

A LETTER TO PARENTS ABOUT CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO LIBRARY MATERIALS

The citizens in our democratic society hold a wide variety of both conventional and controversial ideas and opinions. Here at the library, we do not believe it is the right of the library to pass judgment upon the ultimate worth or correctness of these ideas and opinions, nor is it the right of your public library to restrict or limit your access to these ideas and opinions that fuel the debate about how best to improve our democratic society.

We have attempted to build an extensive collection of information resources which contain a wide range of ideas, interpretations, and opinions that we hope will be useful to the citizens of our library district. We provide free access to information and we believe it is the right and the responsibility of the individual citizen to judge what is good, what is right, and what is true, according to the standards of their own rational, moral, religious, or political values and beliefs. We cannot "sanitize" our collections for use by our youngest patrons without abandoning our responsibility of serving our more mature patrons too.

Just as the library staff does not believe it is the role of the public library to instruct you about the ultimate value of an idea, we do not believe it is our right to instruct your child. **We believe it is the right and responsibility of parents—and only parents—to restrict their children—and only their children—from access to library materials they believe are unsuitable.** While it is not practical or possible for us to "police" the material that children borrow from the library in complete accordance with the values or beliefs of their parents, we will attempt to work with concerned parents to enforce parental restrictions on their children when practical. For instance, if you want us to help you restrict access to mature movies in our audio visual collection according to MPAA ratings, please notify us and we will do our best to enforce a block.

We encourage parents to be responsible for providing the primary advice and guidance your child needs. Look at their library materials and discuss them with your child. If you want to impose restrictions on materials you find objectionable, we suggest that you preview your child's materials before borrowing or make selections for your child yourself. You can always exercise your ultimate parental control and instruct us to withdraw the borrowing privileges of your child.

Library materials are expensive and we hold our patrons responsible for returning library materials in the same condition as when borrowed. As a parent, you are financially responsible for the materials borrowed by your child. If you are concerned about the possible replacement costs of lost or damaged materials, please impose your own controls.

We are relying upon your assistance and cooperation in these matters and hope that you will assume the responsibility of providing the appropriate guidance for your child in using the materials and services the library has to offer.

Sincerely

Phil Baugher
Director