

Behavior Problems & Discipline

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Discipline is a hot topic. When the federal special education law was passed in 1975, Congress found that most handicapped children were not receiving an appropriate education - and that millions of children were excluded from school altogether.

Today, schools continue to suspend and expel students with disabilities for behavior caused by their disabilities. If you are advocating for a child with behavior problems, the articles and resources collected on this page will help.

FAQs About Behavior & Discipline

[Frequently Asked Questions: Discipline](#) - U. S. Dept of Education clarifies rules for disciplining children with disabilities; focuses on need to use appropriate behavioral interventions and functional behavior assessments; clarifies 10-day and 45-day removals; weapons and illegal drugs.

[FAQs: Can School Suspend or Expel a Child with ADD and LD?](#) What can you do if the school suspends or expels a child who has a disability who has not been found eligible for services and IDEA protections?

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Articles About Behavior and Discipline

[What to Do When Schools Have Children Arrested for School-Related Behaviors](#) - Pete Wright offers strategies to turn this negative experience into a positive outcome for the child.

[Discipline and the ADHD Child](#). "If we can teach elephants, lions and tigers to behave, we can teach our ADHD children to behave." In response to a grandmother's plea for help, Pete shares four rules of discipline; what he did, never did, and why.

[What Are the School's Obligations to Children with Emotional and Behavior Problems?](#) A teacher asks, "What obligations do we have to a student with behavior problems? Must we continue to provide special education services if we believe he is a danger to himself or others? What about the safety of the other students, teachers, and administrators?" Pete answers these questions with a few of his own - and offers a plan to help the child. [Read article](#).

[Defusing Violent Behavior in Young Children: An Ounce of Prevention](#) (PDF) - The cost of prevention strategies is lower than the cost of remediating or containing more serious problems down the road. This article, published by the National Association of School Psychologists, includes Prevention and Problem Solving Strategies.

[What Do You Mean by "Behavior?"](#) This article, by Leslie E. Packer, PhD, is an overview for parents and teachers when considering behavior modification.

[Is Behavior Modification Appropriate?](#) This article, by Leslie E. Packer, PhD, talks about how to decide

whether and how to use behavior modification.

[Practicing Restraint](#). Restraint and seclusion were once considered acceptable, even valuable tools in maintaining control of unruly children in residential group homes. But the call for alternatives is growing louder.

[A Problem-Solving Approach to Functional Behavioral Assessments](#). Describes a model for problem solving - defining the problem, developing a plan, implementing the plan, and evaluating the plan. Includes case studies.

[Crisis! Emergency! Help!](#) If you are in a crisis, this article is a "must read" for you, and for parents who want to avoid school crises. Learn how parents damage their child's case by assuming that they must **DO SOMETHING!**

[Center for Evidence-Based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behavior](#)

[Discipline: Suspension, Expulsions and IEPs](#). A child with a language impairment who receives special education is suspended; school does not provide special ed services. Parent attorney Bob Crabtree describes school's responsibilities under IDEA including provision of FAPE, alternative educational placements, functional behavioral assessments and behavior intervention plans.

[Defusing Violent Behavior in Young Children: An Ounce of Prevention - Information for School Principals](#) - Strategies to deal with aggressive and violent behavior; how to teach behavior skills; prevention & problem solving. (National Association of School Psychologists)

[Disciplining Students with Disabilities](#) Dr. Kevin Dwyer of the National Association of School Psychologists provides practical advice about increasing positive behaviors and decreasing negative behaviors.

[Learning and Behavior Problems: Who Fault is It?](#) - Why do children have learning and behavior problems at school? (Answer: Five causes) Who is to blame?

[Original "Letter to the Stranger" by Janie Bowman and Peter Wright](#) - This is the original "Letter to the Stranger" about child who was suspended from school. (This article later became part of a Smithsonian Exhibit about online culture and communities.)

[Misuse of "Zero Tolerance" Policies](#) - Harvard Civil Rights Project Issues Scathing Report of by School Districts. (July 6, 2000)

[Prevention Research & IDEA Discipline Provisions: A Guide for School Administrators](#) - This article from the U. S. Dept of Education describes research-validated practices that use positive behavioral intervention and supports; outcomes include reduced discipline referrals and improved academic performance; includes IDEA legal requirements re: discipline.

[Reinventing Our Schools](#) - Thought-provoking article by Thom Hartmann, author of several best-selling books about ADD/ADHD and education. Describes two "world views" of ADD, discusses low stimulation and high stimulation classrooms.

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Functional Behavior Assessments & Behavior Intervention Plans

[IDEA 2004: What You Need to Know About IEPs for Children with Behavior Problems](#) - IDEA 2004 and the special education regulations include specific requirements for IEPs of children whose behavior impedes their learning or the learning of others -- including the training of teachers to use positive behavioral interventions and strategies.

[An IEP Team's Introduction to Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plans](#) - Describes the IEP team's responsibility to do a functional behavioral assessment to identify the cause of the child's behavior and develop positive behavioral interventions and supports to address problem behavior. (For more info, see Free Pubs section below)

[Behavioral Interventions: Creating a Safe Environment in Our Schools](#) published by the National Mental Health and Education Center (28 pages, pdf).

[Functional Behavioral Assessment & Positive Interventions: What Parents Need to Know by Dixie Jordan](#). Is the child a problem? Does the child have a problem? Is suspension from school "good medicine for bad behavior?" Article describes strategies parents and teachers can use to assess problem behavior and teach appropriate behavior skills to children.

[Functional Behavioral Assessments: What? Why? When? Where? Who?](#) Dr. Stephen Starin describes problem behaviors, functional behavior assessments, environmental manipulation, and qualifications and training of evaluators. [Back to top](#)

Caselaw About Discipline

[Honig v. Doe, 484 U.S. 305 \(1988\)](#). Decision from U. S. Supreme Court in discipline case that involved two emotionally disturbed students who had academic and social problems. Clarifies that schools may not expel children for behaviors related to their handicaps; stay put; procedural safeguards are designed to protect children and parents; describes parent role.

[Community Consolidated Sch. Dist. #93 v. John F. \(IL\)](#) Excellent decision in discipline case; includes procedural violations, prior written notice requirements, manifestation determination review, suspensions for more than 10 days, expedited hearings, special education and related services under IDEA, "passing grades" are not evidence of FAPE, homebound instruction violated LRE, more. [Decision in Word](#) [Decision in pdf](#)

Free Publications About Behavior & Discipline

[Positive Behavior Support: Evolution of an Applied Science](#)

Carr, E. G., Dunlap, G., Horner, R. H., Koegel, R. L., Turnbull, A., Sailor, W., Anderson, J., Albin, R., Koegel, L. K., & Fox, L. (2002). Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 4(1), 4-16. Copyright (2002) by PRO-ED, Inc. Adapted with permission. You may download this article to make single a copy for your own use.

[Facilitator's Guide, Positive Behavioral Support](#)

This guide is made available through the Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Service, Florida Department of Education, and was developed by the staff of the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Project at the University of South Florida. This guide is designed to build capacity of school districts in positive assessment based approaches to support students with significant behavioral challenges.

Free e-Book Download: [Achieving Better Outcomes for Children and Families](#)

The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), in collaboration with the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (FFCMH), serves as the Coordinating Center for the three-year Best Practices in Behavior Support and Intervention Project. The project is designed to reduce the use of restraint and seclusion in seven demonstration sites across the country by improving the training and supervision of staff who work directly with children and youth.

[An IEP Team's Introduction to Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plans](#) (Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice) If your child has behavior problems, this publication will help. Describes need to identify the underlying causes of child's behavior (what the child "gets" or "avoids" through the behavior); that the IEP team is responsible for developing proactive instructional strategies, including positive behavioral interventions and supports, to address behaviors that interfere with learning. [Download](#) A PDF version is also available.

[Interim Alternative Educational Settings for Children with Disabilities](#) (National Association of School Psychologists) This 54 page publication includes useful information about discipline and interim alternative educational settings. [Download](#) or phone: 888-232-7733 to order.

[Behavioral Interventions: Creating a Safe Environment in Our Schools](#) (National Mental Health and Education Center) Articles about school discipline, behavior management, managing disruptive behavior, defusing disruptions, violence prevention programs, bullying fact sheet, disciplining students with disabilities. (28 pages, pdf)

[Opportunities Suspended: The Devastating Consequences of Zero Tolerance and School Discipline Policies](#) (Harvard Civil Rights Project). Under Zero Tolerance Policies, children from kindergarten through 12th grade receive harsh punishments, often for minor infractions that pose no threat to safety. Compelling research indicates that these "get-tough" disciplinary measures fail to meet sound educational principles. In many cases, their application defies commonsense. [Download](#)

To order bound copies, call The Civil Rights Project at 617-496-6367.

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Useful Websites

[Families & Advocates Partnership for Education \(FAPE\)](#). Good source of information about special education topics; connected with PACER Center.

[National Association of School Psychologists](#) publishes *Communique*, a newsletter about school topics, including discipline and behavior issues.

[Education Law Resource Center](#)

[Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports](#)

[Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions](#)

[Center for Evidence-Based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behavior](#)

[Council for Exceptional Children](#)

[National Information Center for Children & Youth with Disabilities](#)

[IDEA Partnerships](#)

Legal References

When Congress reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 2004, they made significant changes in the discipline statute (20 USC Section 1415(k)).

The full text of the statute and IDEA 2004 regulations is in [Wrightslaw: Special Education Law, 2nd Edition](#).

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