

Debra Thompson

From: Eldon Walker <julie.kay.walker@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 06, 2019 2:20 PM
To: Assembly
Subject: Parks and Rec Age Limit

Dear Petersburg Assembly Members,

I am writing to voice my concern for the new proposed policy requiring children be 11 years of age in order to use Parks and Recreation facilities alone. My understanding is that this is proposed to ensure safety at P & R. It sounds like there have been several great suggestions of how P & R can increase safety without limiting the access to these kids. I would like to see these changes considered and those that seem most appropriate implemented prior to jumping to this extreme measure.

As a parent of young children who frequents the facility often, I see many children under 11 who are alone there. They are meeting their friends and enjoying activities in a fun and welcoming community space on weekends, after school and summer vacation. This positive community space is important to raising healthy children in our community. I understand that staff should not be expected to be babysitters and that there is a certain level of increased work that needs to be done to ensure safety of all when there are unaccompanied children of this age. That being said, I think taking the pool and gym away from kids that are old enough to act safely and responsibly would negatively impact so many families. I also think it would negatively impact the number of users, and therefore the income of Parks and Rec.

I urge Petersburg to look at what other community gyms in Alaska are doing and consider a younger minimum age such as 8 years. If there are rules, waivers, etc that need to be enforced in order to allow this age group to continue to use the facilities independently I am sure parents would be on board.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion as a parent and facility user.

Best,
Julie Walker