



In the Best Interests of the Child

In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 3, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 November, 1989

All children and young people are entitled to libraries. The work of the library for children and young people starts from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and aims at fulfilling this convention where applicable. The interests of the child should always come first.

This means that:

- The starting point for libraries should be the child's perspective. The needs of children and young people should act as guidelines for library work. Children and young people should be given the opportunity to influence it and to use the library as a forum where they can express themselves.
 - The library should contribute to strengthening children's and young people's personal growth as well as their development into active and democratic members of society.
 - The library should be a sanctuary and a meeting place for children and young people where they are treated with respect by interested and knowledgeable adults. "The library should be a fun place where things happen."
 - The library should offer a rich, varied and up-to-date selection of media that reflect the state of the world from a child's and a young person's perspective. Specially adapted material should be offered to children and young people who need it.
 - The library's activities, premises and information should be accessible to children and young people with disabilities.
- Children and young people should develop the habit of using libraries and information tools in order to orient themselves in a complex and changing media world.
 - The library should complement and offer alternatives to the services of the local community.
 - The library should be part of the community's network for children and young people regarding language development, cultural heritage, cultural experiences and their own creativity.
 - The library should, together with parents, children's health services, pre-school and school, lay the foundations for life-long learning and help children and young people create a context in life.
 - The library should stimulate curiosity and the desire to read. The library should play a leading role in oral storytelling, free reading and the child's and young person's own search for knowledge. The library should be active and reach out to the community.
 - The use of the library by children and young people should not be limited by economic factors.
 - The library should be an important place for all children and young people.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN on 20 November 1989. Sweden signed it in 1990. Many local government authorities have since then taken the decision that municipal committees and other agencies in various ways should work in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The recommendations for children's and young people's activities in public libraries are based on the relevant articles in the text of the Convention. They can be used as a starting point for a clearer children's perspective when formulating goals for library activities and planning the daily operations of the library.



The recommendations have been drawn up by the children's library advisors from the county libraries in the counties of Gävleborg, Stockholm, Sörmland, Uppsala, Västmanland and Örebro.

The Swedish Library Association accepted these as national guidelines in 2003.



The Swedish Library Association is a non-profit making association with a mission to work towards a national library service of the highest standards. The association has both libraries and private members, totaling over 3500, in the Swedish library sector.

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The Swedish Library Association's recommendations for public library services for children and young people

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