



The Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

A Division of the Council for Exceptional Children

CCBD'S POSITION SUMMARY
ON
Physical Restraint & Seclusion Procedures in School Settings

Initially Approved by the Executive Committee on 5-17-09
Revised and Approved by the Executive Committee on 7-8-09

This document is a summary of policy recommendations from two longer and more detailed documents available from the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD) regarding the use of physical restraint and seclusion procedures in schools.

Declaration of Principles:

CCBD supports the following principles as related to the use of restraint or seclusion procedures:

- Behavioral interventions for children must promote the right of all children to be treated with dignity.
- All children should receive necessary educational and mental health supports and programming in a safe and least-restrictive environment.
- Positive and appropriate educational interventions, as well as mental health supports, should be provided routinely to all children who need them.
- Behavioral interventions should emphasize prevention and creating positive behavioral supports.
- Schools should have adequate staffing levels to effectively provide positive supports to student and should be staffed with appropriately trained personnel.
- All staff in schools should have mandatory conflict de-escalation training, and conflict de-escalation techniques should be employed by all school staff to avoid and defuse crisis and conflict situations.

- All children whose pattern of behavior impedes their learning or the learning of others should receive appropriate educational assessment, including Functional Behavioral Assessments followed by Behavioral Intervention Plans which incorporate appropriate positive behavioral interventions, including instruction in appropriate behavior and strategies to de-escalate their own behavior.

Recommendations:

- CCBD believes that physical restraint or seclusion procedures should be used in school settings only when the physical safety of the student or others is in immediate danger.
- Mechanical or chemical restraints should never be used in school settings when their purpose is simply to manage or address student behavior (other than their use by law enforcement or when students in travel restraints in vehicles). Their use for other instructional related purposes should be supervised by qualified and trained individuals and in accord with professional standards for their use.
- Neither restraints nor seclusion should be used as a punishment to force compliance or as a substitute for appropriate educational support.
- CCBD calls for any school which employs physical restraint or seclusion procedures to have a written positive behavior support plan specific to that program, pre-established emergency procedures, specific procedures and training related to the use of restraint and seclusion, and data to support the implementation of the principles of positive behavior supports in that environment as well as data regarding the specific uses of restraint and seclusion.
- All seclusion environments should be safe and humane and should be inspected at least annually, not only by fire or safety inspectors but for programmatic implementation of guidelines and data related to its use.
- Any student in seclusion must be continuously observed by an adult both visually and aurally for the entire period of the seclusion. Occasional checks are not acceptable.
- CCBD calls for federal, state, and provincial legislation or regulation which would require the implementation of:
 - Recognition that restraint and seclusion procedures are emergency, not treatment, procedures.
 - Requirement that preventive measures such as conflict de-escalation procedures be in place in schools where restraints or seclusion will be employed.
 - Requirements that individualized emergency or safety plans are created for students whose behavior could reasonably be predicted to pose a danger. If an emergency or safety plan is deemed necessary for a student with a disability, that

document should be created by the IEP team and may be appended as an attachment to the student's IEP.

- Requirements that comprehensive debriefings occur after each use of restraint or seclusion and that reports of the incident are created.
- Requirement that data on restraints and seclusion are reported to an outside agency such as the state or provincial department of education.
- CCBD does not believe that “guidelines” or “technical assistance documents” are generally adequate to regulate the use of these procedures since abuses continue to occur in states or provinces where guidelines are in place and these guidelines have few mechanisms for providing oversight or correction of abuses.
- CCBD calls for additional research regarding the use of physical restraint and seclusion with students across all settings.

White Papers from which these recommendations are drawn:

Council for Children with Behavior Disorders (May, 2009). *CCBD Position on the Use of Physical Restraint Procedures in School Settings*. Arlington, VA: Author.

Council for Children with Behavior Disorders (May, 2009). *CCBD Position on the Use of Seclusion Procedures in School Settings*. Arlington, VA: Author.

The Executive Committee of CCBD recognizes and thanks Advocacy and Governmental Relations Committee members Reece Peterson, Susan Albrecht (Chair), and Bev Johns for primary authorship of drafts of this position summary.

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