

Policy Title:	Children in the CLMA
Policy Type:	Public Service
Policy #:	PS 02
Policy Authority:	Board
Effective Date:	June 2023
Revision Date:	September 2025

PURPOSE

To provide guidelines to Clarington Library, Museums and Archives (CLMA) staff on ensuring the safety of children in the CLMA and protecting them from harm.

POLICY

The CLMA recognizes the importance of child safety and aims to create a safe and welcoming environment for all children using the CLMA. The responsibility for the safety, whereabouts and behaviour of children in or about CLMA premises rests with the parent/caregiver. The CLMA does not assume responsibility for the care, supervision, or safety of children left unattended in our spaces.

1. Child Behavior

The CLMA expects all children to behave in a respectful and appropriate manner in accordance with the CLMA User Expectations Policy while on the premises. The CLMA staff will intervene when a child's behavior disrupts operations or services, or when it poses a risk to the safety of the child or others.

2. Lost Child

If a child is separated from their parent/caregiver in the CLMA, staff members will make every effort to locate the parent/caregiver within the CLMA or by telephone. If the parent/caregiver cannot be located, the Durham Regional Police Service will be contacted.

Staff are obligated by the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*, to call the Police or the Durham Children's Aid Society if they have any concerns about the safety and well-being of a child.

3. Telephone Inquiries to Locate Child

The CLMA will assist callers on locating a child in a manner that will help protect the safety and privacy of the child. Telephone numbers should not be passed from the caller, through the CLMA staff, to a child. A child should not be called to the telephone at the request of the caller.

4. Unattended Children

The CLMA welcomes and encourages children's use of its spaces, programs, and services. However, for safety reasons, children under the age of 10 may not be left unattended in the CLMA at any time. A competent caregiver must remain on the premises with the child. For the purposes of this policy, a *competent caregiver* is defined as an individual aged 12 or older who has been entrusted by the parent or guardian with responsibility for the child's care.

If a child under the age of 10 is found unattended, the CLMA staff will make reasonable efforts to locate the parent or caregiver within the building or by telephone. If staff are unable to reach a responsible adult, the Durham Regional Police Service will be contacted to ensure the child's safety.

5. Recognizing Children's Rights

The CLMA is committed to delivering high-quality services, collections, programs, and resources that nurture children's intellectual development, cultural understanding, recreational interests, and lifelong love of reading. The Clarington Public Library Board endorses the Ontario Library Association's *Statement on Children's Rights in the Public Library* (1998) and incorporates its principles into service planning and delivery.

Accordingly, we affirm that children in public libraries and museums have the right to:

1. Intellectual freedom
2. Equal access to the full range of services and materials available to all users
3. A full range of materials, services, and programs specifically designed to meet their needs
4. Adequate funding for collections and services that reflect population, usage, and community needs
5. An environment that supports their physical and developmental stages
6. Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in children's services
7. Welcoming, respectful, and supportive service from birth through the transition to adult user
8. An advocate who represents their needs to administration, the Library Board, municipal council, and the community
9. Policies that explicitly include the needs of children

POLICY RESOLUTION

Any questions, concerns, or requests for clarification regarding the interpretation or application of this policy can be directed to the CEO at ceo@cplma.ca.

If the matter remains unresolved or the party is not satisfied with the CEO's determination, the issue may then be formally escalated to the Library Bard for review at chair@cplma.ca.

The decision of the Library Board shall constitute the final authority on all matters related to the interpretation and application of this policy.