

# Crisis in the Classroom

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Ontario

CELEBRATING  
**70**  
YEARS OF POSSIBILITIES

INTÉGRATION  
COMMUNAUTAIRE  
Ontario

CELEBRER  
**70**  
ANS DE POSSIBILITÉS

# Ontario School Inclusion Study

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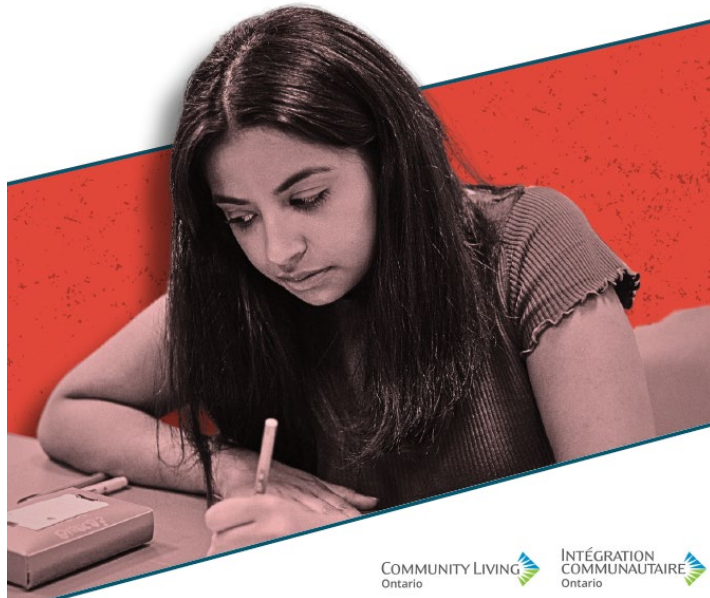
- Partnership with Jess Whitley at the University of Ottawa
- We built on previous studies performed in BC, Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec
- 541 parents and other caregivers participated in June-July 2023
- All information is for the 2022-2023 school year
  - WHY? → parents calling CLO with reports of exclusion, seclusion, and restraint

# Crisis in the Classroom

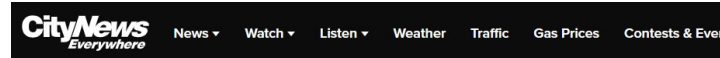
April 2025

## CRISIS IN THE CLASSROOM

Exclusion, Seclusion, and Restraint of Students with Disabilities in Ontario Schools



COMMUNITY LIVING Ontario  INTÉGRATION COMMUNAUTAIRE Ontario 



Disabled students increasingly being secluded and restrained: new report

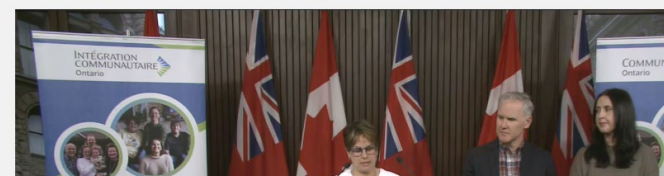


Queen's Park

### Ontario students with intellectual disabilities facing exclusion, seclusion, and restraint says new report

By Joanna Laviole

Published: April 23, 2025 at 2:53PM EDT



[www.communitylivingontario.ca](http://www.communitylivingontario.ca)

SARNIA | NEWS

### Action needed to protect students with disabilities at school: CLO

BY PAUL PEDRO

APRIL 24, 2025 - 5:00AM



Community Living Ontario (CLO) is reporting that students with disabilities are being excluded, secluded, and restrained at school.

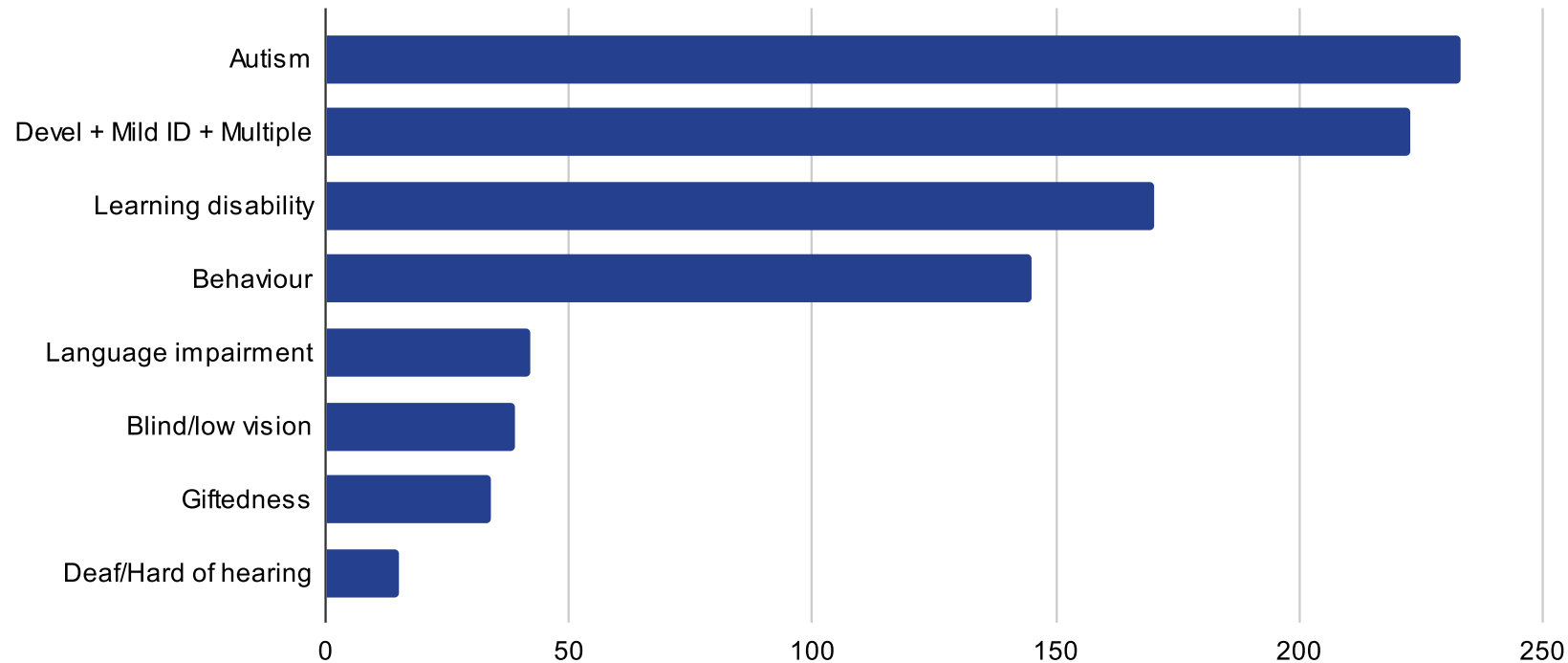
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### Kids held on the ground by staff. Others sent home. Ontario students with disabilities are in crisis, report finds

A report by Community Living Ontario shines a light on the use of secluding, restraining and excluding students.

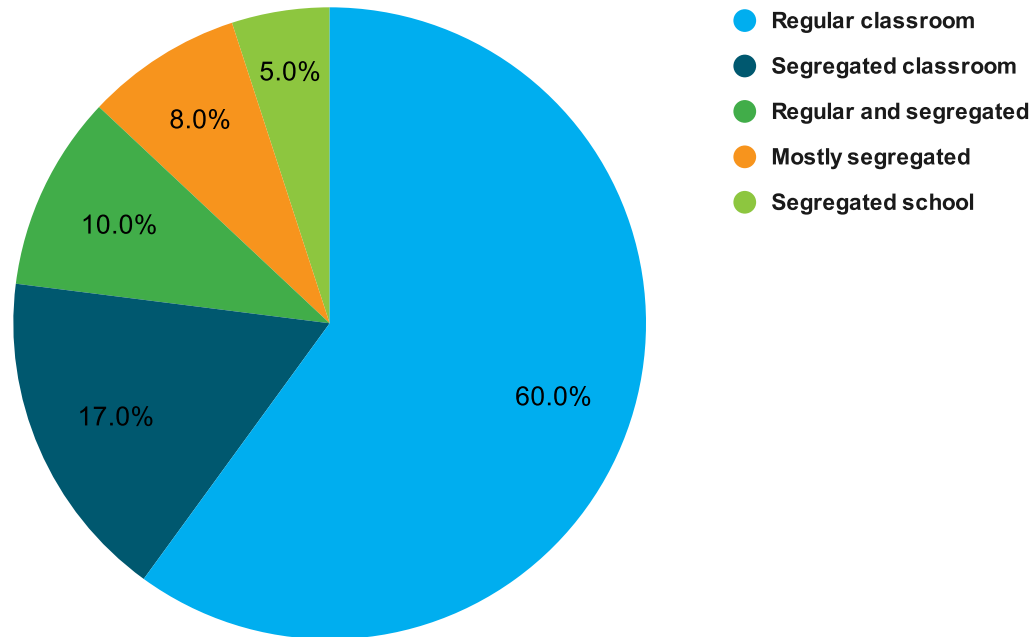
# Ontario School Inclusion Study

## Identifications (#)



✨ 75% of students in the study had been diagnosed with at least one of: autism, developmental disability, mild intellectual disability, multiple exceptionalities, or behavioural exceptionality ✨

# Positive findings



- ❖ 41% of students feel 'often' or 'always' valued and accepted by school staff
- ❖ 48% are 'rarely' or 'never' excluded from academic and extra-curricular activities at school
- ❖ The majority of students in the study had not experienced seclusion or restraint in the 2022-2023 school year

# Exclusion

- Being sent home because of a lack of support
- Being told to stay home / not come to school
- Attending school on a part-time basis
- Being suspended because of a lack of accommodation of disability-connected behaviour

**31% of students had been sent home or told to stay home because of a lack of in-school support**

# Seclusion

- Being put in an isolated area for a long period of time and not being allowed to leave the area
- Commonly-used terms include 'isolation,' 'time out,' 'alone time,' 'quiet time,' 'calming rooms' and 'alternative learning environments
- When students are secluded, they do not have the choice to come and go from the area or room

**29% of students had experienced involuntary seclusion/isolation**

# Restraint

- People physically stopping a student from being able to move.
- For example, someone holding a student in a chair and not letting them move away; forcing a student to walk from one room to another; holding them on the ground

**14% of students had experienced restraint**

# Ontario School Inclusion Study

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## Processes of Exclusion

- ❖ One in five students were attending school on a part-time or modified schedule.
- ❖ More than half of caregivers reported that their children were 'sometimes,' 'often,' or 'always' excluded from academic events and opportunities.
- ❖ One in four students represented in the survey 'rarely' or 'never' enjoy school or feel valued or accepted by school staff.
- ❖ 40% of students avoided school or were reluctant to attend because of anxiety and fear caused by their experiences within the school community.

# Ontario School Inclusion Study

## Processes of Exclusion

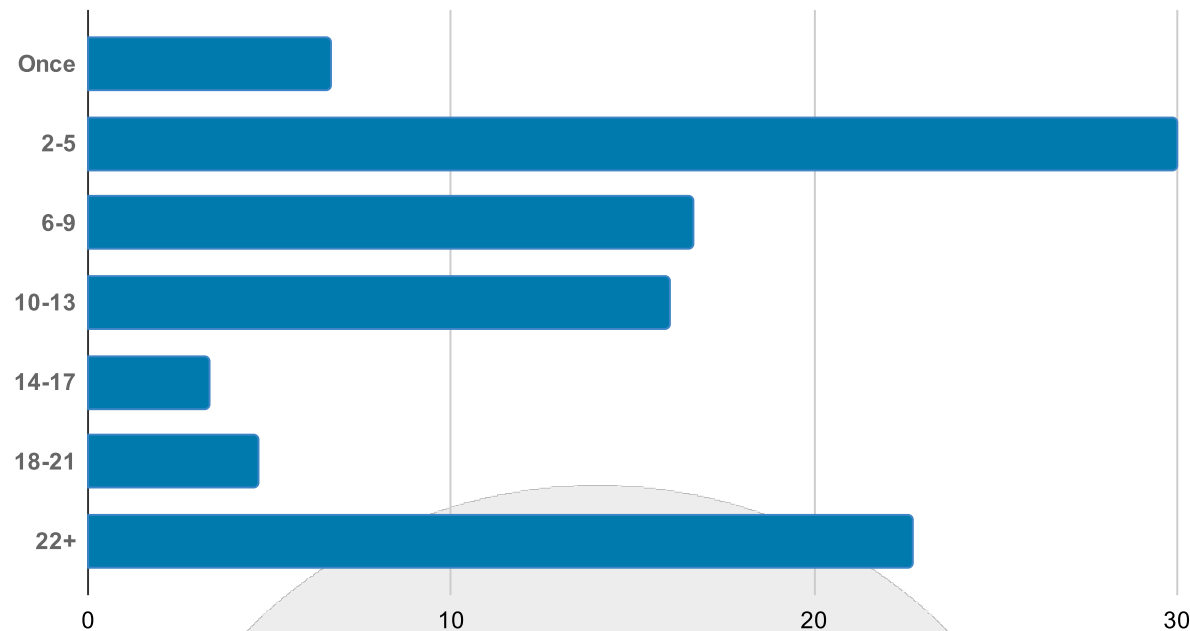
✨ Close to half of our sample meet the criteria for chronic absenteeism, i.e., missing 10% or more of school days. ✨

Table 3 - Main reason for missing school	#	%
Student was reluctant/avoided school (anxiety, fear, etc.)	115	23
Caregiver gave student a day off (to give child a rest)	104	21
Other reasons (e.g., sickness, appointments, etc.)	88	18
School sent student home, citing behaviour issues	59	12
Caregiver's decision - school not able to meet student's needs	54	11
School sent student home because of lack of staff or resources	42	9
School instructed/asked student to not attend	32	6

# Ontario School Inclusion Study

## Processes of Seclusion

Number of times student was secluded (%)

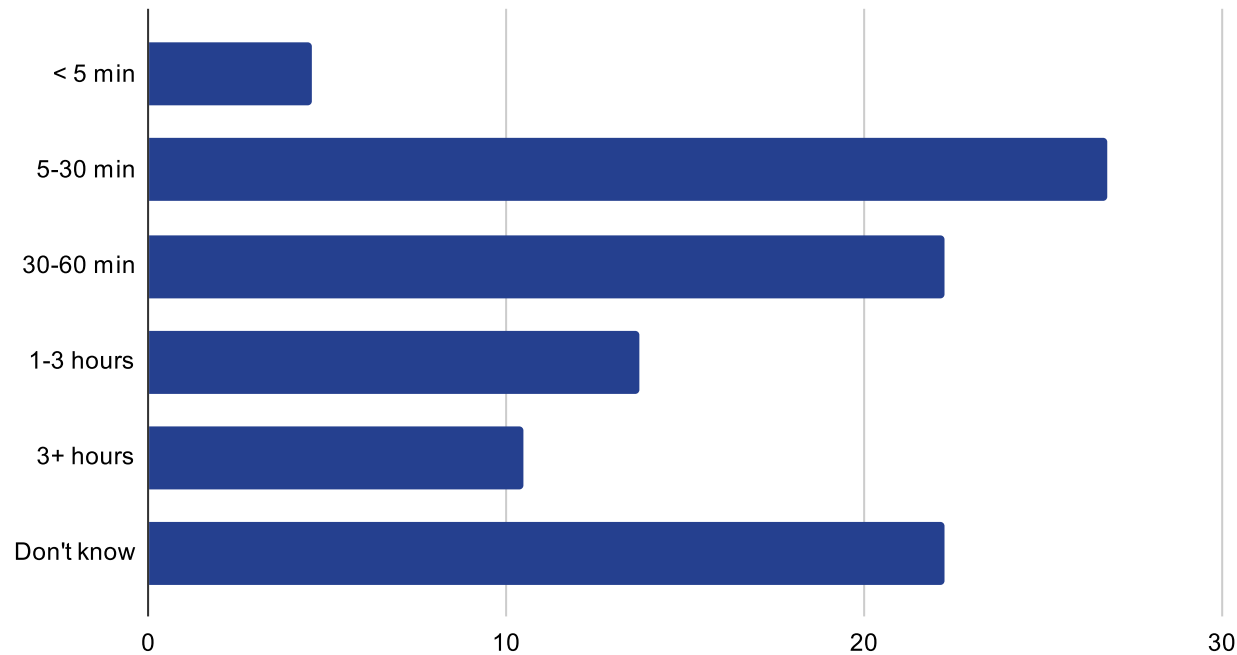


✨ Nearly half of those who were secluded experienced this more than 10 times ✨

✨ The most common reported types of seclusion were having a locked/blocked door (n = 83), and being physically prevented from leaving (n = 25) ✨

# Ontario School Inclusion Study

Longest amount of time spent in seclusion (%)



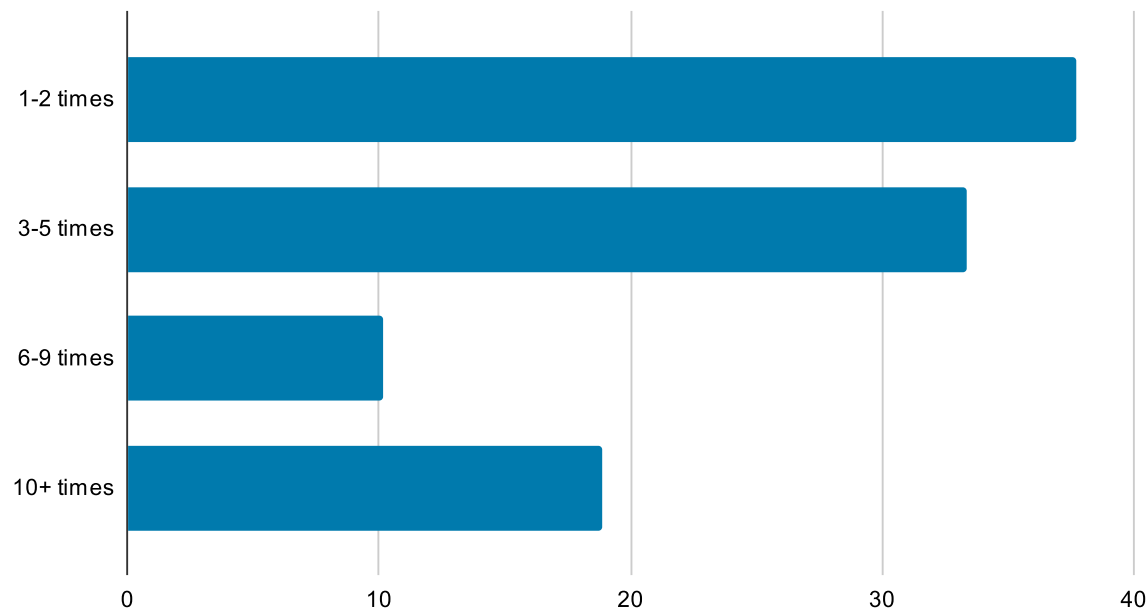
✨ 59% of students who had been secluded experienced emotional trauma or distress ✨

✨ Many parents only learned of the seclusion by chance and were not informed by the school ✨

# Ontario School Inclusion Study

## Processes of Restraint

Number of times student was restrained (%)



- Held in a standing position (n = 27)
- Held while being forced to walk (n = 25)
- Held down on the floor (n = 20)
- Picked up and carried (n = 19)
- Held in a seated position/on a chair (n = 18)
  
- Younger students were more likely to be restrained
  
- 40% of parents said that they had not been informed by the school after instances of restraint

<b>Class Placement</b>	<b>Percentage of students who were restrained</b>
Special education school	14.3%
Special education class, full time	15.7%
Special education class, most of the time	22.7%
Regular + special education class	20.4%
Regular class with support from spec ed staff	13.7%
Regular class with support from teacher if necessary	7.3%

# Ontario School Inclusion Study

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**“My son has spent a lot of time in a padded room within his school. I was not aware of this room initially until I picked him up earlier in the year while he was in there.”**

**“The public school here has a secret padded restraint room. I do not feel comfortable with my child attending this school after a very poor 13 day experience.”**

**“At various times in the year, different people have denied aspects of my child’s restraint, seclusion and exclusion. We have never been given written documentation despite asking repeatedly. My child was deeply, deeply traumatized by restraint and seclusion.”**

**“I am constantly getting phone calls to pick my child up early because their behaviour ‘isn't safe.’ I also had to keep him home for four days so they could develop a safety and behaviour plan. And now he can only go to school in the mornings.”**

# Ontario School Inclusion Study

## The Dangerous Power of Labels

Kitchener-Waterloo

### Ex-Kitchener, Ont., teacher who taped students to classroom chairs pleads guilty to professional misconduct

Criminal charges against teacher were withdrawn after entering into a peace bond

CBC News - Posted: Sep 19, 2023 11:31 AM EDT | Last Updated: September 19, 2023

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Vulnerable boy dies after allegedly being left alone in room at Ontario school



Hi Shawn,

My apologies for the late reply. As Landyn's death does not meet the criteria for a mandatory inquest, there are no plans for an inquest to be held at this time.

Steve Moore

Stephen Moore, PhD, M.P.A.  
Manager, Inquests  
Officer of the Chief Coroner  
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437-881-2532

[www.communitylivingontario.ca](http://www.communitylivingontario.ca)

# Why is this happening?

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- ❖ School environments can be highly stressful
- ❖ Bias, bullying, stereotyping of students with disabilities
- ❖ Not enough supports in the classroom, e.g., widespread shortages of Educational Assistants
- ❖ \$800 less funding in real dollars per student per year, compared to 2018

# Why is this happening?

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- ❖ Kids are waiting more than a year to access a psych-ed assessment, speech language, occupational therapy, etc.
- ❖ 60,000 waiting to access OAP
- ❖ Lack of appropriate knowledge and training for teachers and other school staff – and the training that does exist (i.e., Behaviour Management Systems) does not reflect best practices or the needs of many students with disabilities
- ❖ No provincial direction on restraint or seclusion
- ❖ Insufficient provincial direction on exclusions

# What are we recommending?

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- ❖ Increased supports in the classroom, including increases to Educational Assistants
- ❖ Effective and informed trauma-based training for teachers and other school staff
- ❖ Clear provincial direction on restraint or seclusion (including tracking and reporting)
- ❖ Expanded provincial direction on exclusions (including tracking and reporting)
- ❖ Eliminate or drastically limit the use of seclusion and restraint