**'Monster Closet' Used To Punish 4-Year-Old Pre-K Students, Parents Outraged**

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A Houston, Texas teacher and teacher's aide have been removed from their classroom for allegedly disciplining their pre-K students by placing them in custodial closets they nicknamed "monster closets."

Kelon Chaney, a 4-year-old student at Varnett Charter School, received the disciplinary action when he laughed at another student who had been placed in the closet for acting up. The "monster closet" dubbing was inspired by a book they were reading in class titled "After School Monsters," MyFOX Houston reports.

"There was a monster and the monster was going to eat me," Chaney told the station.

The educators are accused of holding the closet door closed with their feet while the disciplined children cried inside in the dark for about five minutes at a time, according to KHOU. Chaney reportedly cried so hard in the closet that he threw up and was sent home.

"You are taking a 4-year-old and putting them in a dark closet, and that's like torture," mother Kelicia Johnson-Chaney told KHOU. "That's torture even to an adult that is afraid of the dark. Who locks anybody in a closet?"

KHOU reports that the educators have been suspended without pay, pending an investigation.

Questionable disciplinary tactics have arisen in schools across the country. Christopher Baker, a 9-year-old fourth grade student in Louisville, Ky., was stuffed into a duffel bag with the drawstring pulled tight for misbehaving in class last fall, according to his mother. The alleged responsible parties are under investigation, and the case spurred an online petition calling for their firing.

In North Carolina, a state investigation was opened this month at Hudson Middle School following allegations that a teacher forced a student to sit in a cardboard box as a disciplinary measure.

"She asked the teacher what the box was for and said the teacher told her it was for Jacob. She would wheel him in there and let down the flap. He was all alone, in the dark, in a box," mother Joy Amatuccio told WCNC-TV. "She used it to calm him down, as a form of time out."

The teacher was placed on a three-day paid suspension, and the student was moved to a different classroom.

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/25/monster-closet-used-to-pu_n_1546426.html?view=print&comm_ref=false>