

Directives for the Appropriate Use of Seclusion and Physical Restraint in Special Education Programs

Controversy surrounds the use of seclusion and physical restraint in school-based programs, and use of these interventions carries a high degree of risk for being misunderstood. Both techniques should be used only as a last resort in cases of danger to the student and/or others. The immediate goals of seclusion and physical restraint are to defuse the dangerous situation, protect the student and others from injury, and regain a safe, controlled, productive learning environment.

School personnel should be proactive when considering the use of either technique, and there should be planning and procedures in place in the event either becomes necessary for safety and maintaining a productive learning environment. Information about the directives and local procedures should be shared with school staff prior to an incident occurring.

Following is a brief summary of the key points contained in Wisconsin DPI's *Directives for the Appropriate Use of Seclusion and Physical Restraint in Special Education Programs*. Further information and details can be obtained by accessing the complete document at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/sbseclusion.html>.

If you have additional questions, please contact Lynn Boreson, WDPI Consultant, at 608-266-1218 or lynn.boreson@dpi.wi.gov.

Seclusion

1. Use the least restrictive intervention appropriate – seclusion should be a last resort.
2. Make sure “time in” is reinforcing.
3. Include the use of “seclusion” in the student’s IEP/BIP.
4. Teach the student what he/she is to do when seclusion is going to be used; foreshadow what will happen before, during, and after seclusion.
5. Set criteria for ending the seclusion period.
6. Maintain constant adult supervision.
7. The “name” of the room is less important than how the space is used.
8. Develop written procedures or policies.
9. Keep a log or incident report.
10. Use the data to evaluate the use of seclusion.
11. General school building codes apply; fire codes impact the use of locks.

Physical Restraint

1. Use only in an emergency; e.g., immediate danger to the student and/or others.
2. Have First Aid and CPR available.
3. Foreshadow for the student what will happen during restraint. Teach the student what he/she is to do during and after restraint is used.
4. Include the use of “restraint” in the student’s IEP/BIP.
5. Use only for the period of time necessary.
6. Move other students when possible rather than moving or transporting the student in crisis.
7. Develop written procedures or policies.
8. Ensure that staff have information and training.
9. Keep a log or incident report.
10. Use the data to evaluate the use of restraint.