

The Rights of Children & Teens in the Public Library Policy

Burlington Public Library provides library service for children and teens to support and foster learning in 21st century literacies and a lifelong love of reading. The Burlington Public Library Board fully endorses the Children's Rights in the Public Library adopted at the Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting, November 1998, and the Teen Rights in the Public Library adopted at the Ontario Library Association General Meeting, June 2010.

Ontario Library Association's 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.

Ontario Library Association's Position on Teen's Rights in the Public Library

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 endeavours 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 endeavour 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 endeavours 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.

Consulted Resources: OLA/OPLA: Children & Youth Services

Effective Date: Jan. 2019

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Amended Dates:

Associate Procedures: