Powassan and District Union Public Library
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SERV-03 - Children's and Teens' Services

The Powassan & District Union Public Library (PDUPL) recognizes that the needs of young people are important in their own right: that their intellectual growth, their cultural appreciation and recreational activities should be fostered through quality library service, delivered with consideration and respect. This policy sets out the services to be offered for children and teens.

Rights of the Child

The PDUPL endeavours to provide this service based on the principles stated in the Ontario Library Association's *Children's Rights in the Public Library, 1988.* See Appendix A.

Section 1: Scope

The services described in this policy are intended to meet the needs of children and teens, as well as parents, guardians and adults who work with children or are interested in children's literature.

Section 2: Services

1. Collections:

   a) The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will ensure the maintenance and organization of a comprehensive children's and teens' collection.
   b) The children's and teens' collections will meet high standards of quality and reflect the changing educational needs and personal interests of children and teens as well as trends in society.
   c) The staff will develop collections to define the scope and to address the issues of:
      i. Canadian authors and content
      ii. award-winning titles
      iii. non-fiction material that complement the local school curriculum
      iv. age appropriate formats

2. Reference and Readers Advisory

   a) The qualified staff will utilize the full range of collections, technology and methods to answer all users' requests for advice on selecting books and for information, regardless of age and without judgment, with confidentiality and respect.
   b) Library staff should conduct regular informal interviews to better understand what each child and teen wants and needs.
   c) Library staff will point out the variety of resources available in all areas of the library as appropriate.

Programmes:

   a) The library will provide programming for children, teens and parents, both in and out of the library, to stimulate creative potential and to encourage and facilitate the habit of reading, independent learning and use of the library.

   b) The library will provide educational, entertaining and literature related programmes and support for children and teens, such as:
      i. programmes for parents/guardians, adults, caregivers that will educate them on the importance of early literacy, the role of the library in their children's lives, and the support the library can offer them
      ii. programmes for classes, children's groups (Brownies), daycare, etc., depending on age, will emphasize early literacy and library orientation, and that encourage reading for leisure, or highlight various aspects of the collection
      iii. programmes for summer, school breaks and professional development days will be primarily book based and will highlight various aspects of our collection while encouraging reading for pleasure or leisure activities.

   c) The staff will actively involve teens in planning and implementing programmes for this age group.

   d) The number of participants for all programmes will be restricted based on size of the facility, fire department limits, staff supervision available, etc.; this will be enforced by the children's programmer in charge.

e) Some programmes may limit the age of children or teens and the number of children per accompanying adult. This limit may be enforced by the staff as the programme is designed for maximum benefit to the child/parent/guardian through one on one interaction. Leniency is given to parents of more than one child.

Section 3: Library Space

1. The library will provide well-planned areas for children and teens that are distinct from the adult area.

2. These areas should be visually stimulating so that children and teens are able to readily distinguish their own space from the rest of the library.

3. These areas will have furniture, shelves and equipment that are designed for and accessible to all children.

4. The library will ensure that signage is clear and age appropriate.

5. The children's and teens' areas are interactive learning environments where controlled noise levels are tolerated and where young users are invited to explore the library materials and services in their own way.

Section 4: Staffing

1. The board will support a programme of ongoing staff training and professional development in children's and teens' services.

2. The CEO will ensure that all staff members assigned to children's and teens' services receive appropriate training to provide knowledgeable library service.

3. While library staff will assist young people with finding materials, using the Internet or attending programs, they do not act in "loco

parentis". Parents/guardians are responsible for their children's use of the library. Library staff will:

a) promote early literacy, love of reading, lifelong learning and children's and teens' health and well-being

b) seek support for children's and teens' services from community organizations, fundraising, donations, etc.

c) network with other agencies who provide service to children and teens in the community, region and province

d) communicate with principals, teacher librarians and teachers in the community

e) promote the children's and teens' services and collections to groups who could benefit from them (schools, daycares, etc.)

f) welcome class visits and orientation for school children and home schooled children

Appendix A

OLA Position on Children's Rights in the Public Library

Children in Public Libraries have the right to:

1. Intellectual freedom.

2. Equal access to the full range of services and materials available to other users.

3. A full range of materials, services and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their needs.

4. Adequate funding for collections and services related to population, use and local community needs.

5. A library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages.

6. Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in children's services.

7. Welcoming, respectful, supportive service from birth through the transition to adult user.

8. An advocate who will speak on their behalf to the library administration, library board, municipal council and community to make people aware of the goals of children's services.

9. Library policies written to include the needs of the child.