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| |  | | --- | | Parents should be able to monitor and restrict which books, digital media, or other information their children access at or check out of the public library.  Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should consider ways in which the statement might or might not hold true and explain how these considerations shape your position. | |

The issue of what information children should be able to consume is a contentious one, with a wide variety of opinions from different groups of parents. The prompt's position is that parents should be able to monitor the media consumption of their child at a public library. I mostly disagree with this stance, for three specific reasons.

First, an argument that may arise in favour of the prompt is that parents know what is best for their child, and must be able to provide them with only the kinds of books and information that they believe are adequate for the child. But do they always know what is best? Consider the recent banning of books by some US states' governments: This ban was also enacted for some children’s books that the state governments concluded as being 'immoral' or 'undemocratic'. However, these terms are subjective, and could be abused by the government to withhold books that they believe to be mocking their administration or their ideals. It has been found that many of these bans were unwarranted, although some states continue to enforce them. If a government takes such a stance, and the government was voted for by many parents, it would be reasonable to conclude that a lot of parents sided with the bans, in some cases even pushing to expand them. In this case, parents may also have unwarranted dislike for some books, or biases that they fail to acknowledge when not allowing their child to consume these kinds of media. This would be an unfair sort of 'censorship' of children’s books.

Second, even if we assume that parents acknowledge their biases and do not keep their children from consuming different kinds of media, parents who may actively restrict their children from reading some books may cause the children to be more tempted to try and read such material secretly. When children are discouraged from reading some kinds of books, they may want to read it even more. Overly strict parents have been observed to raise quiet and secretive children, and if such parents do not directly address why the book (or information) is bad, or wrong, then their children would not understand why their parents are stopping them. Also, if a parent allows their child to read only few kinds of books, they may not develop a reading habit, or may not be curious to learn more - important qualities to nurture in a child. In the real world, when they grow up, there is no one to shield them from forms of content that are immoral; parents should not overly monitor the books of a, say, teenage child who in that point in their life is grasping and learning new information about the world everyday.

Finally, most public libraries already have certain age restrictions for some kinds of books and media, that are assigned on the basis of a more objective judgement than a parent would make. Regulatory bodies ensure that material not recommended for children is given a 'rating' on what the minimum age of a consumer should be, to access that material. When libraries have this kind of system in place already, children would not be able to get inappropriate books past the librarian at the checkout, or even off the shelves that may be monitored or 'patrolled' by other employees. This simply eliminates the need for parents to monitor and restrict the media consumption of their child at the public library.

In conclusion, children should be able to access or check out whatever books they want from the public library, for the reasons explained above. Note that this is not a case for parents to not restrict their children from all kinds of media; the implications of this argument are confined to the media at public libraries. One may argue, "If parents are obligated to check on their children's media consumption all the time, then why not also at the public library?" However, due to the reasons listed above, the systems in place are in the children’s best interests, and they eliminate the need for a parent's intervention at the public library.