

## Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library

Policy Type: **Operations**

Policy Number: **OP – 10**

Policy Title: **Child & Youth Services**

Policy Approval Date: **March 2016**

Policy Review Date: **March 2018**

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The Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library recognizes that the needs of young people are important in their own right and that their intellectual growth, 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 to children and youth.

### **Rights of the Child**

The 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. See Appendix A.

### **Section 1: Scope**

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

### **Section 2: Services**

#### **i. Collections**

- a. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) ensures the maintenance and organization of a comprehensive child and youth collection based on policy OP – 04 Collection Development.
- b. The child and youth collections meet high standards of quality and reflect the changing educational needs and personal interests of children and youth as well as trends in society.
- c. Staff develop collection profiles to define scope and to address the issues of:
  - i. Canadian creators and content
  - ii. award-winning titles
  - iii. non-fiction materials that complement the local school curriculum
  - iv. age appropriate formats

#### **ii. Reference & Readers Advisory**

- a. Qualified staff 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, without judgment, with confidentiality and with respect.
- b. Library staff conducts interviews to better understand each child's and youth's wants and needs.
- c. Library staff point out the variety of resources available in all areas of the library as appropriate.

**iii. Programmes**

- a. The library provides programming for children, youth and parents/guardians, 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 provides educational, entertaining and literature-related programmes and support for children and youth, such as:
  - i. programmes for parents/guardians, adults and caregivers that educate on the importance of early literacy, the role of the library in children's lives, and the support the library offers
  - ii. programmes for classes, children's groups, daycare, etc., with an emphasis on early literacy, library orientation and leisure reading
  - iii. programmes for summer, school breaks, school professional development days, after school and weekends that highlight various aspects of the collection, encourage reading for pleasure, teach new skills and offer a positive library experience
- c. Staff actively involve youth in planning and implementing programmes for this age group.
- d. The number of participants for all programmes is restricted based on size of the facility, fire department limits, staff supervision available, etc. This is enforced by the children's programmer in charge.
- e. Some programmes may limit the age of children or youth and the number of children per accompanying adult. This limit is enforced by the staff to ensure maximum programme benefit to the child/parent/guardian.

**Section 3: Library Space**

- i. The library provides well-planned areas for children and youth that are distinct from the adult area.
- ii. Child & youth areas are visually stimulating so children and youth are able to readily distinguish their own space from the rest of the library.
- iii. Child & youth areas have furniture, shelves and equipment designed for, and accessible to, all children.
- iv. The library ensures signage is clear and age appropriate.
- v. The child and youth 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**

- i. The board supports a programme of ongoing staff training and professional development in child and youth services.
- ii. The CEO ensures all staff members assigned to child and youth services receive appropriate training to provide knowledgeable library service.
- iii. While library staff assists young people with finding materials, internet use or program attendance, they do not act in the place of parents or guardians. Parents/guardians are responsible for their children's use of the library.

## Section 5: Advocacy for Children and Youth

The library advocates for child and youth services in the community by:

- a. collaborating with agencies to promote early literacy, love of reading, life-long 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 child and youth 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:

**NOTL Public Library OP – 04 Collection Development**

**NOTL Public Library OP – 11 Unattended Children**

**NOTL Public Library OP – 12 Circulation**

**NOTL Public Library OP – 17 Public Internet Service**

### 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

#### Niagara Children's Charter

*Further interpretation of this policy is the responsibility of the CEO and the NOTL Public Library Board. The Board reserves the right to make, modify, revoke, suspend, terminate or change any policy or procedure, in whole or in part, at any time.*