What is a restrictive practice?

Restrictive practices may be used to manage challenging behaviour. They involve some form of intervention on the child or young person’s freedom in order to decrease a particular behaviour.

These practices include the use of:
- psychotropic medication for the sole purpose of controlling behaviour
- non exclusionary time-out (used consistently to target the particular challenging behaviour by the carer’s withdrawal of attention for a period of time so as not to reinforce the unacceptable behaviour)
- exclusionary time-out (the removal of a child or young person from a situation)
- response cost (denying a child or young person valued items or activities as a consequence for unacceptable behaviour)
- restrictive access (limiting a child or young person’s access to items, activities or experiences by means of physical barriers)
- physical restraint to restrain a child or young person (must be consistent with the behaviour management requirements of the plan).

Some of these practices are techniques used by parents and carers in the everyday management of children and young people’s behaviour. It is important the behaviour support plan distinguishes between everyday interactions. A restrictive practice must:
- be part of an approved behaviour support plan that identifies the circumstances that the restrictive practice may be used
- have clear limits placed on its use
- be clearly communicated to the child or young person so that they may understand why the practice is being used
- be implemented by carers and/or other persons who are adequately trained
- have records kept for monitoring purposes.

Further information

Visit the FACS website: www.facs.nsw.gov.au/safehomeforlife