



NATIONAL CENTER FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

Discipline

Zero tolerance for violence AND for losing even one child.

The National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) upholds all efforts to prevent and reduce violence in America's schools. Any student, including a student with a learning disability, whose aggressive and violent behavior is a danger to themselves or others must be immediately removed from that school setting. IDEA ensures that students with LD that are removed from school are still entitled to a free, appropriate public education in an appropriate, alternative setting.

Policy Recommendations

- **Keep IDEA intact to prevent schools from reducing their obligation to students with disabilities.** Cessation of education services to any student, regardless of whether they have a disability leads to increases in juvenile crime, drop out rates, incarceration and drug use.
- **Ensure early identification and intervention are a priority.** The best way to handle violence is to intervene before the violent act occurs. Schools working toward early identification and early intervention are implementing a three-part model of effective, inclusive environments where social skill development is viewed as important as academic skill development. In those schools, discipline referrals have been decreased and academic success has been enhanced. These schools provide clear, appropriate and immediate positive reinforcement, as well as negative consequences to students based on the choice of behavior.
- **Promote safe and violence free school initiatives.** Schools must continue to have the authority to expel and suspend violent students, including those with disabilities, however, education services must be continued in an alternative setting. Educators

The appropriate function of discipline is to decrease inappropriate behavior and increase appropriate behavior. It is the intent of everyone, including NCLD, to insure that discipline policies and programs reach this expectation.

Discipline, cont'd

must be partners in developing comprehensive, family-centered, community-based strategies. Communities need to work together to promote violence free schools –simply removing a child from the school only transfers the problem to the larger community.

- **Establish research-based, effective programs that prevent school violence.** Effective programs provide for a comprehensive approach for a full continuum of services. Research-based programs also include classroom management strategies to help reduce classroom disruption and increase student learning; positive behavior intervention programs that address the emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of students; and professional development to reduce the level of inappropriate disciplinary actions. All school staff must be trained to recognize and respond appropriately to troubled youth. Students must have immediate access to comprehensive school-based consultation and other mental health services.

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NCLD works to increase opportunities and improve outcomes for children and adults with learning disabilities (LD) by providing accurate information to the public, developing and disseminating innovative educational programs, and advocating for more effective policies and legislation to help individuals with LD.