



Española Public Library

A. PURPOSE

Service to children is a high priority of Española Public Library. Children are welcome and are encouraged to use the library's materials, services, and programs. We strive to have a warm and welcoming library setting in which to serve children. The Library is a public building, and the safety and well-being of unattended children is a serious concern. Young children can become frightened, anxious, or restless and disruptive, especially when left alone for an extended period of time. This policy has been established to provide a safe and positive environment for children who use the Library.

B. POLICY STATEMENT

Responsibility for the welfare and behavior of children in the Library rests with the parent/legal guardian or assigned chaperone. The Library staff does not provide care or supervision of children, except to the extent needed to uphold City policies and the Library Rules of Behavior.

Children under eight (8) years of age must be accompanied by a parent/legal guardian at all times. If a parent or legal guardian of any child under the age of eight (8) cannot be contacted or located the Library will ask the Española Police Department to intervene. Children aged eight (8) and older may be left unattended provided they are mature enough to stay alone and observe proper conduct.

Disruptive children will be required to leave the Library. Children are subject to the same rules of conduct as other library patrons, and the same consequences apply, including suspension from use of the library or intervention by Española Police Department. The possibility that such consequences may be imposed should be considered when deciding whether or not to allow your child to use the library without parental supervision.

Because the Library is a public building, children are at risk of physical injury, abduction, assault, or psychological distress when left unattended. Parents/legal guardians need to consider the maturity of their children before leaving them at the library. They should insure that children are trained in appropriate interaction with strangers, and that children are comfortable speaking to library staff whenever they feel threatened. Children left unattended in violation of this policy will be considered endangered by staff, and they will be referred to the Española Police Department for intervention or other appropriate action.

Medical emergencies:

Unattended children who experience a medical emergency are not the responsibility of Library Staff. When staff recognize a medical emergency they will immediately call 911 for emergency assistance. Staff will not assume any responsibility for the treatment or transport of a child in medical distress. Staff will attempt to contact the parent/legal guardian or assigned chaperone.

If the Library is closing and the parent or legal guardian of an unattended child cannot be reached, the Library staff will call Española Police Department.

A minimum of two adults will remain with the child until the police arrive. Staff will write incident reports and forward them to the Library Director whenever a child is left in violation of this policy, or whenever Española Police Department is required to intervene.

C. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all minor children who visit Española Public Library and their parents/guardians.

D. LEGAL REFERENCES NMSA (1978) 32-A-4-3 Children's Code