

PROTECTION AND
ADVOCACY FOR
PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES, INC.

Report Released on Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Schools

Survey Shows Many School Districts Have No Policies to Protect Students From the Unsafe Use of Seclusion and Restraint

COLUMBIA, SC (December 11, 2009) –Protection & Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc. (P&A) along with Center for Disability Resources at the University of South Carolina (CDR), and the South Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) today released a report revealing that many school districts engage in these potentially dangerous practices with no policies in place to guide school staff. The report is the result of a survey of South Carolina School Districts regarding the use of seclusion and restraint.

The report includes the story of a South Carolinian mother whose 12 year-old son was traumatized after being placed in a seclusion room while at school. *“It took me a week to convince him to go back to school...he wouldn’t let me close his bedroom door for a couple of days,”* said parent. On the day her son returned to school he refused to get out of mom’s car. When mom asked, *“What’s wrong?”* Her son replied, *“I’m scared.”*

The report was issued today to the public, with copies directed to the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE), the South Carolina Board of Education, and the South Carolina Association of School Administrators.

This week bipartisan federal legislation was introduced to both houses of U.S. Congress to prevent and reduce the use of seclusion and restraint in schools. For more information, please see http://edlabor.house.gov/documents/111/pdf/legislation/HR4247Seclusion_Restraint.pdf and <http://www.cnn.com/2009/OPINION/12/08/miller.mcmorrisrodgers.childabuse.legislation/index.htm>. Currently, neither federal nor South Carolina law protects students from the inappropriate use of seclusion and restraint. P&A, the CDR, and the DD Council call on the SCDE and the legislature to promulgate regulations or enact legislation governing the use of seclusion and restraint in South Carolina schools.

Over the past year, numerous reports have documented the dangers inappropriate use of seclusion and restraint pose to students, especially students with disabilities. P&A, the CDR, and the DD Council recommend that policymakers review the important recommendations in the following five specific reports prior to the development of statewide rules:

- The National Disability Rights Network, [*School is Not Supposed to Hurt: Investigative Report on Abusive Restraint and Seclusion in Schools*](#)
- Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, Inc., [*Unsafe in the Schoolhouse: Abuse of Children with Disabilities*](#)
- U.S. Government Accountability Office, [*Seclusions and Restraints, Selected Cases of Death and Abuse at Public and Private Schools and Treatment Centers*](#)
- Council for Exceptional Children, [*CEC’s Policy on Physical Restraint and Seclusion Procedures in School Settings*](#)

- Office of Special Education Programs Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, [Considerations for Seclusion and Restraint in School-wide Positive Behavior Supports](#)
- **The report also recommends that districts adopt and implement proven techniques such as Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) to reduce or eliminate the use of seclusion and restraint.** PBIS both improves student behavior and offers greater safety to school staff. For more information, please see <http://www.pbis.org>.

To download and view the entire report, visit <http://www.pandasc.org>.

About Protection & Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc.

Established in 1977 as the protection and advocacy system for the State of South Carolina, P&A is mandated by state and federal law to protect the rights of people with disabilities in South Carolina. P&A is a private, non-profit corporation governed by a volunteer board of directors. As required by federal law, P&A is independent of all agencies that provide treatment or other services to people with disabilities.

P&A has offices throughout South Carolina including Columbia, Greenville, Charleston and Florence. P&A is a member of the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN).

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Media Note: For more details, as well as opportunity to learn from South Carolina parents about the use of seclusion or restraint on their children, please contact one of the regional contacts below.

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