

Policy: Operational - Children and Teen Services

Department: Library

Effective Date: December 2013

Revision Date: February 2024

Next Year of Review: 2026

The Bruce County Public Library 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 Bruce County Public Library endeavours to provide this service based on the principles stated in the Ontario Library Association's Children's Rights in the Public Library, 1988, and Teen Rights in the Public Library adopted June 2010. See Appendices A and B.

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.

Services

1. Collections

- a. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will ensure the maintenance and organization of a comprehensive children's and teens' collection based on the Collection Development Policy.
- 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.

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 will engage in meaningful and age-appropriate conversation to better understand the individuals wants and needs.

- c. Library staff will point out the variety of resources available in all areas of the library as appropriate.

3. Programs

- 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. Programming for children and teens will follow the Bruce County Public Library Programming Policy.
- c. The library will provide educational, entertaining, and literacy related programs and support for children and teens, such as:
 - i. programs for parents/guardians, adults, and 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. programs for classes, children's groups, daycares, etc., that, depending on age, will emphasize early literacy, new skills, and library orientation, and that encourage reading for leisure, or highlight various aspects of the collection.
 - iii. programs for summer, school breaks and professional development days will highlight various aspects of our collection while encouraging reading for pleasure or leisure activities.
- d. The number of participants for all programs will be restricted based on size of the facility, fire department limits, staff capacity and resources, etc. Pre-registration may be required.
- e. Some programs may limit the age of children or teens and/or the number of children per accompanying adult. This limit may be enforced by staff.

Library Space

- 1. Where possible, the library will provide well-planned areas for children and for 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. Where possible, 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.

Staffing

1. The board will support a program 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 receives 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 and its services.

Advocacy for Children and Teens

1. The library will advocate for children's and teens' services in the community by:
 - a) collaborating with agencies to promote early literacy, love of reading, lifelong learning and children's and teens' health and well-being.
 - b) seeking support for children's and teens' services from community organizations, fundraising, donations, etc.
 - c) networking with other agencies who provide service to children and teens in the community, region, and province.
 - d) communicating with principals, teacher librarians and teachers in the community.
 - e) promoting the children's and teens' services and collections to groups who could benefit from them (schools, daycares, etc.).
 - f) welcoming class visits and orientation for school children and home-schooled children.

Related Documents:

Bruce County Public Library OP - Collection Development Policy
Bruce County Public Library OP - Internet Services Policy
Bruce County Public Library OP - Unattended Children Policy
Bruce County Public Library OP - Circulation Policy
Bruce County Public Library OP - Programming Policy

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.

Appendix B

Ontario Library Association - Teen's Rights in the Public Library

Goals for Library Services for Teens:

Young people are valuable members of our library community who deserve the same respect, dignity and human rights as all library members. This document provides a framework for developing library services to teens that meet the educational, informational, and cultural and leisure needs of young people in ways that are developmentally appropriate. Each public library has a different community to serve and therefore different priorities and needs. Although specific services for teens have not been well established in all libraries, these goals are created in the belief that young adulthood is a unique life stage and that young adults are entitled to the same quality of library services offered to other age groups in the population. (Adapted from the IFLA Guidelines for Library Services for Young Adults, 2006 and the YALSA Guidelines for Library Services to Teens, Ages 12-18, 2006.)

The goal of library services for teens is to assist with the transition from children's services to adult services and to provide access to both resources and an environment that meets the needs of young people for intellectual, emotional and social development. Specifically these needs are based on the unique seven developmental needs of adolescents and the five core values of quality service to teens:

Seven Developmental Needs of Teens

- Physical activity
- Competence and achievement
- Self-definition
- Creative expression
- Positive social Interaction with Peers and Adults
- Structure and Clear Limits
- Meaningful Participation

Excerpted from Dorman, G. (1981). The Middle Grades Assessment Program: User's Manual. Carrboro, NC: Center for Early Adolescence.

Five Core Values of Service to Teens

- Respecting and responding to unique YA needs
- Providing equal access
- Empowering Youth through participation
- Engaging Teens in active collaboration
- Supporting healthy youth development

Core Values excerpted from Jones, P. (2002). New directions for library service to young adults. Chicago: American Library Association.

Teens in Ontario Public Libraries have the right to:

1. Intellectual freedom

The library establishes clear policy statements concerning the right to free access by young adults to library resources and information sources; and respect for the rights of young adults to select materials appropriate to their needs without censorship. The library's teen collection, policies and services should be consistent with the concepts of intellectual freedom defined by the CLA, OLA and Ontario Human Rights code.

2. Equal access to the full range of materials, services, and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their unique needs.

The Library integrates library service to teens into the overall plan, budget and service program for the library. Library service to teens is integrated with those offered to other user groups.

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

The Library incorporates funding for materials and services for teens in the library operating budget and ensures there is equitable distribution of resources to support programs and services for young adults.

4. Collections that specifically meet the needs of teens

The Library provides a wide spectrum of current materials of interest to young adults to encourage lifelong learning, literacy, reading motivation, and reader development. The library endeavors to develop collections that encourage leisure reading, support homework and school success and responds to gender and cultural diversity. The library provides unfettered access to technology including social networking, licensed databases, and other online library resources for teens.

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

The Library provides identifiable spaces for teens that are separate from children's spaces where possible, reflects their lifestyle and allows for teens to use this library space for leisure or study, either independently or in groups.

6. Welcoming, respectful, supportive service at every service point.

The Library promotes friendly, positive, non-biased customer interactions with teens, providing staff development and training and ensures that services for teens embrace cultural and gender diversity and economic differences. Library staff will endeavor to respect the teen's need for privacy and nonjudgmental service and assist young adults in acquiring the skills to effectively access all library resources and become information literate.

7. Library Programs and Services appropriate for Teens

The Library fosters youth development by providing programs for teens that contribute to literacy, life-long learning and healthy youth development. The library endeavors to provide volunteer opportunities for helping others through community service hours including participating on Library Advisory Boards, and other projects that help develop a sense of responsibility and community involvement. The library's teen services initiatives are effectively managed according to best practices in the field of Youth Services.

8. Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in teen services.

Library staff is knowledgeable about adolescent development and age appropriate resources for young adults inclusive of those with special needs. The library provides services by teen specialists as well as by others who are trained to serve teens.)

9. 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 teen services.

The Library works in partnership with other community agencies and organizations to support all aspects of healthy, successful youth development.

10. Library policies are written to include the needs of the youth.

Adopted at the Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting June 2010.