



Unattended Child Policy

Section: Library Operations

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Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- Child – a person eight (8) years old or younger.
- Premises – inside and outside areas of Library property and the Bookmobile.
- Responsible caregiver – a parent, guardian, or other person who takes responsibility for a child, has emergency contact information, stays within visual contact of the child, and remains in the child's immediate vicinity.
- Unattended Child – a child who is out of visual contact or not in the direct vicinity of a responsible caregiver or who is left alone on Library premises.

Statement of Philosophy

Ames Public Library welcomes children of all ages. Children age eight (8) or younger must be accompanied by a responsible caregiver. Responsible caregivers assume responsibility for the safety, comfort, and behavior of their child/children on Library premises and must not leave the child unattended on Library premises. Library employees cannot assume the role of responsible caregiver.

Policy

Children must have a responsible caregiver within visual contact and in their immediate vicinity while on Library premises. Exceptions may be made by Library staff for children age three (3) and older who are attending select Library programs. When an exception is made, the responsible caregiver is expected to remain *in the library building and available* during the program and to immediately join the child at the end of the program.

When made aware of an unattended child, Library staff will make a reasonable attempt to locate the responsible caregiver. If the responsible caregiver is not located, the police will be notified.

The Library's [Conduct in the Library Policy](#) defines misconduct and states that some behaviors will result in a request for the person to leave the Library. Although young persons age nine (9) and older may use the library on their own, their actions and well-being remain the responsibility of their parents and caregivers. A young person who cannot be responsible for themselves outside of the library should not be left alone on Library premises.