensure that children are safe and cared for while in the library:

Children 5 and younger: A parent or representative must remain with them at all times, on the same level of the library.

Children 6-8: A parent or representative must remain in the building for the duration of the child’s visit, except while the child is attending a library-sponsored program supervised by library staff.

Children 9-12: Children of these ages can use the library unattended, but should not be left alone for more than two hours and should have emergency contact information.

## Staff interventions:

Patrons of all ages, including children, are required to adhere to the Patron Code of Conduct, which bars such conduct as running, throwing things, loud talking, and misuse of library furnishings or materials. [For the full Code of Conduct, see page 3 of the Service and Operational Policies and Guidelines.] Staff who observe behaviors that violate the Code of Conduct will remind patrons, including children, of library rules. If multiple warnings are required, patrons, including children, may be asked to leave the library for the remainder of the day.

Library staff will make a reasonable attempt to notify parents, guardians, or caregivers in the event that a child is disruptive, becomes ill or injured, or is deemed to be at risk of harm (i.e.: is left at the library when it closes), or if an emergency occurs at the library (i.e.: fire). However, it may be necessary to notify law enforcement or emergency medical personnel for assistance with unattended children.

Since staff members are unable to authenticate the relationship between a caller and a child, for the protection of the child, staff cannot answer phone inquiries about whether a child is in the building. In the case of an emergency, staff members are authorized to take the name of the caller and a phone number and will attempt to locate the child (or adult) and deliver the message.