

A Child's First Library Card: Information Every Adult Should Consider

New Hampshire has one of the strongest library patron confidentiality laws in the country, and that law applies to all, regardless of age. Because of this, we encourage you to think about a few things before your child becomes a full card holder.

The law (*please see below*) states that every individual with a library card has the right to privacy and can expect his/her use of the library to remain private. *It does not specify age.* This means that when we call about a reserved book, or an overdue one, we cannot reveal the title except to the patron on whose card it was borrowed (though the parents/guardians remain legally and financially responsible for their children). This can complicate things for parents/guardians.

As the child's parent/guardian, you are encouraged to weigh the child's delight in a first library card against the knowledge that, according to state law, you do not have direct access to that child's borrowing record. Parents who wish to foster a child's enthusiasm yet still have access to borrowing records may decide to check all materials out on their own card.

It's all about choices, and we are pleased that you, as a parent/guardian, are encouraging your child to explore the many educational and entertaining experiences available. We provide a wide variety of informational sources. It is not the library's policy to choose what ideas your child should be exposed to; therefore, we hope you will continue to participate in the learning process by helping your child select materials and by sharing them at home.

We provide the resources. You make the choices.

Thank you for considering these issues. Whatever you choose for your child and your family, we welcome you at the Madison Library.

RSA 201-D:11 Library User Records; Confidentiality. –

I. Library records which contain the names or other personal identifying information regarding the users of public or other than public libraries shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed except as provided in paragraph II. Such records include, but are not limited to, library, information system, and archival records related to the circulation and use of library materials or services, including records of materials that have been viewed or stored in electronic form.

II. Records described in paragraph I may be disclosed to the extent necessary for the proper operation of such libraries and shall be disclosed upon request by or consent of the user or pursuant to subpoena, court order, or where otherwise required by statute.

III. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit any library from releasing statistical information and other data regarding the circulation or use of library materials provided, however, that the identity of the users of such library materials shall be considered confidential and shall not be disclosed to the general public except as provided in paragraph II.

Source. 1989, 184:3, eff. July 21, 1989. 2009, 273:1, eff. July 29, 2009.