# How does your library approach material like R-rated movies and younger patrons? Do you have a policy in place that requires a patron to be over 18 to check them out? Does the policy extend to video games and/or books?

I received responses from 18 Michigan Libraries and from a Michigan Librarian that had worked in Oregon in 3 different libraries. Of those 21 libraries, almost all of them have no barriers to accessing materials, regardless of age. One library does have a policy of restricting R-rated material to underage patrons. One restricts all movies to underage patrons. One avoids the problem by not purchasing any R-rated movies. Otherwise, every library leaves the responsibility with a child's parents.

### Dearborn Heights City Libraries

We do not restrict items. Any sort of restriction is left up to parents’ discretion and is done on their end.

### Bullard Sanford Memorial Library

No. Parents regulate and monitor their children’s circulation, not libraries.

### Berkley Public Library

Per our collection development policy: "Responsibility for materials to be read, listened, or viewed by minors rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection should not be inhibited by the possibility that items may inadvertently come into the possession of a minor."

Further, our library card application form states: "Minors under the age of 18 must have the signature of their parent or guardian. As parent or guardian of the minor named above, I give permission for him/her to borrow materials from the library. I agree to pay all fines and damages to his/her card, to be responsible for supervising his/her selection of materials, and to make sure he/she obeys library rules."

### Alvah N. Belding Memorial Library

We do not restrict any type of materials to patrons of any age, as long as they have their own card. Juvenile cards are signed for by a parent or guardian, who are the caretakers of the account, and who are responsible for what's checked out on the card. Otherwise we toe the line into censorship.

### Milan Library

We do not have a policy or any restrictions on children checking out R rated material. We have never had a problem with this. Our family/youth films are in a different location than the rest of our movies. We believe parents are the only ones who should decide what their children can/cannot check out. We do not practice in loco parentis.

from the ALA: [**Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors**](http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/minors)**:** Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources available to other users violate the Library Bill of Rights. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials, and facilities based on the age of library users. Amended 2019

### Sparta Carnegie Township Library

We solve that problem by not purchasing any movies that are rated R.  We don't circulate video games. You can't limit with books. Although we try to limit when we can to our minors, we feel that the responsibility of what a minor checks out lies with the parent.

### Coloma Public Library

Does have this policy.

### Albion District Library

We don't restrict patrons of any age from borrowing specific items because of ratings or content. We do allow parents who have taken on the legal and financial responsibility of their child's card, or those patrons who are allowing (by instruction to staff, recorded in their patron record) to limit how many items that child/designated person may check out at any one time. However, when it comes to limiting by rating or content, we have explicitly stated that we do not act "in loco parentis" and parents that would like to limit their child's borrowing are responsible for visiting with their child or otherwise discussing and enforcing those restrictions on their end. We cannot and will not enforce it.

### Superior District Library

No, we do not have a policy.  Ratings are not a legal standard, they are an industry standard and you cannot be charged for checking out an R-rated film to a minor.  What a child checks out is up to the parents of said child.  It is a very slippery slope once you start any kind of censorship.  We don’t say what materials people can check out period – based on age, sex, race, religion, economic background, etc.  This applies to ALL materials.  For more background, check out the American Library Association site.

### Leland Township Public Library

We follow the ALA guidelines on this “[P]arents-and only parents-have the right and responsibility to restrict access of their children-and only their children-to library resources”. The full text is here: <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/ocrpdfofprm/53-1-13accessnonprint.pdf>

 We also recognize (as discussed in the ALA document) that MPAA ratings and game ratings are created by a private organization and not a governmental entity.

### Saline Library

We do not restrict use or borrowing of materials by age or anything else.  Having a library card entitles a patron to check out any library item.  OK, one exception: must be at least 18 years old to check out a mobile hotspot.

### Garden City Public Library

No.  We adhere to the ALA's Library Bill of Rights.  If it can be borrowed from our collection, then anyone with a library card in good standing may borrow it.  See the following interpretation:  <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/minors>

### Herrick District Library

We allow anyone with a card to check out any materials. But we provide a way for parents to restrict what their minors check out - which is a nice option to have, although hardly anyone takes advantage of it. Parents can opt to sign their minor up for a restricted card, which will limit them to materials housed in the kids and teen departments until they qualify for an adult card. Once they have an adult card, they are no longer subject to that.

Other than that, the only items which are 18+ are mobile hotspots (because of CIPA) and a handful of library of things items with either safety concerns (giant scissors) or very high cost.

### White Cloud Community Library

Our patrons MUST be 18 years of age or older to borrow any movies including educational ones.  The policy does not extend to books.  We don’t circulate video games, but children are allowed to check out our computer games (most of them are family friendly) and music cd’s.

### T.A. Cutler Memorial Library

No, we will lend any item to any patron. For an R-rated movie where I don't know the family dynamic I might mention in passing to the child that the movie is rated R and will their parents be ok with that. If they say yes, well and good, if they elect to put it back, that works too. If the parent wants to restrict borrowing privileges on their child's account, that is up to them, but we do not assume.

### Traverse Area District Library

We do not.  All cards can check out all materials.

### Shelby Township Public Library

Does not restrict materials to certain age groups. It is the thought that we are not the child's parents, and it is not our place to censor materials from them. If the parent does not want their child to access or view something, it is on them to ensure the child does not check it out.

### Clarkston Independence District Library

Does not restrict materials to certain age groups.

I also received this response:

I'm new to The Library Network in Michigan, but I previously worked in three libraries in the Libraries of Clackamas County consortium in Oregon for 6 years.  There weren't age restrictions on any material.  Their stance was that every patron has a right to intellectual freedom and the access of material that goes along with it and parents should be accompanying their children and monitoring what they check out.  Here's a blurb from the Oregon City Public Library's collection policy:

**Access**  
All materials will be freely and easily accessible to the public. Users are free to select or reject for themselves or their own children any item in the collection. Children are not limited to use of the materials in the children’s or young adult areas. Responsibility for a child’s selection or reading rests solely with their parent or guardian. The library will not limit access to materials based on content, and selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that children may inadvertently use such items.