

PARENTS GUIDE TO TRANSPORTATION FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



The Department of Transportation is committed to providing the highest level of service and support for student with special needs.

Our goal is to insure a safe and pleasant trip to and from school for all students. This will enhance the positive learning environment for each student on a daily basis.

This guide will acquaint you, the parent/guardian, with procedures that are important for you. Shared understanding of roles and responsibilities between parents/guardians and school district employees will enhance the quality of service we are able to provide to all students.

Albert Francisco

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Manager of Transportation

WHO QUALIFIES FOR TRANSPORTATION

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that transportation be provided as a related service to students with disabilities who cannot otherwise access a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

Most students with disabilities use the same transportation services available to all students who live in a particular location. Special transportation may be required when the student's program assignment is not in his or her attendance center or neighborhood school, or when the student has documented areas of significant challenge that would prevent getting back and forth to school safely.

For students identified for special education services, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, of which you are a member, will determine if your child requires transportation.

Some students with disabilities who are not enrolled in a special education program are provided transportation under SECTION 504 of The Rehabilitation Act. If a medical extension is required parents need orientate appropriate procedures with nursing services.

Once a need for transportation is established, the Department of Transportation will make a route assignment. It generally takes about three days to arrange transportation once the request has been approved. Several factors must be considered before beginning the bus ride: including routing, space available, length of ride, special equipment need, etc.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

It is extremely helpful for the Department of Transportation to know as much about your child as possible. Complete and thorough information is critical to transportation. You will need to complete a Transportation Plan for students with special needs. If your child has a Health Care / Behavior Plan, it will be attached to the Transportation Plan Information provided in the form enables the driver or paramedic to take appropriate action in an emergency situation.

Should this information change any time during the school year (i.e. new address, phone number, medications, etc.) please complete new form and turn into your driver. All personal information regarding students is maintained in a strict confidence in accordance with the family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Parents are asked to give three full days notice to the Department of Transportation if there are any changes in the pick-up or drop-off location. In consideration of other students assigned to the bus, the driver is not permitted to change or modify a bus route. The Dispatcher or Transportation Manager must approve all changes.

TRAINING

Drivers who transport students with special needs receive additional training to assist them in performing their duties safely. This training includes information about the law, sensitivity, general awareness, confidentiality requirements, evacuation drill procedures, medical emergency procedures, equipment operations, health concerns, and more.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please help us provide safe, comfortable and efficient transportation for your child. The following are a number of things you can do.

- Have your child ready to board the bus 5 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. The driver is not required to wait more than two minutes and is not permitted to "honk" the horn or knock on the door.
- Please notify transportation at 303 853-7909 if your child will not attend school. A phone call 30 minutes prior to your child's pick-up time will enable the dispatcher to notify the driver via two-way radio resulting in saved mileage and time. When calling simply give your child's name, bus number, school, and scheduled pick-up time. Also, please identify yourself and provide a phone number for verification. In the event your child does not ride and no notice was given we will not resume transportation until you have notified Transportation Department.
- Have all necessary supplies, materials, medications, etc. In a pouch or packet labeled with your child's name. In consideration of student safety, live animals (service animals are the only exception), items in glass containers, dangerous objects, or large articles, which block the aisles, emergency door or service doors of the bus, will not be transported.
- Due to the danger of choking while riding the bus, students are not permitted to eat or drink while riding the bus. Please have your child finish his/her breakfast prior to boarding and to save any lunch leftovers until home. Exceptions to this rule are made for students who have a medical condition that requires regularly scheduled intake of food or liquid to avert seizures or consciousness, in these cases the driver is informed via The Transportation Plan and the intake of food or liquid can be supervised.

*Encourage your child to practice proper bus
Behavior and obey the department's safe riding rules*

- ✓ Stay seated
- ✓ Keep your hands, feet, body and objects to yourself
- ✓ No swearing, rude gestures, spitting or cruel teasing
- ✓ Talk in a classroom voice
- ✓ Follow the driver directions

If behavior problems occur on the bus, drivers are instructed to work with the parents and teachers to resolve the problem. Since the bus ride is an important connection between home and school communication among parent, driver, and teacher is essential in teaching the student how to ride the bus safely.

- * School staff may be asked to develop a Behavior Support Plan in collaboration with the parents), student (If appropriate), and driver if the student's behavioral issues persist.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The driver develops a written emergency evacuation plan that includes a seating chart and appropriate use of both front and rear exits. These drills are conducted a minimum of twice each school year. All children participate in the drills, although some non-ambulatory students remain in their mobility aids (wheelchairs) and are evacuated via the bus lift. In an actual emergency, students may be removed from their chairs and carried out the exit. Emergency evacuations plans are also developed for summer extended school year routes, although actual drills are not conducted.

NO ONE HOME PROCEDURES

It is important that a parent/guardian or person designated by the parent meet the bus each afternoon to take responsibility for the student. Since the route has other children to deliver and must arrive at the next stop on time, there bus can wait only a few minutes before continuing to the next stop. Please make certain that you have provided the transportation Department and driver with your current emergency numbers by completing an Emergency Information Form. The driver is not permitted to leave the student unattended at home in the afternoon unless the Emergency Plan has designated someone or states that they are able to use their own key to enter the house unassisted. This must be filed in the Transportation Department and with the driver.

Failure of the parent or guardian to have a responsible person meet the bus will be handled in the following manner: (as per the General Guideline form)

- The driver will radio the Transportation office to report that no one is home.
- **1st Incident** - The dispatcher will attempt to contact the home by telephone and check to see if an alternative number has been designated on the Emergency Information Form.
- **2nd Incident** - **The student will be taken back to transportation and released to proper authorities. (i.e. Police Department)**

Equipment

Students who use mobility seating devices (wheelchair) must have the devices equipped with a positioning belt/or postural supports, all in good repair and properly fitted. Velcro lap belts are NOT acceptable for securing your child into mobility aid. Wheel locks must be in good working order. Headrest, wedges, and any other adaptive devices prescribed for support or positioning purposes must be in good condition and in place.

Mobility aid/seating devices are not intended by the manufacturer to be occupied while traveling in a moving vehicle. Some mobility aids are considered more unsafe than others. (i.e. Scooters, three wheelers and some travel chairs or buggies) If transportation personnel determine the device is unsafe, you child may need to be transferred from the device to a regular bus seat, for the ride to school or home.

The need for a safety restraint system will be described in the student's IEP. You, the parent, must give signed permission to use a safety restraint system

IMPORTANT NAMES AND NUMBERS

Transportation Department 4211 E. 68th Ave., Commerce City, CO 80022 Office Hours 5:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Transportation Manager

Albert Francisco 303-853-7906 Fax 303-287-2408 Office Hours 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Transportation Supervisor

Mario Castillo 303-853-7927 Fax 303-287-2408 Office Hours 5:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Transportation Dispatcher

Geri Gonzales 303-853-7909 Fax 303-287-2408 Office Hours 9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Training Coordinator

Paul Alvarez 303-853-7956 Fax 303-853-7971 Office Hours 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Trainer/Special Needs Coordinator

Billy Salaz 303-853-7954 Fax 303-853-7971 Office Hours 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

STUDENT NOT RIDING THE BUS? CONTACT THE DISPATCHER 303-853-7909