

UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY

The Elmwood Park Public Library is dedicated to providing a welcoming and comfortable environment that encourages children to visit the library and use its resources and materials as well as attend library programming.

NJSA 9:6-8.21 prohibits parents from endangering the welfare of their children. NJSA 30:5B-1 prohibits the library from functioning as a child care center unless licensed by the State of New Jersey.

Children under the age of six years must remain with a responsible caregiver at all times unless they are in a specific program that does not require the presence of an adult.

Children six to ten years old may be left unattended, but must have a responsible caregiver present in the library building.

Children eleven and older may use the library alone.

Children of all ages are not allowed to:

- Engage in disruptive conduct including loud talking, rude language, making noise, running, pushing or fighting.
- Steal, damage or mark materials, premises or equipment.
- Misuse the restrooms.
- Talk on cell phones.
- Bring food or drink into the library.

If a child fails to observe these library rules and regulations, the child will be asked to leave the premises.

Staff are not permitted to protect or monitor children, adults needing care, or personal belongings.

If problems arise while children are using the library or if they are left alone, the library staff will attempt to reach a parent. In certain circumstances, if no parent can be contacted, the police will be called.

Parents or a responsible caregiver are required to be at the library 15 minutes before closing time. Staff will approach unattended children 15 minutes before closing to confirm that they have a ride home, and if not, staff or the child will attempt to contact a parent or caregiver. If the child's ride has not arrived by closing, two staff members will wait with the child. At 15 minutes past closing, staff will call the Elmwood Park Police for assistance in locating the parents/legal guardian/caregiver. Staff are not permitted to escort the child off library property nor to drive the child home.

Parents, guardians, or caregivers, not the library, are responsible for the behavior of their children or dependent persons using the library and may be responsible for damages caused by their children or dependent persons.

Adults who visit the children's library area must be actively caring for or waiting for a child or using the children's library collection.

Approved by the Elmwood Park Free Public Library Board of Trustees on May 17, 2022, Revised April 17, 2023.