



Restraint and Seclusion

What is seclusion? What is restraint?

What is allowed to be used in Georgia's public schools?

What facts should you know about these procedures?

The Georgia State Board of Education adopted a rule in June 2010 which prohibits the use of seclusion and limits the use of restraint to situations where students are a danger to themselves or others. That rule (**160-5-1-.35 Seclusion and Restraint for All Students**) applies to all students in public schools and educational programs in Georgia.

- ✓ Seclusion is a procedure that isolates and confines a student in a separate room or space, away from the common areas. A student who is in seclusion is not able to leave that area, but instead must stay until allowed to leave by adults in attendance. Seclusion is prohibited in Georgia public schools and educational programs.
- ✓ Chemical restraint (use of any medication to control behavior or restrict movement) is prohibited in Georgia public schools and educational programs.
 - Medications that are prescribed for a student's medical or psychiatric condition are not considered chemical restraints and are not prohibited. Such medications may ONLY be given at the prescribed dosage and frequency and cannot be altered to control a student's behavior.
- ✓ Mechanical restraint (use of any device or material to restrict a student's movement and which cannot be easily removed by the student) is prohibited in Georgia public schools and educational programs. Seatbelts and other safety equipment used during the transportation of students are allowed.
 - Prohibited mechanical restraints include, but are not limited to, straightjackets, straps, and handcuffs (when used by anyone other than law enforcement personnel).
- ✓ Prone restraint (a type of restraint where a student is placed face down on the floor or other surface and physical pressure is used to keep him or her in that position) is prohibited in Georgia public schools and educational programs.
- ✓ Physical restraint (direct physical contact from an adult that prevents or significantly restricts a student's movement) is prohibited in Georgia public schools and education programs EXCEPT in situations where the student is an immediate danger to himself or others AND if the student is not responding to less intensive behavioral interventions.
 - Physical restraint cannot be used as a form of discipline or punishment.
 - Physical restraint cannot be used when a student cannot be safely restrained.
 - Physical restraint cannot be used if a student has a psychiatric, medical or physical condition that would contraindicate such a procedure. Such a condition must be documented in the student's educational records.
 - All physical restraint must be immediately stopped when a student is no longer an immediate danger to himself or others OR if the student is in severe distress.
- ✓ Schools that use physical restraint must develop written policies to govern the use of physical restraint.
- ✓ Parents must be provided information about the school's policy on the use of physical restraint.
- ✓ Staff must receive training on the use of physical restraint and on their own school's policies and procedures regarding the use of physical restraint.
- ✓ When restraint is used on a student, that student's parents must be notified, in writing, within "a reasonable time not to exceed one school day".
- ✓ Georgia's rules do not prevent a school from breaking up a student fight or other altercation.
- ✓ Schools can still use "time out" for short periods of time. Time out means that the student is removed from the instructional activity and placed in another location in the classroom or other instructional setting. A student in time out is NOT confined in a separate room or isolated setting.
- ✓ Georgia's rules are not intended to interfere with law enforcement or emergency medical personnel providing assistance in an emergency situation.

Tips for Families:

- ✓ Attend IEP meetings and other school-based meetings where your child's behavior will be discussed. Be
- ✓ prepared to share ideas about what works and what does not work if or when your child exhibits dangerous behaviors.
- ✓ Take written notes with you to all meetings so that you can remember what you want to talk about.
- ✓ Provide written documentation to school personnel of any psychiatric, medical or physical conditions that would prevent the use of restraint with your child.
- ✓ Provide necessary documentation of medications prescribed for your child. Be sure to document the proper amount and timing of each medicine for school staff. Ask if staff has any questions about this information.
- ✓ If you learn that your child has been physically restrained at school, you should
 - Expect to receive written notification from your child's school within one school day.
 - Ask for a copy of your school's procedures for the use of physical restraint.
 - Ask how the staff at your child's school is trained in the use of physical restraint.
 - Request a copy of your child's individualized education program (IEP) and decide if there is a need to review or modify the plan.
- ✓ If your child is exhibiting behaviors that are resulting in repeated use of restraints, time outs or suspensions ask to meet with the IEP team. Ask lots of questions.
 - What has been tried to de-escalate or calm your child?
 - Does your child respond to verbal commands or directions?
 - Has your child had a Functional Behavior Analysis (FBA)?
 - Does your child have a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)?
 - Request that the team review your child's FBA and BIP.
 - Review the state implementation manual for [Restraint and Seclusion](#).
- ✓ If your child does not have an FBA and/or a BIP, request one or both. Requests for an FBA and a BIP should be made in writing. Submit your written requests to your child's teacher, school Principal and district Special Education Director.
- ✓ In some cases, a school may determine that they need help from emergency medical or law enforcement personnel. If your child is removed from school or the program setting by emergency medical or law enforcement personnel, you should be immediately notified by the school.
- ✓ If you learn that any prohibited procedures, including seclusion and some types of restraint, are used with your child, you may want to immediately contact your Special Education Director, the Georgia Department of Education, Parent to Parent of Georgia, and/or the Georgia Advocacy Office. You may do this in order to prevent any further use of prohibited procedures and to ensure the safety of your child while at school.
- ✓ Parents of students who are eligible under IDEA may also use any of the dispute resolution processes (formal complaints, mediation, or due process) to address issues with the school or district.

Where to go for more information:

Parent to Parent of Georgia
770 451-5484 or 800-229-2038
www.p2pga.org

Georgia Department of Education, Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports
404 656-3963 or 800-311-3627 and ask to be transferred to Special Education
http://www.gadoe.org/ci_exceptional.aspx

The Georgia Advocacy Office (GAO)
404-885-1234 or 800-537-2329
www.thegao.org

Additional resources: Contact the **Special Education Director** for your school system.