

# **Adams County Library System Unattended Child Policy**

**Mission:** The mission of the Adams County Library System is to provide all County residents access to library materials and information systems that address the needs and expand the aspirations of County residents for formal and lifelong learning, enrichment and pleasure.

**RATIONALE:** The purpose of this policy is to promote the safety of children in the library. Although the staff, administration and Board of Trustees of the Adams County Library System strive daily to make the Library a friendly, warm, inviting and safe place for children and families to visit, the library is a public building. As public facilities, the Adams County Library System staff is not able to provide adequate security and supervision for children during the entire time they are visiting a facility. Therefore, this policy is to provide an outline of what the staff should do when children are determined to be unattended.

## **Child Safety**

The Adams County Library System welcomes children to use its facilities and services. However, the responsibility for the care, safety and behavior of children using the library rests with the parent/guardian or caregiver. A caregiver must be at least 12 years of age. Library staff members have many duties and cannot supervise children nor act as a substitute for daycare.

Children through age 7 must have a parent or caregiver in the immediate vicinity unless they are participating in a Library program. Parents or caregivers for those aged 5 or under who do not attend the program with the child should remain in the building. Parents are still responsible for the actions of their children.

Children 8 – 12 may use the Library unattended for an amount of time appropriate to their age and maturity. It is important for staff to take note of disruptions caused by children who appear to be unaccompanied. Parents are still responsible for the actions of their children. Children using inappropriate behavior will be informed of the rules. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child will be asked to leave the Library. If a child in this age group is unaccompanied by an adult or appropriate-aged caregiver, the staff will follow the directions below for children found on Library premises without a parent or caregiver. All children should have the telephone number of someone who can assist them in an emergency. The Library staff may not take responsibility for the care of a child of any age.

If a child is found without a parent or caregiver, the staff will:

1. Attempt to comfort the child, if necessary.
2. Locate the parent or caregiver in the Library and explain the Child Safety Policy.

3. Make every effort to contact the parent or caregiver who is not in the Library to come and pick up the child. Staff will express the Library's concern for the child's safety and explain the Child Safety Policy.
4. Call the local Police to pick up the child if the parent or caregiver cannot be located within 30 minutes. Staff will notify the Director that police have been called.
5. Encourage an unattended child to contact the parent or guardian if it is within 15 minutes of closing time. If a parent or caregiver cannot be contacted or does not arrive within 15 minutes of closing, Library Staff will call the local Police to pick up the child. Staff will notify the Director that police have been called.
6. Remain with the child until the parent or caregiver or police arrive. This is compensated time for the two staff members who remain with the child.
7. Leave a note on the Library door stating "Unattended child is in the custody of the [Facility Name] Police [Address], [Phone Number]" once the child is in the care of the police. Names will not be stated on the sign.
8. Under no circumstances will library staff transport any minor in their personal car or Library vehicle.