



SPECIAL EDUCATION

Your district will assume that you are familiar with the broad spectrum of laws governing special education and inclusion. The details of the identification and referral process for special needs children, the names of the individuals responsible for the program, and the location of required forms is information provided by your district. If this is not part of an orientation, ask.

It is highly likely that students who have already been identified as having special needs will be in your class(es). It is critically important that you know who they are and have copies of their Individual Education Plans (IEPs) / 504s. IEPs/504s should clearly identify any modifications in learning strategies or materials required for these students. IEPs should also identify who is responsible for delivering the student's specially designed instruction (SDI). If you are responsible for delivering the SDI, please be sure to consult with the intervention specialist (special education teacher) regularly about student progress towards meeting the goals of the IEP. Consult with the intervention specialist to confirm what data you will need to collect for IEP progress reporting. It is your legal obligation to meet the terms of the IEP/504s from day one.

Your colleagues who specialize in supporting students with special needs will connect with you to discuss how you can work together to meet student needs. However, they have an extraordinary workload at the beginning of the school year. Clarify all questions relating to special education with your intervention specialist(s).

If you are providing services to special education students, you should be a part of the student's IEP planning meeting and annual review meeting. Consult with your intervention specialist(s) to ensure that you are available to attend these meetings.

Inclusion

Until recently, many support services have been provided in settings separate from the regular education classroom. The current approach, however, is greater inclusion or fuller integration of regular and special education. There is considerable disparity among districts in the levels of support for inclusion. You can expect to find more students with severe needs placed in regular education classrooms than you remember from your own K-12 days. Succeeding in the inclusive classroom is a major challenge for all. We are all striving to meet this challenge. Current Michigan law emphasizes inclusive practices for special education students, and all school districts implement these practices differently.

There is a wealth of opinion and research, and an abundance of hands-on guidance. Seek out professional development activities on this topic, and ask colleagues about strategies that work for them.

Seclusion and Restraint

In 2016, Michigan adopted a law (MCL 380.1307) that restricts the use of seclusion and restraint in schools. Your best course of action is to always strive to de-escalate situations so that seclusion and restraint is unnecessary. Know that there are very specific rules and regulations surrounding the use of emergency seclusion and restraint. The law requires awareness training for all school personnel and comprehensive training for key identified personnel (KIP). The KIP team will probably be made up of special education teachers and specialists. The KIP team should have additional training such as CPI (Crisis Prevention Institute) certifications.

Important Definitions:

Emergency Seclusion: the confinement of a pupil in a room or other space from which the pupil is physically prevented from leaving. This does not include general confinement during an emergency lockdown drill. It is to be used as a “last resort that is necessitated by an ongoing emergency situation and that provides an opportunity for the pupil to regain self-control while maintaining the safety of the pupil and others.”

It is essential that during all times of Emergency Seclusion that there is continuous observation of the student by school personnel. Obviously, student safety is essential so it is important that the room offers a safe environment. Generally seclusion cannot last longer than 15 minutes for elementary students or 20 minutes for secondary students.

Emergency Restraint: an action that prevents or significantly restricts a pupil’s movement either using direct physical contact, a mechanical device, or the administration of medication (known as chemical restraint). This does not include the brief holding of a pupil in order calm or comfort, escort a student from one area to another, minimum contact to prevent an impulsive and dangerous behavior like running in front of a car.

If either seclusion or restraint occurs, documentation and reporting is required. See your administrator for appropriate documentation requirements. Additionally, debriefing is essential.

If a pupil exhibits a pattern of behavior that poses a substantial risk of creating an emergency situation that would require restraint or seclusion, school personnel is encouraged to

- Conduct a functional behavioral assessment
- Develop and revise a positive behavioral intervention and support plan
- Organize a team to create an emergency intervention plan.

For more information see the MDE [FAQ](#)

A typical classroom teacher will probably never be responsible for restraint or seclusion. If you have a student who exhibits extreme behavior that puts the student or others at risk of physical harm, contact your building representative or UniServ Director for suggestions and support.