



## MEMO

**To:** Montana State Library Commission  
**From:** Jennie Stapp, State Librarian  
**Subject:** Library approaches to managing parental concerns about library content  
**Date:** May 1, 2026

At the April 8, 2026 Commission meeting the Commission heard public comment from a parent who expressed concerns about the books her child checked out from their local public library. In response, the Commission stated a desire to discuss how libraries manage concerns about parental involvement and the appropriateness of content for minors.

Local library boards are responsible for creating policies, including collection development and circulation policies, that reflect the needs and interests of their communities. During the Conversations with the Commission on April 15, the Commission and Montana librarians discussed parental concerns and examples of local policy solutions to address these concerns. Examples of policies and practices from Montana libraries include:

- A parent resource shelf for books that require parental approval before check-out
- A policy that requires videos to be checked out using adult library cards only
- Policies that require children to be accompanied by parents or guardians when in the library
- Use of book review resources such as Common Sense Media which help parents and librarians identify books of interest for certain ages and based on content limits
- Practices that empower parents to monitor their children's reading, including meeting with parents when a child is issued a library card to educate parents on library policies and content in the library collection
- Policies that provide age ranges and requirements for when children can apply for and use library cards such as:
  - Persons age 16 and over may complete an application for a library card. A current photo identification card, ID, must be presented. ID cards include driver's license, tribal enrollment, student ID, federal ID, or military ID.
  - Children less than eight years old may check out materials under their parent's/legal guardian's card. Students ages 8-15 may apply for a card with a parent/legal guardian present who has a current photo identification card, working phone number and mailing address.
  - Parents/legal guardians may not check out materials using their child's cards without the child present.
  - Borrowers may not check out materials using other people's cards.