



south carolina STATE LIBRARY

Guidance on Collection Development for Minors

Introduction and Purpose

The South Carolina State Library is responsible for providing guidance to public libraries regarding services provided to the public. The intended audience of a book is established by the publisher and can vary significantly as it relates to the recommended age of the reader. The intention of this document is to provide guidance to public libraries related to collection development of materials for minors. The South Carolina Code of Law § 63-1-40(1) defines a “minor” as a person under eighteen years old.

Recommended Shelving Locations of Material for Minors

The South Carolina State Library recommends a simplified approach to shelving location of materials for minor children. Materials for minors should be shelved according to the age of the reader based on professional evaluation by library staff or by using the upper range of the recommended age by the publisher. For example, if a publisher identifies a book as appropriate for ages 12-18 years old, the book would be shelved in the adult section of the library as 18 years of age is considered an adult in South Carolina. Materials for minors should be shelved in either the Children or Teen area of the library. By using only the terms children and teen, the age ranges are clear to the public.

Materials located in the Children’s Services area of the library should be appropriate for children from birth to 12 years old. The Children’s Services area of the library may be further divided into areas such as:

- Newborn – 4 years old: Board books / Soft books
- Ages 4–8 years old: Picture books / Early Readers
- Ages 8–11 years old: First Chapter books
- Ages 11–14 years old: Middle Grade books

Materials including graphic novels located in the Teen Services area of the library should be appropriate for children 13 – 17 years of age. Material with a recommended upper age of 18 should be located in the Adult section of the library.

While "young adult" is a standard term used by publishers and libraries, it can be ambiguous and confusing to the general public. If a library has a "young adult" section it should be located in the adult area of the library. The term “young adult” is generally understood as individuals aged 18-25.

Minors may borrow items from the Adult section of the library in accordance with the policies of the library. For example, the signed library card application for the minor child may provide permission by the parent or guardian for the child to check out items in the Adult section of the library. Consent is not needed for each item a minor child may borrow.

Collection Development

Collection development is the responsibility of the Public Library Director and must follow the established policies and procedures approved by the local Library Board of Trustees.

The South Carolina State Library recommends that public libraries regularly review their collections and policies to ensure they comply with all applicable laws.

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