



Restraint and Isolation Fact Sheet

The Facts

Tennessee Law: Restraint and Isolation in Public Schools

- Special Education Behavioral Supports Act
- Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-10-1301 et seq.
- Originally took effect January 2009
- Amended in 2011

(R&I) Purposes of the Law

- Keep students who receive special education services free from unreasonable, unsafe, and unwarranted uses of isolation and restraint practices
- Positive behavioral interventions and support
- Properly trained staff

Restraint & Isolation Defined

- Restraint means limiting a student's freedom of movement by physical contact or holding.
- Isolation, sometimes called seclusion, means confining a student alone in a room or space from which the student is physically prevented from leaving.

What Schools are Allowed to Do?

Schools may use R&I:

- Only in emergency situations even if written into IEP
- Before writing into an IEP, an individualized positive behavior intervention plan (BIP) should be created based on a functional behavior assessment (FBA).

What are Schools Not Allowed to Do?

Schools MAY NOT:

- restrain a child in any position that restricts breathing or is life-threatening
- use mechanical restraint
- use chemical restraint
- use noxious substances
- lock a child in a room, closet, or other confined space
- use R&I as punishment, coercion, convenience, or retaliation

What are Schools Required to Do?

- Report and Record
- Notify parent each time R&I is used unless it falls under 4 exceptions
- Hold an IEP meeting if R&I is used when not in IEP or if used longer than written into the IEP
- Report to principal every time R&I is used
- Keep records of R&I
- Report information to the school system
- Report to the State the use of R&I

*Presentation adapted from information sheet produced by the Disability Coalition on Education, DCE, a statewide alliance of families, agencies and advocacy organizations working together to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities.