

CAPITAL AREA DISTRICT LIBRARIES
SER 103a UNATTENDED CHILDREN
AUGUST 16, 2023

Capital Area District Libraries endeavors to provide a welcoming environment for patrons of all ages. In order to share this environment with each other, all library patrons need to follow the Library Code of Conduct established by the Library Board of Trustees and posted in each library building and on the Library web site, www.cadl.org. Capital Area District Libraries wants children to use its facilities and services. Young children in the library should always be accompanied by a parent/guardian or assigned caregiver. Parents should be advised that the library is a public place and unattended children are vulnerable.

The safety of children left alone in a library building is a serious concern of the library staff. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/caregiver. Library employees cannot be responsible for children who are unattended or demonstrating inappropriate behavior.

The following guidelines will be followed concerning the care and behavior of young library users:

Children aged seven or younger must have a parent/caregiver in the immediate vicinity of and in visual contact with the child. The assigned caregiver must be a responsible person, at least twelve years old, and must carry emergency contact information if a minor. An exception would be children attending a library program without a parent/caregiver in the room. The parent/caregiver is expected to remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.

If a child in this age group violates the Library Code of Conduct, the child and the parent/caregiver will be informed of the policy. If misuse persists, the family may be asked to leave the library.

If a child in this age group is found unattended, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the library and inform him/her of the policy. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, or if the child is left unattended again, the police may be called for assistance.

Children aged eight and older may use the library on their own. However, parents are still responsible for the actions and the well-being of their child(ren). Unattended children are welcome to use the library. If they are disruptive to patrons or staff, they may be asked to leave.

If a child in this age group is not able to leave the library without an adult due to inclement weather, it being after dark, or other extenuating circumstances, a staff member will call the child's parent/legal guardian or emergency contact. If they cannot

be reached, the police may be called for assistance. All children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency.

Teenagers are treated as adult users. However, they are still legally the responsibility of their parents and should have an emergency contact available.

Closing Time: Youth aged 15 and under who do not have transportation home at closing time will be asked for telephone numbers of people who can pick them up at the library. If transportation is not available within 15 minutes of closing, the police may be called for assistance. A minimum of two staff members must stay with the youth if it is after closing.

Penalties: Patrons who do not adhere to this policy will be asked to leave the library. Repeat offenders may be denied access to the library for longer periods of time. See Library Code of Conduct (SER 103).