

## **1009 - Unattended Children**

Date Policy Approved: February 2, 2011 by DeSoto Parish Library Board of Control

DeSoto Parish Library welcomes visitors of all ages to use its materials, programs and resources. However, caregivers must be mindful of the fact that the library is an open, public building. The well-being and safety of young children left alone raises serious concerns. Caregivers are responsible for the safety, behavior, and supervision of children at all times in the library and on library property. Library staff cannot assume responsibility for any child, even for a very short period of time.

Children ages 8 and under should not be left alone in the library. Parents, guardians, or caregivers must remain within sight or sound range of their children at all times to ensure safety and appropriate behavior. Caregivers must be 13 or older, able to effectively supervise young children, and must be willing and able to provide contact information for a parent or guardian upon request.

Caregivers are not required to remain in the room with children ages 5 and older who are attending library-sponsored programs. However, caregivers must remain in the library at all times during the program and must be available to meet children in the program room at the conclusion of the program. Library staff may use their judgment to determine if an unaccompanied child of any age needs the assistance of a caregiver during a program.

If library staff deems a child of any age to be in need of supervision and no parent or guardian can be located or contacted, law enforcement will be called.

Public announcements are made throughout the last open hour of each business day to remind all patrons to arrange for their rides home prior to the library's closing. If a child under 13 is left unattended after the library closes, staff will attempt to contact a parent or guardian, and if unable to do so, they will call law enforcement in accordance with library procedures. The library will make no determination as to the suitability or authority of anyone arriving or being contacted to transport a minor from library grounds or for minors leaving library grounds. Library staff members are not permitted to transport any minor to another location.