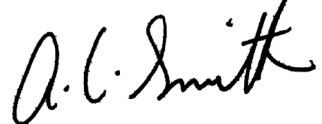




Department of  
Rehabilitation & Correction

SUBJECT: <b>Reading Room Programs</b>	PAGE <u> 1 </u> OF <u> 4 </u>  NUMBER: <b>76-VIS-04</b>
RULE/CODE REFERENCE: ORC 5120.01	SUPERSEDES: 76-VIS-04 dated 04/23/2018
RELATED ACA STANDARDS:	EFFECTIVE DATE: <b>March 1, 2021</b>
	APPROVED: 

## I. AUTHORITY

Ohio Revised Code 5120.01 authorizes the Director of the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, as the executive head of the department, to direct the total operations and management of the department by establishing procedures as set forth in this policy.

## II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide procedures for employees to participate in Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) Reading Room activities and supervision.

## III. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all civil service employees and persons under contract with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC). This policy is not applicable to the Corrections Training Academy (CTA) or the Division of Parole and Community Services (DPCS).

## IV. DEFINITIONS

The definitions for the below listed terms can be found at the top of the ODRC policies page on the ODRC Intranet at the following:

### [Definitions Link](#)

- **Narrator**
- **Reading Room/Area**
- **Reading Room Coordinator**

## V. POLICY

It is the policy of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) to provide guidelines for employees to participate in the Reading Room/Area programs and activities which support family literacy and elementary education initiatives. It is also the policy of the ODRC to provide guidelines for incarcerated individual participation in Reading Rooms.

**VI. PROCEDURES****A. General Overview – Reading Rooms**

1. Unless waived by the regional director and the superintendent of the Ohio Central School System (OCSS), each institution shall maintain one Reading Room to be located in the visitation hall/area supervised by the Reading Room coordinator and the visitation supervisor.
2. Reading Rooms shall provide space for children to interact and socialize with their parents and the assigned inmate narrator or employee. Each Reading Room shall be in plain view of the visitation staff and conform to security procedures in accordance with the designated institutional security level. The narrator may be positioned outside the actual Reading Room for security reasons to enhance observation by the security staff.
3. Materials for the Reading Room may include the following if funds are available:
  - a. An assortment of books for all ages and cultures, donated books may be available at no cost through the arrangement of the Operations Support Center Library Administrator.
  - b. Materials such as books, pencils, paper, crayons, markers, and other materials that promote literacy.
  - c. Small tables and chairs for children to read or sit.
  - d. Rugs shall be used on the floor to contribute to a comfortable atmosphere for younger children.
  - e. TV/VCR, if available, to watch educational programming.
  - f. A computer/thin client with reading software.

**B. Institutional Reading Room Coordinators**

The institution Reading Room coordinator shall be responsible for tracking and coordinating the narrator training.

1. Incarcerated individuals shall be screened and evaluated prior to assignment as a Reading Room narrator. Screening criteria shall be reflective of all security needs appropriate (see section VI.E for screening criteria).
2. Specific rules and regulations shall be developed at the institution level to provide guidelines for narrators who will be interacting with children. At no time shall narrators discipline a child or have any physical contact with a child other than their own.
3. Narrator duties shall also include the organization and sanitation of the Reading Room area specifically. Narrators shall assist in keeping proper order of all books and supplies within their assigned area.

**C. Employee Involvement**

The appointing authority/designee shall create a local participation procedure for all institutional Reading Room/Areas. Local procedures must comply with established ODRC procedures.

1. The Reading Rooms/Areas are integral components in educating the children of the State of Ohio because these programs contribute to the overall improvement of a child's health, education, and welfare.
2. It is imperative that state employees be encouraged to volunteer their time and efforts for these programs. The primary focus of any participation by the ODRC and its employees is to provide human resource support for this program. All volunteers/employees must obtain permission from their supervisor and their absence from their work site must cause very little impact on their work area to participate in the program.

**D. Employee Duties and Responsibilities**

1. Employees choosing to participate in the Reading Room activities shall work in conjunction with the visitation hall/area security staff to facilitate smooth and orderly operations that support security concerns as well as family literacy initiatives. The Reading Room coordinator shall have the responsibility of reviewing all supplies and materials placed in this area to ensure the items are academically appropriate, free from contraband, and meet the age requirements for elementary level reading initiatives. The Reading Room coordinator shall have the discernment over the academic value to the resources retained in the Reading Room.
2. The Reading Room coordinator shall maintain records for each program or special activity held in the Reading Room during visitation hours. These duties may be shared with the on-duty security staff assigned to this area. These records may include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Names of employees who participated during the activity.
  - b. Number of hours of employee participation.
  - c. A brief description of employee participation activities, the number of children served/visited and the hours of daily operation. Coordinators shall submit a monthly report to the school administrator.
  - d. Monthly report statistics shall include number of children served, number of books read, and the number of narrator's hours working in the Reading Room.

**E. Incarcerated Individual Selection and Orientation**

Unless waived by the superintendent of the OCSS, all institutions shall assign an incarcerated individual to serve as the Reading Room narrator. Incarcerated individuals selected to participate as the Reading Room narrators shall receive instructional training provided by both the Reading Room coordinator and the visiting hall supervisor as to the focus of the Reading Room initiatives, rules, and responsibilities. Prior to classification as a narrator, incarcerated individuals shall be interviewed by the Reading Room coordinator and managing officer's designee and consideration shall be given to the following criteria:

1. Must have an Ohio Central School System (OCSS) verified high school diploma or GED.
2. Must obtain a Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) reading level score of 243 or 10.0 or above on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE).
3. Must not be convicted of a sexual offense or a sexually related offense.
4. Must not have any “child related” offense or domestic violence history.
5. Must not have any rule violations resulting in rules infraction board (RIB) disposition within a rolling calendar year (from the date of initial placement as a narrator).
6. Must not have tested positive on a drug test while incarcerated.
7. Must not have gang affiliations.

**F. Narrator Duties**

1. Narrators shall be directly supervised by the visitation staff daily, as well as the Reading Room coordinator on a functional basis.
2. Narrators shall be scheduled for working hours in the visitation area by the visitation staff or Reading Room coordinator.
3. Narrators shall report to work when the visiting area is open.
4. Narrators shall be courteous to parents and children in the Reading Room.
5. Narrators shall conduct formal and informal reading sessions.
6. Narrators shall keep the Reading Room area neat and child friendly.
7. Narrators shall assist in tracking of services provided to visiting children and report this data to the Reading Room coordinator.
8. Narrators shall inform the visiting room staff of any problems with children during reading sessions.
9. Narrators shall keep the Reading Room coordinator informed when supplies are running low in the Reading Room.

**G. Expenditures**

1. The expenditure of monies for this program shall be authorized for the purchasing of supplies or equipment, which are reasonably related to support of the Reading Room. This would include, but not be limited to, prizes, awards, and non-educationally related materials.
2. State employees are permitted to engage in limited fundraising activities to raise additional monies for the purchase of items which benefit the children. With proper authorization, I & E funds and other educational fund revenue may be used to purchase learning materials.

**Referenced Forms:**

Educational Monthly Report

DRC2311