



GEORGIA ASSOCIATION ON YOUNG CHILDREN
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February 2, 2010

Allan Meyer Interim Director, Policy
Georgia Department of Education
2053 Twin Towers East
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive, SE
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Dear Mr. Meyer:

We are writing to provide feedback regarding Proposed Rule 160-5-1-.35 “Seclusion and Restraint for all Students.” The Georgia Association on Young Children (GAYC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft rule and to be involved in the development of the rule prior to its proposal. GAYC’s mission is to encourage and support healthy development in young children by working with others to increase public awareness of the importance of early childhood education, and to improve the quality of programs for young children through learning opportunities for early childhood educators. In addition, our vision is a world in which all young children have the learning opportunities they need for healthy development, supported by early childhood educators who have the education, financial support, and the recognition of their community. As such, we are committed to the development of a rule that supports schools to educate children in safe and positive environments that foster learning and growth.

The Georgia Association on Young Children supports the Department of Education’s decision to address the issue of restraint and seclusion through the development of a rule. In particular, GAYC supports your proposed prohibition on seclusion, prone restraint, mechanical restraint, and chemical restraint. We endorse the Georgia Advocacy Office’s position on significant limitations of the use of physical restraint and the need to build safeguards into the process by which school personnel use restraint and seclusion on a student. Specifically, GAYC aligns its support with the Georgia Advocacy Office in their suggestions regarding the proposed rule as follows:

Behavioral support for students must promote the right of all students to be treated with dignity and to be educated in a safe environment.

Physical restraint, an inherently dangerous practice, should only be used in situations of risk of serious bodily injury and is only justified based on actual behavior of the student in the time of emergency.

Physical restraint may never be used for disciplinary purpose, convenience of faculty or staff, or as a substitute for appropriate positive teaching strategies, techniques, and supports.

Restraint is prohibited to those situations when less intrusive efforts are not effective and there is danger of serious bodily injury to self or to others.

Schools should use Positive Behavior Supports as an intervention for students with disruptive or challenging behaviors. Early identification and intervention are key to effective utilization.

Physical restraint should only be applied to students by school personnel who have been trained and certified in a State-approved training program consisting of instruction not only in applying restraint, but also in de-escalation strategies and problem solving techniques.

School systems should be required to document and report each specific instance of physical restraint on a student in their school.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed rule. We look forward to continuing to work with you to help keep the children of Georgia safe.

Sincerely,



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President



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cc:

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