

# Family Matters Fact Sheet

Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education



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## Seclusion and Restraint

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has a policy required by law outlining standards for the emergency use of seclusion and restraint in Michigan public schools. The policy applies to all children, with and without disabilities, and requires using proven practices to reduce and eliminate seclusion and restraint practices. If restraint or seclusion is used, it must be in emergency conditions only and staff using seclusion and restraint in schools must be trained. Schools should always promote the security of the school community and the care, safety, welfare, and dignity of each child.

The following information was summarized from the [MDE Policy for Use of Emergency Seclusion and Restraint](#). See the MDE's [Emergency Use of Seclusion and Physical Restraint Frequently Asked Questions](#) for additional information and clarification of the policy.

Seclusion or restraint may only be used in emergency situations when other interventions have failed and there is great risk to the safety and well-being of the student or others. It cannot be used for staff convenience, as a form of discipline or punishment, or as a substitute for something less limiting or restrictive. Emergency seclusion may never be used for preschool students or students who have self-injurious or suicidal behavior.

### Emergency Seclusion

Emergency seclusion is confining (or keeping) a child in a room or space to regain self-control and to ensure safety of the child and others while being observed by an adult.

- There must be continuous observation by school staff. The room or area must meet local fire and building codes, and must not be locked. The space must provide adequate space, lighting, ventilation, and protect the safety and dignity of the child.

### Emergency Restraint

Emergency restraint is the use of direct physical contact to prevent or restrict a child's movements.

- Staff must ensure the child's breathing is not restricted.
- Staff may not hold the child face down (in the prone position).
- Staff may not use any device, article, garment, or material to restrain a child (mechanical restraint), unless it is an adaptive or protective device recommended by a physician or therapist.

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**1-888-320-8384**  
(OSE information line)



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Family Matters fact sheets are intended to enhance public understanding of Michigan's special education system and are not a substitute for official laws and regulations.



## What if the school uses seclusion or restraint with my child?

1. The school must contact you as soon as possible.
2. The school must also document the incident in writing and give you a written report within one school day or seven calendar days if there is no school scheduled.
3. The school must invite you to a debriefing meeting. You will discuss with the school what happened and what should happen in the future.
4. If there is a pattern of behavior that requires emergency seclusion or emergency restraint, an emergency intervention plan (EIP), functional behavior assessment (FBA), or a positive behavior support plan should be created or revised.
5. Emergency seclusion generally can be no longer than 15 minutes for an elementary child or 20 minutes for a middle or high school child.
6. If emergency restraint is needed for more than 10 minutes, additional support and an explanation for the extended time are required.

### Prohibited Practices

- Mechanical or chemical restraint
- Corporal punishment (§380.1312(1) of *The Revised School Code*, 1976 PA 451)
- Depriving the child of basic needs and anything that is considered child abuse
- Anything that restricts breathing
- Any intentional use of substances, activities, or items that cause physical pain or extreme discomfort

### School Staff Must Be Trained

Everyone who works in the school must receive awareness training about the emergency use of seclusion and restraint. A staff member must receive comprehensive training before he or she uses emergency seclusion or emergency restraint.

### Resources



Michigan Alliance for Families:  
[Seclusion and Restraint](#)

- [Michigan Department of Education: Policy for the Emergency Use of Seclusion and Restraint](#)
- [Michigan Department of Education: Emergency Use of Seclusion and Physical Restraint Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Michigan Compiled Law \(MCL\): 380.1307 Use of seclusion and restraint in public schools](#)