



Lawmakers Urged to Ban Seclusion Media Invited to Meet Families

April 28, 2023

MEDIA ADVISORY: (Minneapolis, Minn.) — Photos, documenting injuries, and stories of abuse, told by families of children as young as four, have compelled Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid to support legislation that would end use of seclusion rooms in schools throughout the state.

By appointment, media are invited to meet families:

Capitol, Monday, May 1, 10 a.m.-Noon

Reserve time: Lisa Ramirez lramirez@mylegalaid.org, 612.746.3641

Capitol contact: Jessica Webster jlwebster@mnlisap.org

MMLA's Legal Services Advocacy Project, The Arc Minnesota and the Multicultural Autism Action Network will host this meeting, standing in support of House File 2497 (Senate File 2684), currently under consideration at the Capitol. If passed, this would begin the phase-out process to end seclusion in schools for children, birth-3rd grade.

Seclusion, as reflected in [2021-22 MDE data](#), has been reserved exclusively for children with disabilities. "Using these techniques on disabled students violates their right to nondiscrimination in accessing education," says Public Policy Director for The Arc Minnesota, Julia Page. The same data sets also show a disproportionate number of children of color are affected—17% of students in isolation, under 10 years-old, were identified as Black, while Black students made up 12% of the overall student population.

Stories of harmful effects include that of Maren Christenson's son, who was four, "The day my son was secluded at school, it went from a place of joy and learning to a place where trauma happens"; a school employee, instructed in practices of restraint, recounted: "One third grader spent all day in the seclusion room, even eating lunch there. He cried for his mother who was incarcerated. I left that job and never returned"; a mother says her daughter's experience followed her into adulthood, "she was dragged on the floor in front of peers... [today] having a door shut behind her brings up the trauma from being closed in a seclusion room."