



There may be a time when staff members working in child care facility find themselves in a position where a child they are caring for requires a restraint in order to protect themselves or others from harm. This restraint should be approved and documented in the specific child’s care plan, or it may be required in the event of an emergency.

The Child Care Licensing Regulation (CCLR) states:

*Behavioural Guidance*

Section 51

- (2) If the child has a care plan that includes instructions respecting behavioural guidance, the licensee must ensure that
  - (b) if the behavioural guidance includes the use of restraints, that the restraints are administered only by a person who is trained in the use of, and alternatives to the use of, restraints.

*Notification of Illness and Injury*

Section 55

- (1) A licensee must immediately notify a parent or emergency contact if, while under the care or supervision of the licensee the child
  - (b) is involved in, or may have been involved in, a reportable incident described in Schedule H. (Emergency Restraint).

Section 55

- (2) A licensee must notify the medical health officer within 24 hours after
  - (a) a child is involved in, or may have been involved in, a reportable incident described in Schedule H while under the care or supervision of the licensee. (Emergency Restraint).

*Community Care Facility Records and Policies*

Section 56

- (1) A licensee must keep current records of each of the following:
  - (d) written policies and procedures that are intended to guide employees in the care and supervision of children. (Emergency Restraint)

**What is a Restraint?**

A restraint is an action that restricts or controls an individual’s freedom of movement.

A restraint may be defined as:

- Physical – any item or action that physically constricts or controls movement or behaviour.
- Environmental – any item or action that may include modification of a child’s surroundings to restrict or control movement.
- Chemical – any medication used to control behaviour beyond the point of what is directed in the child’s care plan and/or beyond the point of therapeutic benefit.

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The use of a restraint would be intended to protect the child in care's health and safety, and preserve his/her dignity, rights and well-being. Restraints are never to be used as a means of coercion, discipline, convenience, or retaliation by caregivers.

### **When are Restraints Used?**

If a child in care requires additional support due to behaviors includes the use of restraints, the behavior and circumstances that may trigger a situation where the restraint is used must be identified in the child's care plan. The Licensee must ensure that the expected response and behavioral redirection by staff is also outlined clearly in the care plan. Restraints, if identified as an intervention tool, may only be used when behavior identified in the care plan is exhibited and staff have utilized all alternatives to the use of restraints, and attempted to de-escalate the situation following instructions outlined in the care plan with no effect.

If the behaviour described in the care plan is observed and there is an imminent risk to the health and safety of a child in care, caregivers, or other children in care, the use of the restraint must then be recorded in the child's care plan and contain the reasons for the use of the restraint and all alternative methods used before the restraint was applied.

It is the Licensee's responsibility to ensure that staff are aware of and have been properly trained in implementing the care plan, including training and education on the use of restraints.

### **When Would an Emergency Restraint be Appropriate?**

Despite CCLR Sections 51(2)(b) and 56(1)(d), Schedule H of the Child Care Licensing Regulation defines an "emergency restraint" as a restraint that is necessary to protect the child or others from imminent serious physical harm that is not approved and documented in a child's care plan.

The use of an "emergency" restraint may be applied, when the following applies:

- The restraint is necessary to preserve the child in care's life or to prevent serious physical harm to the child in care or other children and caregivers.
- The behaviour has not been previously displayed or planned for which has not been appropriately assessed in the child's care plan.
- **If a behaviour occurs that is not documented in the child's care plan or the child does not have a care plan and an emergency restraint is used, this is considered a Reportable Incident.** An example is a child without a care plan attempts to run out of the yard into the parking lot and the caregiver uses a restraint to stop the child.

**Licensing must be notified of an Emergency Restraint and an Incident Report form must be completed and forwarded to your Licensing Officer.**

### **Steps to Consider Before Using a Restraint in a Care Plan:**

1. Look for "trends" in behaviour and escalation.
2. Identify and document circumstances, which may trigger the situation that would require a restraint.
3. Use de-escalation strategies or non-physical techniques such as redirection, verbal cues, removing stimuli or triggers from the child's surroundings.
4. Create an environment, which lowers stress and anxiety.
5. Be aware that reactions by caregivers may affect the escalation of the child's behaviour.
6. Ask yourself and co-workers: Is the restraint in the child's best interest and is it necessary to protect the health and safety of other persons?

7. Consult with your co-workers and your Supervisor. Sometimes stepping away from the situation and allowing another caregiver to apply their skills in alternative methods will bring the desired results.

If other steps have failed and a restraint is the only alternative, a caregiver trained in the appropriate use of a restraint may proceed. During the use of the restraint, caregivers must ensure that the dignity, comfort and safety of the child is paramount.

### **Requirements of a Care Plan:**

The use of restraints in community care facilities must be documented, monitored and assessed. Child specific restraints may be used if all other means to manage behaviours have been exhausted, and they are used in the least restrictive way. Licensees that provide care to children that may require the use of a restraint to ensure their health and safety should be aware that:

- The plan for the use of a restraint should be developed in consultation with the child's parent/guardian, physician (if applicable) and the Licensee.
- The development of the care plan should include the input of any persons requested by the parent/guardian (for example a counselor, a social worker).
- The use of the restraint involves weighing the benefits of using the restraint against the risks of not using the restraint.
- Must be comprehensively assessed on an individual basis by the Licensee on a regular basis or as dictated by the child's behaviour.
- The care plan must be reviewed with the parent/guardian at least once per year or as needed.
- Document the annual review of the child's care plan.
- Caregivers must receive training in alternative behavioural guidance techniques, as well as on the use of a restraint.
- Caregivers must receive training on the use and implementation of the restraint.
- The physical and mental well-being of a child in a restrained condition should not be compromised.

Any restraint, as documented in a care plan or used in an emergency, should not be used as a substitute for providing a safe and well-designed environment conducive to positive interactions between children, their peers and adults. Direct, continuous supervision by a caregiver, who is well trained in positive behavioural guidance methods, will find that the use of a restraint is a very rare occurrence. The use of no restraint would be the preferred choice.