**STOP HURTING KIDS**

Restraint and seclusion are being used repeatedly and systemically on students in British Columbia’s public schools, Inclusion BC and the Family Support Institute report. These practices, along with other disturbing incidents and patterns of conduct, are detailed[in a report](http://www.inclusionbc.org/sites/default/files/StopHurtingKids-Report.pdf" \t "_blank) issued on November 21, 2013.

“Stop Hurting Kids: Restraint and Seclusion in BC Schools” includes data collected from an online survey of approximately 200 parents and guardians of children who had been restrained or secluded in British Columbia schools.  The report will be officially launched with a panel discussion on [Friday, November 22 at Douglas College in New Westminster](http://inclusionbc.org/register-restraint-seclusion).

**Restraint** is the use of physical procedures or mechanical devices to limit freedom of movement, and **seclusion** is placement in an isolated area for an extended time and prevention from leaving that area.

“School should be a place that is welcoming and supportive for all students, not a place that isolates, alienates and humiliates as a result of seclusion and restraint,” said Faith Bodnar, executive director of Inclusion BC. “Most of the students who were restrained were 5 to 10 years old, just starting out in the school system. Restraint and seclusion have long-term emotional effects on children and youth, their families and communities where they live; over 75% of the students in our survey suffered emotional trauma.”

Parents reported that children were restrained in closets, isolation rooms, stairwells, and classrooms. Some parents reported that “prone holds,” “supine holds,” and “wrestling holds with pressure” were used on students. 10% of respondents said that their children had been secluded for over 3 hours, and 20% reported that this occurred on a daily basis.

“One of the most concerning figures in this survey is that 72% of parents learned about restraint or seclusion from someone other than the school,” said Bodnar. “This points to the fact that our survey is revealing only the tip of the iceberg in terms of restraint and seclusion in our schools. Clearly, this is about a systemic, fundamental problem, not an isolated event.”

Inclusion BC is calling for legislation and a targeted plan of action from the BC Ministry of Education to prevent the serious and egregious harm done to students in public schools as a result of the ongoing use of restraint and seclusion in schools.The fact that 49 of the families in the survey reported that they removed their child from public school because of this issue and 80% reported that they were unsatisfied with the school district’s handling of the issue calls for the Ministry of Education to take action now.