



**POLICY # 102 – Unattended Children**  
**Approved by the Board of Trustees 2/26/2018**

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**Policy Statement:**

The Ruth Enlow Library welcomes library use by children. Staff members are available to assist children with library materials or services. The library staff and administration wish to provide a safe and appropriate environment for visitors of all ages. The library, however, is a public building with staff trained to provide public library services. The library is not equipped—and it is not the staff's responsibility—to provide long- or short-term child care.

**Regulations:**

For the safety and comfort of children, a responsible adult or caregiver should accompany children while they are using the library. While in the library, parents and caregivers are primarily responsible for monitoring and regulating the behavior of their children.

Unattended children under the age of 8 are not permitted in the library, except with specific permission from the library staff, and are subject to the following Maryland law:

A person who is charged with the care of a child under the age of 8 years may not allow the child to be locked or confined in a dwelling, building, enclosure, or motor vehicle while the person charged is absent and the dwelling, building, enclosure, or motor vehicle is out of the sight of the person charged unless the person charged provides a reliable person at least 13 years old to remain with the child to protect the child. (Annotated Code of Maryland, FL §5-801)

Library staff members will be guided by this policy in situations, such as:

- An unattended child is found frightened or crying in the library.
- An unattended child is perceived to be endangering him or herself, or another person in the library poses a perceived threat to the unattended child.
- An unattended child exhibits inappropriate or disruptive behavior.
- An unattended child has not been met by a responsible caregiver at closing time.

After evaluating the situation, library staff members will attempt to contact the parent or guardian of an unattended child. If a child is left unattended in the library, the staff will attempt to locate his/her parents. Staff is not required to remain after hours with an unattended child. Library staff may not give the child a ride home. For the safety of the child, the staff will not leave a child under the age of twelve outside to wait for a ride. If a parent cannot be reached by the time the library is to close, the police will be called to escort the child home or keep the child until parents can be reached. This policy should be used in conjunction with the Rules of Conduct.