



Violence in Schools

Position Statement of the Learning Disabilities Association of America

Adopted by the LDA Board of Directors May 21, 1995. Updated April 2001

The Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA) strongly supports efforts to eliminate violence in American schools. LDA agrees that students, including students with learning disabilities, whose violent behavior is a danger to themselves or others must be immediately removed from the current school setting. LDA also supports current law which ensures that students with learning disabilities so removed remain entitled to a free appropriate public education, as provided through the Individualized Education Program process.

LDA is concerned about misperceptions that students with disabilities are disproportionately involved with violence in schools and that schools can do little or nothing to discipline those few students with disabilities who do exhibit violent behavior. Nothing in the limited data available indicates that there is any disproportionate relationship between students with disabilities and violence in schools. Further, as stated above, current law provides more than adequate procedures to appropriately discipline students with learning disabilities.

Schools must intervene early, using techniques such as behavior management strategies to prevent violence in schools. The U.S. Department of Education reports that schools which have effectively implemented models for classroom and behavior management practices have greatly reduced or eliminated entirely the need for subsequent interventions. LDA believes that such strategies are essential so that students whose learning disabilities may make them vulnerable in a volatile school environment may benefit from their educational program.

LDA recognizes that a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment is only possible in violence-free schools. Therefore, LDA is committed to working toward that end with all parties interested in ensuring safe schools for all children.

LDA reiterates that schools should be safe and that all children whether disabled or not, should have access to educational services.