

**POLICY: MATERIALS SELECTION**

**SECTION: III – Public Service Policies – Collections**

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### **Effective Date**

June 25, 2012

### **Policy Objective**

To guide staff in the acquisition of material that is of current interest and/or lasting value to existing or potential Library users.

To familiarize Library users with the principles upon which selection decisions are made for Toronto Public Library collections.

### **Underlying Principles**

The selection of materials for the Library is driven by principles defined in the Library's Mission Statement.

Ongoing material selection activities are founded on staff familiarity with existing collections, their awareness of the needs of Library users, and their knowledge of retrospective, current and future trends in informational and recreational materials suitable for public library use.

Except where limited by law, children are entitled to borrowing privileges and open and ready access to materials and facilities provided by the Library. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for monitoring and limiting the use of Library materials by their children.

The Library endeavors to provide equitable access to its extensive collections through a multi-tiered service delivery model which rationalizes the location, scope and focus of collections. In addition, items may be delivered to any branch at the user's request. The Library materials budget is maximized through coordinated and controlled expenditure.

## **Policy Statement**

The selection of Library materials is driven by the principles defined in the Library's Mission Statement described in part as providing "universal access to a broad range of human knowledge, experience, information and ideas...".

The Library selects:

- contemporary materials representing varying points of view and which are of current interest and possible future significance, including materials which reflect current conditions, trends and controversies;
- source materials and thoughtful interpretations which document or shed light on the past;
- materials that inform and increase an individual's ability to function effectively as a member of society;
- materials that provide an aesthetic experience, stimulate the imagination and increase an individual's potential creativity;
- materials that expand an individual's understanding of the world in which they live;
- materials in the two official languages, English and French, as well as materials which reflect the diverse linguistic or cultural heritage of the Toronto community;
- materials that entertain and may enhance an individual's enjoyment of life.
- textbooks and curriculum-related works when they are considered to be useful as an introduction to a subject, are the only source of information, or because their content is considered essential to a library collection.

Staff selection activities are supported by attention to review media, bibliographies and reviewing tools, consultation with the publishing industry, authoritative discussions of genres or subject areas, and recommendations from Library users. Activities are responsibly exercised within the context of available funds.

Special consideration is given to materials with Canadian content, that record the Canadian experience or that relate to life in Canada or the lives and works of Canadians.

The Library does not keep, acquire or purchase material that the Canadian courts have found to be obscene, hate propaganda or seditious.

No materials are excluded from selection solely because of the “race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, age, record of offences, marital status, disability, family status, sex, sexual orientation and/or receipt of public assistance” of the creator of the work.

No materials are excluded from selection solely because they may come into the possession of a child.

In adopting this Policy, the Board endorses the Canadian Library Association’s Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom, the Ontario Library Association’s Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual, the Ontario Library Association’s Position on Children’s Rights in the Public Library and the Ontario Library Association’s Position on Teen’s Rights in the Public Library.

The Library Board, in establishing this Materials Selection Policy, was cognizant of Section 2(b) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which guarantees everyone the freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication.

## **Scope**

The Materials Selection Policy applies to all formats including print, non-print, audio-visual and electronic materials.

## **Application**

This policy applies to any Library staff or organization that undertakes the selection or withdrawal of materials for the Library’s collections and to all Library staff involved with accepting and evaluating gifts to the branch collections.

## **Specific Directives**

### 1. Selection Criteria

Library staff consider:

- Suitability of format for Library use;
- Suitability of subject, style and reading level for the intended audience;

- Relevance to community users;
- Insight into the human and social condition;
- Importance as a record of the times;
- Relationship to the existing collection;
- Reputation, skill, competence or significance of the originator of the work;
- Attention of critics, reviewers and the public;
- Demand for material;
- Reputation of the publisher or producer;
- Clarity, accuracy and logic of presentation;
- Purchase price and other budgetary considerations.

## 2. New Formats

Careful consideration is given to the introduction of new formats to Library collections. Budget considerations, community needs and the probable impact on existing resources are all reviewed before items are selected and introduced to collections in a new format.

The selection of material in any new format may result in the Library's decision to retire specific items or material formats from its collections in order to responsibly accommodate trends in user demands and/or changes in technology.

## 3. Withdrawal Activities

Selected materials are regularly assessed for their condition, accuracy, currency and usage, within the context of the Library collection, and relevance to Library users. The withdrawal of materials from any collection is a formal process conducted by knowledgeable staff, according to written guidelines, as a necessary means to maintain collection vitality, size and scope.

An item that is the subject of a libel action of which the Library becomes aware will be removed from the collection until the action is finally resolved when, depending on the outcome of the action, it will be returned to the collection or permanently withdrawn.

## 4. No Endorsement of Content

Selection of an item for a library collection does not constitute endorsement by the Library of either the content or viewpoint expressed in that item.

## 5. Access to Collections

- (a) For user-information purposes and the guidance of borrowers, videos owned by Toronto Public Library are labeled with viewer classification codes outlined in the Film Classification Act available from the Ontario Film Review Board. If a viewer classification code is not available from the Ontario Film Review Board, the Library may use Canadian Home Video Association and the Motion Picture Association of America classification codes.
- (b) The Library may control use of any collection material in order to protect items deemed susceptible to theft or damage by users, or to ensure the widest possible use of materials by Library customers.
- (c) The Library does not mark selected materials in order to indicate approval or disapproval of item contents or attempt to expurgate information contained in selected items.

## 6. Gifts and Donations

- (a) The Library welcomes gifts of materials from individuals or groups.
- (b) Gifts-in-kind to the Library's Special Collections follow the Donations of Gifts-In-Kind to Special Collections Policy.
- (c) The same criteria and guidelines that apply to the selection of all Library materials are used to evaluate gifts. It is understood that gifts are freely given without conditions attached, unless specifically negotiated beforehand, and that all donations will be used or disposed of as the Library deems appropriate.
- (d) Tax receipts are issued by the Toronto Public Library Foundation only for items that meet the selection guidelines and are accepted into the collection.

## 7. Customer Requests

- (a) Library users may place formal requests for the purchase of collection materials by completing a form provided by the Library.
- (b) All suggested purchases are reviewed by Library staff who apply to the customer request the same selection criteria that are applied to all materials purchased by the Library.

- (c) The originator of a request will be notified of the Library's selection decision.

#### 8. Resource Sharing / Inter-Library Loan (ILLO) Services

- (a) Items that fall outside the selection criteria of the Library or that are “out of print” or temporarily unavailable can be requested by Library customers from other library systems by using regular Inter-Library Loan services. Fees for the service occasionally apply.
- (b) Application for Inter-Library Loan service can be made at any local library branch of the Library.
- (c) The Library recognizes the purposes and resources of other information agencies in the City and does not needlessly duplicate materials.

#### 9. Reconsideration of Materials

- (a) The Library believes that a vital society encourages members of its community to actively participate in an open exchange of ideas and opinions. Material selectors consequently strive to provide the widest possible range of resources within Toronto Public Library collections.
- (b) The content or manner of expressing ideas in material that is purposely selected to fill the needs of some Library users, may, on occasion, be considered to be offensive by other Library users. The Library recognizes the right of any individual or group to reject library material for personal use, but does not accord to any individual or group the right to restrict the freedom of others to make use of that same material.
- (c) Library users who object to materials located in the collection are asked to complete a written request for the reconsideration of the materials. Request forms are available for this purpose at all Library branches.
- (d) Decisions made about challenged materials will be communicated to the originators of the requests following completion of a formal staff review.
- (e) An annual report on challenges to Library materials is provided to the Board.

## Accountability

The responsibility for selection of materials is vested in the office of the City Librarian which delegates this professional activity to qualified and knowledgeable staff.

## References

This list contains the most significant legislation and Toronto Public Library policies relating to the Materials Selection Policy.

### Federal Legislation

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as amended.  
*Criminal Code* (R.S., 1985, c. C-46) as updated.

### Provincial Legislation

*Film Classification Act, 2005*, S.O. 2005, c.17 as updated.  
*Ontario Human Rights Code*, 1990, c. H.19 as updated.

### Toronto Public Library Policies

Donations of Gifts-In-Kind to Special Collections Policy as updated.

## Definitions

**Materials:** All of the items that comprise library collections regardless of format.

**Collections:** The various holdings of the Library organized by category, e.g. fiction collection, French collection

**Format:** The medium in which information is presented, e.g. a book, DVD, e-video

**Inter-Library Loan:** The service through which customers may request that items not owned by or missing from the Toronto Public Library be borrowed from other institutions, subject to availability and the interlibrary loan policies of the lending institutions

## Contact

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## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Toronto Public Library Mission Statement
- Appendix 2: Canadian Library Association’s Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom
- Appendix 3: Ontario Library Association’s Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual
- Appendix 4: Ontario Library Association’s Position on Children’s Rights in the Public Library
- Appendix 5: Ontario Library Association’s Statement on Teen’s Rights in the Public Library



Appendix 1

## **Toronto Public Library's Mission Statement**

Our mission describes our role within the community and our service philosophy.

Toronto Public Library provides free and equitable access to public library services which meet the changing needs of the people of Toronto.

Toronto Public Library preserves and promotes universal access to a broad range of human knowledge, experience, information and ideas in a welcoming and supportive environment. New technologies extend access to global information beyond Library walls.

The Toronto Public Library upholds the principle of Intellectual Freedom.

Effective partnerships enhance the Library's ability to provide service throughout the City.

Toronto Public Library staff are accountable for the effective management of Library resources and for the quality of Library service offered to the people of Toronto.

June 26, 2000

Appendix 2

### **Canadian Library Association's Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom**

All persons in Canada have the fundamental right, as embodied in the nation's Bill of Rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity, and to express their thoughts publicly. This right to intellectual freedom, under the law, is essential to the health and development of Canadian society.

Libraries have a basic responsibility for the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom.

It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some sections of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, libraries shall acquire and make available the widest variety of materials.

It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee the right of free expression by making available all the library's public facilities and services to all individuals and groups who need them.

Libraries should resist all efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.

Both employees and employers in libraries have a duty, in addition to their institutional responsibilities, to uphold these principles.

November 18, 1985

Appendix 3

## **Ontario Library Association’s Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual**

In affirming its commitment to the fundamental rights of intellectual freedom, the freedom to read and freedom of the press, as embodied in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Library Association declares its acceptance of the following propositions:

- 1) That the provision of library service to the public is based upon the right of the citizen, under the protection of the law, to judge individually on questions of politics, religion and morality.
- 2) That intellectual freedom requires freedom to examine other ideas and other interpretations of life than those currently approved by the local community or by society in general, and including those ideas and interpretations which may be unconventional or unpopular.
- 3) That freedom of expression includes freedom for a creator to depict what is ugly, shocking and unedifying in life.
- 4) That free traffic in ideas and opinions is essential to the health and growth of a free society and that the freedom to read, listen and view is fundamental to such free traffic.
- 5) That it is the responsibility of libraries to maintain the right of intellectual freedom and to implement it consistently in the selection of books, periodicals, films, recordings, and other materials, and in the provision of access to electronic sources of information, including access to the internet.
- 6) That it is therefore part of the library’s service to its public to resist any attempt by any individual or group within the community it serves to abrogate or curtail access to information, the freedom to read, view and listen by demanding the removal of, or restrictions to library information sources in any format.

- 7) That it is equally part of the library's responsibility to its public to ensure that its selection of material is not unduly influenced by the personal opinions of the selectors, but determined by the application of generally accepted standards of accuracy, style and presentation.

*Adopted at the Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting, November 1998*

Appendix 4

**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.

*Adopted at the Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting, November 1998*

Appendix 5

**Ontario Library Association’s Position on Teen’s Rights in the Public Library**

**Goals for Library Services for Teens:**

Young people are valuable members of our library community who deserve the same respect, dignity and human rights as all library members. This document provides a framework for developing library services to teens that meet the educational, informational, and cultural and leisure needs of young people in ways that are developmentally appropriate. Each public library has a different community to serve and therefore different priorities and needs. Although specific services for teens have not been well established in all libraries, these goals are created in the belief that young adulthood is a unique life state and that young adults are entitled to the same quality of library services offered to other age groups in the population. (Adapted from the IFLA Guidelines for Library Services for Young Adults, 2006 and the YALA Guidelines for Library Services to Teens, Ages 12-18, 2006.)

The goal of library services for teens is to assist with the transition from children’s services to adult services and to provide access to both resources and an environment that meets the needs of young people for intellectual, emotional and social development. Specifically these needs are based on the unique seven developmental needs for adolescents and the five core values of quality service to teens:

7 Developmental Needs of Teens	5 Core Values of service to teens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical activity</li> <li>• Competence and achievement</li> <li>• Self definition</li> <li>• Creative expression</li> <li>• Positive social Interaction with Peers and Adults</li> <li>• Structure and Clear Limits</li> <li>• Meaningful Participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respecting and responding to unique YA needs</li> <li>• Providing equal access</li> <li>• Empowering Youth through participation</li> <li>• Engaging Teens in active collaboration</li> <li>• Supporting healthy youth development</li> </ul>
<p>Excerpted from: Dorman, G. (1981). The Middle Grades Assessment Program: User’s Manual. Carrboro, NC: Centre for Early Adolescence.</p>	<p>Core Values excerpted from Jones, P. (2002). New directions for library service to young adults. Chicago: American Library Association.</p>



## **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 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 participation 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.**

Adopted at the Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting June 2010.