

**PASCO COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
POLICY MANUAL**

SECTION: PUBLIC SERVICES

POLICY TITLE: UNATTENDED CHILD

EFFECTIVE DATE: JANUARY 2005

REVISED: JULY 2008

Philosophy:

The Pasco County Library System is dedicated to providing a welcoming, educational, and safe environment for customers of all ages. Parents, guardians, and caregivers are responsible for the safety, behavior, and supervision of their children at all times in the library and on library property, whether or not they are with the child.

When children are left alone they may become frightened or anxious. If they wander through the building they may encounter hazards such as stairs, doors, furniture or electrical equipment. They may also become bored and restless and could disturb the enjoyment and work of others

The safety of children left alone in a library building is a serious concern of the library staff. However, the library is a public facility, and staff may not be able to monitor all aspects of patron behavior. Libraries cannot guarantee that a child will be safe in the Library or on library property. Libraries does not act **in loco parentis**.

Statement of Policy:

It is strongly recommended that children be accompanied in the library by a parent, guardian, or assigned caregiver. Staff is not able to provide childcare or babysitting.

An exception would be children attending a story time or library program without a parent, guardian or caregiver in the room. However, the parent, guardian or caregiver must remain in the library building and join the child at the end of the program or when summoned by a library staff member to care for the child.

Parents/guardians and caregivers should be aware of library opening and closing times and make suitable arrangements to meet and/or transport their children. In the event that a child is left after library hours and no one can be contacted to provide transportation within fifteen (15) minutes, the staff will call the appropriate law enforcement agency for

assistance. Staff will not transport children home or to any other destination under any circumstances.

Violation of Policy:

Library staff cannot be responsible for children who are unattended or who are demonstrating inappropriate behavior. If a child's behavior does not conform to the library's Patron Conduct Policy, or results in a safety issue, the child may be asked to leave the library, a parent may be notified, and/or law enforcement may be called for assistance.

Complaints by other library patrons of misbehavior or disturbance by a child, or the need for a staff member to repeatedly approach the child and/or parent, guardian or caregiver about a child's behavior, may be grounds to ask the child, and anyone accompanying the child, to leave the library immediately.