

# Metuchen Public Library

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## CHILDREN'S ROOM POLICY

The Metuchen Public Library welcomes people of all ages and all abilities to use its facilities, services, and resources. Children and their safety are of great concern to the Library. Parents and caregivers are advised that libraries are public places. In libraries, as in all public places, "stranger danger" is a real concern. Library staff cannot prevent children from interacting with or leaving the library with persons who are not appropriate caregivers. We encourage families and youth to use our Library and, while doing so, also affirm parents/guardians and caregivers' responsibility for their children's safety and conduct.

The materials, services and equipment in the Metuchen Public Library Children's room are intended for the use of children, their parents/guardians, caregivers, and others needing children's materials and services for some specific purpose. All other patrons are asked to use the adult areas of the Library.

The purpose of this policy is to outline acceptable use of the Children's Room and its resources and to ensure that the Children's Room is a welcoming, safe place for all children who use it.

### Child Safety and Conduct in the Children's Room:

- Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children while the children are in the library.
- No child under the age of 10 shall be left without adult supervision for any reason in any part of the library; they must be accompanied by a responsible parent or caregiver at all times.
- Children 10 years of age or older may be left in the building unattended for no more than three hours. If this policy is not observed, library staff will attempt to locate the parents of children left unattended in the library. If it is not possible to contact a parent or guardian, the police may be notified. The Library is not responsible for the safety of any child in the library.
- Parents or guardians should encourage their children to use low voices and should calm/console upset children when necessary.

- Children must conduct themselves at all times in a manner appropriate to a library setting. For example, cleaning up after use of crayons, toys, and library materials.
- Running, roughhousing, loud noise, inappropriate conduct with the furniture or toys (such as throwing or climbing) or other disruptive, damaging, and/or dangerous behavior is not acceptable. Disruptive children may be asked to leave the Library.
- It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to supervise children. Library staff do not act in place of the parent or guardian and are not responsible for the care of unsupervised children.
- Staff will make a reasonable effort to assure that children leave the Library safely at closing time. If any children remain at the Library 15 minutes before closing, a staff member will contact parent/guardian or caregiver. If the parent/guardian or caregiver cannot be reached within 15 minutes of closing, the matter will be referred to the Metuchen Police Department.

Appropriate use of the Children's Room includes:

- Use by children birth to 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Use by a parent or caregiver while attending a child in the library. Parents and caregivers should generally be with the child in their care and assisting the child in using library resources.
- Use by a teacher, day care provider, researcher, etc. in developing curricula or other resources related to children's literature or materials.
- Use by a patron over 8<sup>th</sup> grade when materials suitable to the patron's particular needs are not available in the young adult/adult areas of the Library.
- Use by tour groups, visiting librarians, library volunteers, teachers, city officials, trades people, or others visiting the Children's area for business-related purposes.

Out of concern for the safety of young patrons, adults who are unaccompanied by a child or children in the Children's Room, and conduct activities that are not specifically tied to the use of materials in the Children's Room may be questioned by staff, and may be asked to move to another area of the Library.

1<sup>st</sup> Reading 1/12/2016

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading and Adopted 2/9/2016

Revised and Approved 3/12/2019