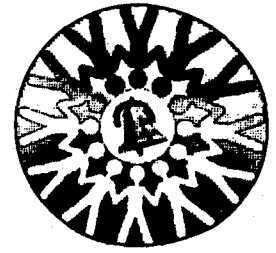


Mental Health Association in Butler County

140 N. ELM STREET
SUITE A
BUTLER, PA 16001-5742

PHONE: (724) 287-1965
FAX: (724) 287-7090



A UNITED WAY AGENCY

Mr. JimBuckheit
Executive Director
PA State Board of Education
333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Re:ID36-306

Dear Mr. Buckheit;

The Mental Health Association is a social service agency that is dedicated in ensuring appropriate educational opportunities for children with disabilities. I have been the educational advocate for the past three years, and have worked with nearly 150 families to ensure that their children are getting the most appropriate education possible.

I would like to extend my endorsement of the VALUE's comments, which are focusing on 22PA Code 14.133(Behavior Support). I feel that this is a very significant problem and if the regulations stay in the current form that they are, then children with disabilities safety is at great risk. I feel if a positive behavioral plan is developed well then the use of restraint is not necessary. I feel that restraining children just tears away at the self-esteem level and it does not teach the child how to control their emotions. As the adults in charge, we need to know how to prevent potential situations from exploding and teach children appropriate ways of dealing with their emotions. Restraining children does not teach them how to deal with their emotions. The safety part of restraining is another problem, you have adults restraining young kids and that is dangerous. How do we know if that adult is applying too much pressure on that child? Any type of "therapeutic hold" can be dangerous to a child. Let's consider the size of the person that is going to be restraining that child. I think we need to think about this problem, it is a safety issue and as well as emotional issue

I hope that the State Board will take a serious look at these regulations and make the necessary changes before they become law. Pennsylvania has always been a leader when it comes to matters dealing with people with disabilities, so I urge you to please take a strong look at the regulations under Behavior Support and keep Pennsylvania as a leader.

Thank You,
Lonni DePolo
Lonni DePolo
Educational Advocate

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