

## **UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY**

The Trustees and staff of the Portage County Public Library strive to make the library a welcoming environment and take pride in creating a friendly, respectful atmosphere for all visitors and staff. The Children's areas at all branches provide a special opportunity for children to explore their interests, complete assignments, and develop a love of reading.

The Portage County Public Library is a public space intended for use by county residents as well as residents from surrounding towns, and the safety of children on library premises is a serious concern of the library staff. However, the responsibility for the safety and behavior of children on library property rests with the parent or childcare provider and not with library staff. In an effort to ensure the safety and well-being of children, ensure use of the Children's Room is consistent with its mission, and maintain an atmosphere of constructive library use, the following guidelines apply to children.

- Children under the age of 8 must be supervised by a parent or caregiver by remaining in visual contact at all times. A caregiver is defined as a responsible person at least 14 years old who is responsible for the safety, wellbeing, and behavior of a child.
- Children under the age of 8 are allowed to attend registered library events by themselves as long as their caretaker remains in the building.
- Children age 8 and older may use the library without an adult in attendance, provided the child is able to use the library independently and without supervision.
- Children are subject to the same Behavior Policy as adult patrons, and disruptive and destructive visitors of any age will be asked to leave the library after appropriate warning.
- Unaccompanied children must be equipped to contact someone in case of emergency, and must be capable of safely leaving the library alone.
- If an unattended child is left in the library at closing time with no way to get home, library staff will call the police for assistance.
- Parents or caregivers are responsible for supervising the materials their child is allowed to borrow or use in the library and should make their rules clear to their own child.