

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY



# TRANSPORTING OUR FUTURE

A DoDEA Guide for Transporting Students with Disabilities

May 2002

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# FOREWARD

On a daily basis during the school year, the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) assumes a major responsibility for ensuring that our most precious assets, our students, are safely transported to and from school. Approximately ten percent (10%) of DoDEA's school bus riders are students with disabilities. Knowing that the school bus is an extension of the classroom, it is important to realize that what happens on the bus can have a significant impact on a student's school day. Personnel involved in the transportation of disabled students have a responsibility to ensure that students arrive at school ready to learn, and are returned safely to their homes at the end of the school day. This transportation guide is designed to assist transporters, school personnel, the military community, and families in becoming familiar with basic terms, operations, and procedures that will foster communication and collaboration to ensure that our students with disabilities receive appropriate transportation services throughout DoDEA.

Transportation of students with disabilities presents challenges and specific requirements in order to meet individual and unique needs. This guide is designed to offer suggestions and recommendations to meet these challenges and requirements, and to review certain practices that have been successful in the past. The following basic concepts are inherent throughout the guide:

- All service providers, including contracted personnel, must have a clear understanding of the DoD requirements applicable to the education of students with disabilities.
- The individualized needs of each student must be considered in determining the appropriate type of transportation service to be provided.
- Parental involvement is not only required by DoD policy, but is considered necessary in planning appropriate services.
- On-going communication and collaboration between transportation and special education providers is necessary in planning appropriate services.
- An on-going program of in-service training and professional development should be planned and implemented for all personnel involved in the transportation of students with disabilities.
- All vehicles and equipment must be configured to appropriately serve the individual students being transported, particularly those with medically prescriptive requirements.
- Area and district operational procedures/guidelines for transportation should be developed, published, disseminated, and implemented.

The *DoDEA Guide for Transporting Students with Disabilities* is a document designed to offer transporters, school/district personnel, parents, and the military community information on providing “safe and appropriate” transportation services. It also embraces the realization that appropriate use of resources requires efficient and cost effective applications. While a number and variety of individuals are involved in the total process of transporting students with disabilities, and each has varied responsibilities and concerns, it is important to remember that the most critical factor is the safety and welfare of the student(s). Successful outcomes will not be achieved by simply reading this guide. They will require the efforts and follow-through of each individual in planning and implementing appropriate policies and practices. All stakeholders must recognize their shared responsibilities if “safe and appropriate” transportation of students with disabilities is to be achieved.

A number of transportation personnel and special educators throughout DoDEA, including DoDDS Europe, DoDDS Pacific, and DDESS, have reviewed and contributed to the development of this document. Special recognition is given to Mr. Gary Carter, former DoDEA Transportation Program Manager, who provided much of the technical information for the guide, and Dr. David Burket, former Chief of Special Programs/DDESS, for providing the special education information. Their initial commitment to developing this guide and continuing support in drafting and editing the various sections of the guide is acknowledged.

# LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

## -FEDERAL LAWS-

### ***The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)***

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), amended in 1997, is a federal law that requires states and local public schools to provide a free and appropriate public education for all students with disabilities. The federal agency designated by Congress to enforce this law is the U.S. Department of Education. Since DoDEA is not considered a “state” under IDEA, DoD has enacted its own legislation and authority to meet the requirements of IDEA, where applicable, in DoD schools. These DoD policies are cited below.

As required by IDEA, DoD policy mandates that each student’s needs must be assessed in order for him/her to be eligible for special education services. Once deemed eligible, the student’s needs must be addressed in the Individualized Education Program (IEP). DoDEA is required to provide all the special education and related services as stipulated in the IEP. The plan must be reviewed annually, or more often as needed. DoDEA requires that related service personnel participate in the IEP process as appropriate.

### ***Public Law 101-336, “The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990”***

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a comprehensive civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities. It does not change or diminish existing provisions of federal law protecting individuals with disabilities under IDEA, and further incorporates the definition of disabilities as previously found in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The ADA defines a disabled person to include persons who are regarded as having a record of physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities. Examples of such activities include caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. According to the Act, physical impairments may include any physical disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, and loss of bodily parts or functions. Mental impairment may include such mental or psychological disorders as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.

This law applies to all ages including young children with disabilities. The ADA regulation specifically exempts school buses from some of its requirements, but it does not exempt access to transportation services for infants, toddlers, and preschool children.

## -DOD POLICY-

There are two DoD policies mandating that DoDEA programs provide transportation services for students with disabilities:

**32 CFR Part 80 (July 25, 1994)**

***“Provision of Early Intervention Services to Eligible Infants and Toddlers With Disabilities and Their Families, and Special Education and Related Services to Children with Disabilities within the Section 6 School Arrangements”***

*(This is applicable only to DDESS)*

**Department of Defense Instruction 1342.12 (March 12, 1996)**

***“Provision of Early Intervention and Special Education Services to Eligible DoD Dependents”***

*(This is applicable only to DoDDS)*

Each of these policy documents has similar language that describes the disabilities that make a student eligible for special education and related services. Both documents require DoDEA to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for all students with disabilities. As defined by these policies, FAPE includes related services identified as necessary for the student to access the educational program. “Transportation” is one of those identified related services.

Most students receiving special education services in DoDEA programs can either walk or ride to school with their nondisabled peers. For some students, specialized transportation services are required; without these services they could not attend school. For these students with disabilities, transportation is a **“related service”**. DoD policy defines related services as:

*Transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services required to assist a child, ages 3 to 21, inclusive, with a disability to benefit from special education under the child’s IEP. The term includes speech therapy and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, orientation and mobility services, recreation, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling services, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluative purposes. The term also includes rehabilitation counseling services, school health services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling. The sources for those services are school, community, and medical treatment facilities (MTFs).*

DoD policy also defines **transportation** as a service that includes the following:

- *Services rendered under the IEP of a child with a disability.*
- *Travel to and from school and between schools, including travel necessary to permit participation in educational and recreational activities and related services.*
- *Travel in and around school buildings.*
- *Specialized equipment, including special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps, if required to provide transportation for a child with a disability.*

**-DOD REGULATION-**

**DoD 4500.36-R: “Management, Acquisition, and Use of Motor Vehicles”**

Department of Defense Regulation 4500.36-R implements DoD policy which governs the school transportation services for all DoD dependent students attending schools located in the 50 states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the possessions of the United States. This authority is extended to eligible local education agencies providing educational services for children residing on Federal property, including DoD installations. Under this regulation, transportation may be provided to:

- (1) *Local public schools when the schools are not accessible or serviced by local school bus transportation.*
- (2) *Nearby public schools, other than the local public schools, when:*
  - (a) *The nearby public school is not accessible; and*
  - (b) *The activity designated by the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) as responsible for overseeing dependent education has determined that local public schools in which the children would normally be enrolled are unable to provide adequately for their education; that attendance at other public schools (to include public schools for the handicapped) in a nearby education agency district can be arranged ...*

DoD 4500.36-R also implements policy which governs the school transportation services for all DoD-operated or non-DoD schools located outside of the United States. It further applies to such services for DoD dependents authorized to attend non-DoD schools outside the United States. The regulation defines “commuting areas” and “walking distance” for students under this authority.

Regarding transportation of students with disabilities, DoD 4500.36-R states:

*Students with Disabilities. Special emphasis shall be placed on meeting the transportation needs of students with disabilities. Special transportation services that are prescribed in a student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP) by the Case Study Committee (CSC) of the receiving school, or by a Special Education Hearing Officer, or by a court must be provided. Examples of special services which may be required include, but are not limited to, curb-to-curb transportation between the student’s residence and the school, establishment of a special bus stop within a designated distance of the student’s residence, use of a special safety harness, transportation of a seeing eye dog, or assignment of a one-on-one attendant, or aide, for dangerous physically-aggressive students.*

- (1) *Motor vehicles used solely to transport special education students shall be equipped with a seat belt for each passenger.*
- (2) *Motor vehicles transporting more than two special education students or any student for whom a special four-point harness is required must also transport a safety aide who is trained to assist the disabled.*
- (3) *Motor vehicles used to transport students who normally use wheelchairs shall be equipped with a lifting device or ramp, which can be secured to the vehicle. Approved wheelchair restraining devices shall be installed and used.*

DoD 4500.36-R also implements the transportation needs of children who are not eligible for special education services but who require a reasonable accommodation. In both DoDDS and DDESS, when a local school committee prescribes special transportation as an accommodation for a student, schools will apply the guidance in DoD 4500.36-R to provide the required transportation for the duration of need.

### **Transportation Services in the Least Restrictive Environment**

Both the Federal law and DoD Regulations require that transportation be a part of the discussion at every IEP meeting when it has been determined to be a required related service for a student. As in all educational instructional settings, a student should be served in the least restrictive environment. The continuum of transportation services listed below may be discussed at the IEP meeting to determine the most appropriate level of service for an individual student:

*Student uses public transportation.*

*Student uses public transportation with assistance.*

*Student uses central pick-up point (without or with special equipment).*

*Student requires an assigned bus stop (without or with special equipment).*

*Student requires curb pick-up closer to home (without or with special equipment).*

Students who live within walking distance of the school will not be provided transportation service unless it is required as a related service on their IEP, or if the student's disability inhibits him to walk safely or to be escorted by a parent or guardian to school. Sponsors of students who live outside the commuting area will be required to transport the student between their residence and an existing school bus stop or the school. In special situations, exceptions may be granted to the commuting area or walking distance after full consideration of circumstances and evaluation of alternatives. Request for exceptions must be initiated by the sponsor, endorsed by the local principal, and forwarded to the appropriate DoDEA district or Area office as established by local policy.



## DoDEA DISABILITY CRITERIA

All personnel involved in transportation of students with disabilities should be familiar with the various terms that the DoDEA uses to classify students who are eligible for special education and related services. There are five major disabling conditions defined and recognized by DoDEA policy. Several of these include specific disabilities that will be defined and discussed in terms of “Implications for Transportation.”

Listed below are the five disability criteria identified by DoDEA that the Case Study Committee will review during the evaluation process to determine if a student is eligible for special education. It is important for transporters and others to seek as much information as necessary in order to understand the implications of the disability to be able to provide safe and appropriate transportation services.

### **CRITERION A: PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT**

*Students whose educational performance is adversely affected by a physical impairment that requires environmental and/or academic modifications including, but not limited to, the following: **visually impaired, hearing impaired, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired.** This category also includes the disabilities of **autism and traumatic brain injury.***

#### **Indicators and Implications for Transportation**

**Visually Impaired:** These students have a vision impairment that, even with correction, adversely affects their educational performance. This includes partially seeing and blind children.

This student population may or may not require special services. A careful assessment should be made of each student to provide the appropriate level of assistance. Some students require extensive assistance to be seated, while others need little or none. Safety is best assured by maintaining a consistent daily routine that includes the same seat assignment. Verbal communication should be used to compensate for what the student cannot see. Directions should be precise, and communication should be friendly and direct.

**Hearing Impaired:** These students have a hearing impairment, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects their educational performance, but is not considered “deafness.”

Students with hearing impairments may or may not use sign language. These students may also have fluctuated hearing, and therefore do not respond consistently to verbal communication. The driver and attendant must be sensitive to each student’s communication needs. It is important to accommodate hard-of-hearing students by patiently repeating missed information, speaking clearly, and avoiding excessive background noise which can further reduce hearing. Students should be able to see the lips of the person speaking. Establishing good communication practices increases acceptable behavior.

**Orthopedically Impaired:** These students have a severe physical impairment that adversely affects their educational performance. Such impairments may include congenital impairments such as club foot or absence of some limb; impairments caused by disease, such as poliomyelitis and bone tuberculosis; and impairments from other causes such as cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns causing contractures.

Students with orthopedic impairments may require specialized services. Many require specialized seating, physical handling, or specialized equipment with adaptations. If significant modifications are required, they should be discussed at the IEP meeting where the parent and appropriate educational and related service personnel can address the required modifications. If special personnel are required to assist these students, both the driver and assistant should be knowledgeable about the student's needs. Safety in student handling and equipment management are essential for drivers and assistants. Occupational and physical therapists are valuable resources for serving children with orthopedic impairments.

**Other Health Impaired:** These students may have limited strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems that adversely affects their educational performance. Such impairments include Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, seizure disorder, lead poisoning, leukemia, and diabetes.

It is essential that transportation personnel know about each student's disability and how it may be manifested while on the school bus. A clear understanding of how a specific health impairment affects a student will promote safety and communication. Special education personnel, occupational and physical therapists, and nurses can provide valuable assistance. Children with health impairments are frequently transported with their nondisabled peers.

**Autism:** These students may exhibit a developmental disability that significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction (generally evident before age 3) and adversely affects their educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. Children with characteristics of the disability termed "serious emotional disturbance" are not included under this term.

Extensive in-service training conducted by skilled personnel is required for both drivers and attendants. Behavior management strategies used in the classroom should be adapted for use on the school bus. It is essential that a driver and attendant receive specialized training on how to ignore behaviors that don't hamper bus safety. When behaviors do affect bus safety, there is a need to intervene. However, intervention must be carefully planned. Only one- or two-word directions should be given to correct inappropriate behavior. No choices should be provided and all requests given in a quiet, gentle, but firm voice. Severe behavior disruptions may necessitate stopping the bus. It is essential to have a daily routine that minimizes inappropriate behaviors. Bus attendants are essential to ensure transportation safety.

**Traumatic Brain Injury:** These students have an acquired injury to the brain caused by external physical force resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment that adversely affects their educational performance. The term includes open or closed head injuries resulting in mild, moderate, or severe impairments in one or more areas, including cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgement, problem solving, sensory perceptual and motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical function, information processing, and speech. The term does not include brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or brain injuries that are induced by birth trauma.

This student population often requires very specialized transportation planning because of limited physical, behavioral, or intellectual abilities. It is essential that personnel be identified to provide assistance with interventions recommended on the student's IEP. Students who have suffered traumatic brain injury were not born disabled, and thus may demonstrate extreme frustration trying to accept changes in their physical, behavioral, and/or intellectual status. Patience, compassion, and good communication are essential elements for appropriate services. Rehabilitation personnel are often the most knowledgeable about the particular needs of this student population.

**Deafness:** These students have a severe hearing loss or deficit that impairs their ability to process linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, and adversely affects their educational performance.

Not all deaf students communicate in the same manner. Some deaf students only use sign language, while other students use a total communication system that includes both sign language and oral language. It is essential that transporters of the deaf be familiar with each student's mode of communication. If the primary mode of communication is sign language, the transporters should know enough basic signs and finger spelling to provide safe transportation. Paper and pencil should be kept available. Students who are able to maintain communication with the driver or assistant will present fewer behavioral problems.

**Deaf-Blindness:** These students have associated hearing and visual impairments. These impairments cause such severe communication, developmental, and educational problems that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or blindness.

Students with both hearing and visual impairments require very specialized planning. Consistency in seating, communication, and daily management are required in order to minimize transportation problems. Transporters will require training, skill, and knowledge about mobility and alternative communication techniques. Students who are deaf-blind react positively to a daily routine, and are easily distracted and upset by sudden change. Bus attendants may be necessary in order to accommodate these students.

## **CRITERION B: EMOTIONAL IMPAIRMENT**

*An emotional condition that has been confirmed by a clinical evaluation and diagnosis, and that over a long period of time and to a marked degree adversely affects educational performance, and that exhibits one or more of the following characteristics:*

- 1. An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.*
- 2. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.*
- 3. Inappropriate types of behavior under normal circumstances.*
- 4. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.*
- 5. A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.*

*This includes students who are schizophrenic, but does not include students who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they are seriously emotionally disturbed.*

### **Indicators and Implications for Transportation**

Transporters need to be experienced and receive extensive behavior management training. Daily transportation services require a sophisticated level of planning in order to implement appropriate intervention strategies. The day-to-day transportation problems may range from mild to severe behavior disruptions. Inappropriate behaviors may include failure to stay seated, name calling, hitting, spitting, screaming, stealing, fighting, exiting the bus, and destruction of property. A structured daily routine that is coordinated with the instructional program will enhance appropriate behavior. Video cameras have been recognized for their effectiveness in modifying bus behavior. In addition, there has been success in not transporting all seriously emotionally disturbed students on the same bus.

## **CRITERION C: COMMUNICATION IMPAIRMENT**

Students whose educational performance is adversely affected by a developmental or acquired communication disorder to include voice, fluency, articulation, receptive and/or expressive language. *Language disorders are characterized by an impairment/delay in receptive and/or expressive language including semantics, morphology/syntax, phonology, and/or pragmatics. This impairment does not include students whose language problems are due to English as a second language or dialect difference.*

*Speech disorders include:*

- 1) ***Articulation disorder*** which is characterized by substitutions, distortions, and/or omissions of phonemes which are not commensurate with expected developmental age norms, which may cause unintelligible conversational speech, and which are not the result of limited English proficiency or dialect.
- 2) ***Fluency disorder*** which is characterized by atypical rate, rhythm, repetitions, and/or secondary behavior(s) which interfere with communication or are inconsistent with age/development.
- 3) ***Voice disorder*** which is characterized by abnormal pitch, intensity, resonance, duration, and/or quality which are inappropriate for chronological age or gender.

### **Indicators and Implications for Transportation**

These students seldom require special transportation services, and due to the emphasis on early intervention, students with communication impairments are more frequently being served at a very young age. Transportation equipment, including a Child Safety Restraint System (CSRS) appropriate to the child's age, weight, and height, is essential to ensure safety for young children. However, students of any age with severe language disorders may have significant difficulty understanding instructions and expressing their need. In addition, students with language disorders frequently have difficulty with social communication and may be at risk for altercations with peers.

## **CRITERION D: LEARNING IMPAIRMENT**

*This category includes two disabilities: **Information Processing Deficit and Intellectual Deficit.***

- 1) **Information Processing Deficit.** These students have a disorder that may affect their ability to effectively use one or more of the cognitive processes (i.e., discrimination, association, retention, and reasoning) in the educational environment. The term does not apply to students who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, or if mental retardation or emotional disturbances are the result of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. This disability is more commonly designated as **specific learning disability**.

### **Indicators and Implications for Transportation**

These students rarely require transportation intervention. However, students who have severe learning disabilities may require patience and understanding with written and oral communication. Because these students frequently do not look or act differently from others, their special needs are not obvious. It is important to remember that a learning disabled student may have a problem using or understanding language. The majority of these students ride the school bus with their non-disabled peers.

- 2) **Intellectual Deficit:** These students have a significantly below average intellectual functioning that exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior which is manifested during the developmental period and adversely affects their educational performance. This disability is more commonly designated as **mental retardation**.

### **Indicators and Implications for Transportation**

The degree to which transportation services must be modified depends on such factors as independent functional level, ability to follow directions, ability to memorize and retain safety rules, and day-to-day age-appropriate self-help and adaptive behavior. Drivers and attendants should follow a daily routine, speak softly and firmly, be friendly, and give one-part directions. Severely and profoundly mentally disabled students require a greater level of assistance because of their limited level of comprehension or severe memory limitations. It is difficult for students to conform to what is expected of them if they can't comprehend the expectations. Students who have toileting problems should use bathroom facilities before leaving home in the morning and before leaving school in the afternoon. Appropriate garments should be worn to protect the school bus seats. Expectations should be directly related to the student's functional ability. More and more students with intellectual deficits are being integrated with their nondisabled peers. Transportation personnel should work closely with the school staff regarding other best practices.

## **CRITERION E: DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY**

*The category of developmental delay is specific only to children ages birth through age 8, and refers to a condition which represents a significant delay in the process of development. It does not apply to a condition in which a child is slightly or momentarily lagging in development. The presence of a developmental delay is an indication that the developmental processes are significantly impacted and that, without special intervention, it is likely that the educational performance will be affected when the child reaches school age.*

The five developmental areas, which are included in this category, are:

- 1. Physical Development*
- 2. Communication Development*
- 3. Cognitive Development*
- 4. Social/Emotional Development*
- 5. Adaptive/Self-Help Development*

### **Indicators and Implications for Transportation**

This student population may require significant special transportation services due to their young age. It is essential for transportation personnel to work closely with the school and the family to determine special equipment that may be required, as well as to identify other personal needs the child may have. Transportation equipment, including a Child Safety Restraint System (CSRS) appropriate to the child's age, weight, and height, is essential to ensure safety for young children.

# **THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS**

This section of the guide briefly describes the various steps in the special education process. DoDEA policy and guidelines define specific actions that must occur at each step in the process. Following a description of the process, implications for transportation personnel are discussed.

## **Step 1: Pre-referral**

When it is suspected that a student is experiencing difficulties in academic achievement and/or developmental progress and may have a disability, the school will arrange a conference with the child's parents, teacher/s, and other appropriate persons to discuss ideas and strategies that may help the student in the learning process. Behaviors that may indicate that this pre-referral process should begin include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Difficulty staying on task.
- ◆ Persistent difficulty in following directions.
- ◆ Frequent outbursts for no apparent reason.
- ◆ Difficulty in understanding what is read.
- ◆ Difficulty expressing ideas in spoken or written form.
- ◆ Difficulty solving math problems.
- ◆ Experiencing complex medical problems.
- ◆ Demonstrating puzzling behaviors.

## **Step 2: Intervention**

Interventions are changes in routines, both at home and in school, that have been recommended and implemented as a result of the pre-referral process. During this intervention period, observations of the child at home and school are closely monitored. Some children may be recommended to receive support services such as remedial reading or math, counseling, psychological support, social work services, and/or community services.

## **Step 3: Referral**

At the end of the pre-referral/intervention period, a conference is held by school personnel, with parent participation, to discuss the child's progress. If the interventions have not been successful, then a referral to the Case Study Committee (CSC) may be made. The CSC will decide whether to provide additional support services or to plan a comprehensive evaluation for the student. The individual evaluation is recommended when the CSC suspects that the child may have an educational disability. An evaluation plan is designed to gain insight, through a series of tests and observations, into the suspected area of disability which may be influencing the student's educational success.



#### **Step 4: Evaluation**

The evaluation process incorporates special testing, observations, and other activities that will help in determining whether a student needs special education. These evaluations are completed by a trained multidisciplinary team of professionals, include more than one test, and are administered in the child's native language or mode of communication. The results of the evaluation will provide information concerning the child's educational strengths and needs, and will help to determine whether a special education program is necessary. DoDEA policy and guidelines provide specific guidance regarding the evaluation process.

#### **Step 5: Eligibility**

After the evaluations are complete, the CSC will meet to review all of the information gathered. During this meeting, which includes the parents, the team will determine if the student is eligible for special education based on DoDEA eligibility criteria.

#### **Step 6: Individualized Educational Program (IEP)**

If the student is found eligible for special education, the CSC will develop a written program for the student that includes the following major components:

- Present level of educational performance.*
- Annual Goals and Short-term Objectives.*
- How and when progress will be evaluated.*
- Who the service providers will be.*
- Amount of time in special education.*
- Modifications needed for the general education program.*
- Listing of related services such as **transportation**, speech therapy, OT/PT.*
- Secondary transition planning for students over age 14.*

The IEP goes in effect only after the parents agree and sign the document. The IEP may be reviewed and revised at any time concerns arise regarding the services being provided. DoDEA policy and guidance provide specific guidelines regarding the content of the IEP, as well as who must be in attendance at IEP meetings.

#### **Step 7: Placement**

Placement refers to the appropriate learning environment for the student and is determined by his or her individual needs, strengths, goals, and services required. All placement decisions are made by the CSC, including parents as team members, and are based on the IEP.

DoDEA policy and guidelines mandate that all placements be made with consideration of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for the student. The two primary considerations for LRE placements are: (1) being as close to home as possible, and (2) being in the general education curriculum with nondisabled peers as much as possible.

## **Step 8: Annual Review**

Each special education student's progress in achieving the goals on the IEP must be reviewed and revised each year at an annual IEP review meeting. All parties that have worked with the student over the year have an opportunity to provide input into the new IEP based on their observations and interactions with the student. Teachers and parents are a part of this meeting, which may also include related services personnel based on the IEP goals and objectives.

### **Implications for Transportation Personnel**

Throughout the entire special education process outlined above, the step in which transportation personnel may become involved is in the IEP process. The IEP is the document that describes the student's educational program and appropriate related services. Since transportation personnel may be service providers, the IEP meeting may be the appropriate time to discuss transportation options with other special education professionals and parents. The IEP meeting may also provide the opportunity for transportation personnel to initiate communication that promotes respectful interaction between parents and other service personnel.

Transportation personnel should not be required to attend each IEP meeting. However, as a best practice, the district may consider having them available at IEP meetings if:

- Specific medical support or mobility equipment is required for a student;
- Behaviors of the student present a challenging or unusual situation during the bus ride;
- Monitoring or intervention during transportation will be discussed;
- Decisions are being made regarding special transportation provisions as a related service;
- Other special circumstances determined critical by school and transportation personnel warrant their attendance; or
- Additional transportation costs will have a significant impact on the district special education transportation budget.

It is in the best interest of students, and the district, for the special education and transportation programs to have on-going communication concerning service capabilities and requirements. Transportation personnel should be proactive with special education program administrators to establish the necessary dialogue for a collaborative and communicative relationship. Conversely, special education program personnel need to have an understanding of the level of service that transportation reasonably can be expected to provide.

The development of a "transition plan" may be an additional component of the IEP process. This plan discusses a student's plan and goals for post-secondary school life and activities. The plans are individually designed programs for secondary students ages 14 and older. Frequently, these plans involve providing students the opportunity to experience different job-related activities in their home communities. Transportation may become a necessary related service in developing these plans, and transportation personnel may need to become involved in identifying service strategies in this plan.

## **COLLABORATION WITH SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND MILITARY COMMAND**

In order to implement an appropriate transportation program for disabled students, it is imperative that transportation personnel establish and maintain open and collaborative communication with local school personnel as well as with the military command on each base in DoD school districts. As members of the same team, transportation and special education personnel have a responsibility to keep each other informed and apprised of the issues impacting on the transportation needs of students. The collaboration between transportation and special education begins with transportation acting as a support service to the instructional program. Transportation's role is to help accomplish the goal of each student receiving a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.

To facilitate this collaboration, it is recommended that appropriate school and transportation personnel meet at least on an annual basis, preferably prior to the beginning of each new school year, to discuss student, program, and equipment needs, and to determine options or alternatives that may improve on the delivery of services for the coming school year. Transportation personnel should seek input from the special education program and request that special education personnel assist in identifying equipment resources and needs. School personnel should also provide transportation personnel with the most up-to-date enrollment data and student needs for transportation services. It is critical that the local military command be fully informed of the transportation program being planned and implemented throughout the district.

***Remember: On-going communication and collaboration among all parties is necessary in planning and implementing a quality transportation program for all students.***

## PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement is also critical in designing and implementing a quality transportation program for disabled students. Parents have a responsibility to assist and inform transportation personnel about their child's needs. Parents must collaborate closely with transportation personnel on any specific equipment and other assistive devices required by their child in order to safely ride a bus. Parents also have a responsibility to share with transportation personnel any behavioral issue that could be a contributing factor to ensure a safe ride to and from school.

According to National Standards for School Transportation, responsibilities for all parents and guardians include:

*Understanding and supporting district rules/ policies/ regulations.*

*Assisting children in understanding and following safety rules.*

*Recognizing their responsibilities for the actions of their children.*

*Supporting safe riding practices and reasonable discipline efforts.*

*Teaching proper procedures for safely crossing a roadway before boarding and departing a bus.*

*Supporting procedures for emergency evacuation as prescribed by DoD.*

*Respecting the rights and privileges of others.*

*Communicating safety concerns to school administrators.*

*Monitoring bus stops, if possible.*

*Supporting all efforts to improve school bus safety.*

*Being aware of the dangers involved in and around loading and unloading zones, including the dangers of loose clothing, accessories and/or other personal items.*

Transportation personnel should coordinate with the school and/or military community on action to be taken if no one is present to receive a special education student at the drop-off location. Although it is not uncommon for students to have pick-up and drop-off addresses that are different from their home address, transportation personnel should be able to expect consistency in those locations. Frequent changes in these addresses increase anxiety for students and can be disruptive to the route schedule. A common problem for all transportation departments is the delays that occur when student passengers are not ready on time for pick up, or when no responsible person is at home at the end of the school day when the student is dropped off. When these instances occur, it is important to keep the lines of communication open with parents, and to have a set of guidelines or policies that is consistently followed.

### **Fastening Restraints/Equipment Maintenance**

Normally, the driver or safety aide will help each student onto the bus and fasten the student's seat belt. In some cases, a parent may assist. Regardless of whether a parent helps a student onto the bus and fastens his/her seat belt or wheelchair-positioning belt, it is still the driver's responsibility to check and ensure that the device is fastened properly before moving the bus.

Normally, parents are responsible for maintaining their child's wheelchair in a manner suitable for transportation purposes. In addition, it is the parents' responsibility to notify transportation of any modifications or changes in a student's equipment. A change in equipment or modifications to existing equipment can impact the placement and securement of the chair on the bus. If special equipment is required by the school district in order to transport a student safely, it is the district's responsibility for its maintenance.

***The important component in this process is maintaining a positive relationship among the school, bus transportation managers/drivers, and the parents or guardians.***

## **TRANSPORTING STUDENTS WITH ADAPTIVE DEVICES**

It is essential that knowledgeable personnel be consulted on decisions regarding seating devices and securement. The use of safety seating devices should be recommended only after consultation with the parent/guardian and the Case Study Committee (CSC). There are different kinds of equipment that may be required during the period a student receives transportation services, and which should always be used in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines. When transporting students with adaptive devices, it is necessary to secure oxygen tanks, lap trays, wheelchairs, child safety seats, walkers, or other articles not needed during transportation. National Standards recommend that any such unattached article be secured to withstand a pulling force of five times its weight. Walkers, stretchers, and any other assistive devices must be secured so they will not move.

### **Transportation Equipment and Regulations**

When a student who has mobility concerns is transported, a vehicle that is equipped with special equipment to assist with loading must often be used. Other devices that can secure a student in a wheelchair may also be required. Transportation vehicles for students in mobile seating devices must be equipped with either a power lift or ramp. Once the student is in the vehicle, transportation providers must secure the wheelchair to prevent movement during transport and restrain the student safely.

Special education buses must meet the requirements listed under National Law FMVSS 222 (School Bus Passenger Seating and Crash Protection). A new bus (i.e., any bus purchased after January 17, 1994) designed with one or more locations for transporting students in wheelchairs must also conform with the recent amendment to FMVSS 222. According to this amendment, those vehicles must be equipped with wheelchair securement devices and occupant restraint systems meeting specified performance requirements. The requirements include a forward-facing orientation, and minimum strengths for the anchorages and securements. While vehicles are required to have securements meeting specific requirements, use of the securements is not required. FMVSS 222 only applies to buses specifically manufactured to transport school children by U.S. standards. The legislation allows exemptions for special needs students.

Additional laws cover seat belts (FMVSS 209 and 210) and children's car seats (FMVSS 213). These laws were not written to cover the transport of students with special needs; they are only applicable to buses specifically manufactured to transport school children by U.S. standards.

Where DoDDS overseas schools use foreign-made buses for contracted services, similar host-nation laws and regulations will apply instead of the FMVSS. The DoDDS transportation offices must be familiar with the host-nation standards applicable to vehicles used to transport students with disabilities. If the host-nation standards are not acceptable for the safe transport of special needs students, additional safety requirements should be included in the contractual statement-of-work where feasible and reasonable. For example, where host-nation law does not

require a seat belt on all seats of a vehicle used to transport special education students, the contract may require seat belts on all seats of a special education vehicle used under DoDDS contract. Besides legislative requirements, recommendations of several other sources should be met when possible.

### **Special Seating Systems - Car Seats**

In all DDESS schools, and where DoDDS schools are serviced by U.S.-manufactured school buses, only FMVSS-approved car seats may be used. Devices that are not perfectly rigid and that flex or bend during an impact are preferred since the seat absorbs some impact forces. FMVSS 213 covers additional issues related to auto restraints for able-bodied children up to 50 pounds such as Child Safety Restraint Systems (CSRS)

Where DoDDS schools use contracted foreign-made vehicles, only car seats that are approved under host-nation laws and regulations may be used. Car seats made in the United States may not be able to be properly secured to foreign vehicles, and use of these car seats could place a contractor in violation of host-nation law.

### **Loading Guidelines**

A separate loading procedure should be developed for each student who has a specific requirement for getting on and off the bus. This procedure should be noted in the student's IEP and developed with the support transportation personnel. The loading procedure should be designed to require as much student participation and as little adult assistance as possible. However, when writing up a plan in an IEP, the maximum student effort that can reasonably be expected during loading, as well as the minimal student effort during unusual situations, must be taken into account.

Loading procedures should be recorded and a copy made available in the vehicle. All school personnel should comply with the determined procedure and follow it consistently, without variance. In addition to consistently following the standard loading procedure, transportation personnel should identify safe loading and unloading methods that do not involve equipment to prepare for unexpected equipment breakdowns or replacement. These methods may also be used during emergency evacuations.

### **Guidelines for Lifting Students**

Some students do not use a mobile seating device but still need assistance when entering a vehicle. Small children may need to be carried onto a vehicle. Other students may require help going up and down the bus stairs. Using proper lifting techniques can mean avoiding injury for the driver and paraprofessional. The school district or bus company may have a policy on lifting students. Drivers and attendants should be aware of individual student problems to ensure that they are not putting themselves or the student into a potentially harmful situation. Lifting a student should be avoided if possible, but at times there may be no choice and the correct lifting procedure can help avoid injury to the lifter and student.

**Some additional guidelines and recommendations regarding lifting are listed below:**

1. *Always tell the student exactly what you are going to do.*
2. *Make sure the path to the exit is free of obstacles before lifting.*
3. *Estimate the student's weight, and do not lift more than half your weight.*
4. *Ask for help if you are unsure if you can lift someone.*
5. *Stand with your feet at shoulder width, face the student, and move forward in the direction you want to go.*
6. *Get a good grip on the student or student's clothing.*
7. *Bend at the knees to reach the student, using your legs to lift. Do not bend at the waist.*
8. *Keep the student as close to your body as possible.*
9. *Test your lifting ability with a small movement that can be stopped. If the student weighs too much, try another method or get help.*
10. *Avoid twisting as you lift. Take small steps.*
11. *Never accept a student handed to you – the sudden weight shift may injure you.*

**Using a One-person Lift**

1. Follow general lifting guidelines.
2. Pass the student's near arm over your shoulder.
3. Place one of your arms across the student's shoulders with your hand under the student's other arm.
4. Place your other arm under the student's knees.
5. Keep your feet about shoulder width apart.



6. Holding the student close to you, lift the student with the load equally divided between each arm. Remember to bend at the knees to lift.

### **Using a Two-person Lift**

1. Follow general lifting guidelines.
2. In most emergencies, it is best to remove the student from the wheelchair rather than to move the wheelchair. If it is possible to move the wheelchair, move it as close to the exit as possible.
3. If the student is not in a wheelchair, slide the student on the seat next to the aisle.
4. The taller person should stand behind the student, and the other person stand in front of the student off to the side.
5. If possible, the person in front should remove the armrests and fold up the footrests.
6. Using the emergency rescue knife, the person behind the student should cut the seatbelt and other positioning straps.
7. The person in back should reach under the student's arms and grasp his right hand to the student's right wrist, and his left hand to the student's left wrist. Alternatively, clasp hands across the student's chest.
8. Lift together, saying "one, two, three, lift." Remember to bend at the knees.
9. Move to the designated area and lower the student on a three count.

### **Fastening Student Restraints**

- ❑ Position the lap belt so it is over the pelvic bones, rather than abdomen, of the student.
- ❑ Do not position the lap belt over the armrests or side panels.
- ❑ Adjust the torso restraint as needed to fit the height of the student.

## **TRANSPORTING PRE-SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN IN SCHOOL BUSES**

Transporting preschool children with disabilities to and from programs presents a special set of challenges. The most obvious is the one presented by the school bus. The seats are too big to safely accommodate small passengers. For children weighing over 50 pounds who need help sitting upright, safety belts and safety vests should be used. For students weighing less than 50 pounds, a Child Safety Restraint System (CSRS) designed for use in a motor vehicle to restrain, seat, or position a child should be used. Any system used must provide upper body support and keep the passengers from slipping or moving off the seat.

Although most buses have not been designed to accommodate child safety seats or child restraint systems, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has published guidelines for this age population. Based on its research NHTSA determined children in school buses are safest when transported in child safety restraint systems that meet FMVSS 213 and are correctly attached to bus seats. DoDDS and DDESS transportation personnel should be trained in proper selection, use, and installation of this equipment.

In all DDESS schools, and where DoDDS schools are serviced by U.S.-manufactured school buses, the seats should meet all the requirements for FMVSS 213 and should be used, installed, and maintained by the transporter in accordance with manufacturers' instructions. The District must maintain current and accurate information on each child restraint system in the event that the CSRS is recalled. The NHTSA also recommends those seats involved in a crash should be destroyed, not just discarded. The child safety seats should be secured to the vehicle seat with a safety belt that meets FMVSS 210 or 225, and safety belts should be installed only on bus seats meeting FMVSS 222. Retrofitting safety belts not meeting these standards should not be an option.

The use of child safety seats in a bus has the effect of reducing its passenger carrying capacity. For the purpose of determining bus carrying capacity, the 13 inches of seat width usually designated per passenger is insufficient to accommodate a child safety seat. The passenger seat that is 39 inches long, although rated for three passengers, is sufficient only for two child safety seats.

In determining the level of service necessary for each student, transportation personnel in collaboration with program personnel and parents, should consider whether a school bus is the best mode of transportation for each individual student. For some students, an alternative transportation strategy may be necessary. One viable option may be to use a contracted service provider.

***Regardless of the type of vehicle transporting the student, personnel must be trained to properly select, install, and use the CSRS.***

## **BUS ATTENDANTS**

Frequently another adult (bus attendant) is assigned to ride on a bus to meet the needs of specific students. Clear responsibilities for attendants should be detailed in a job description. When the assignment of an attendant is made through the IEP process, it can result in an attendant being assigned to an individual student. The attendant assigned to an individual student through the IEP process has primary responsibility for that child, with secondary responsibility for the remainder of the bus passengers.

It is better to assign attendants to buses based on the needs of all students when possible. Student safety and driver needs and should be included in assignment decisions. Transportation personnel should develop guidelines outlining attendant placement on a bus. For example, a guideline could stipulate that an attendant is assigned when more than four wheelchair students are assigned to a bus. In addition, attendants should have a clear understanding of emergency and evacuation procedures, be physically capable of evacuating students, be familiar with students and the route, and be knowledgeable regarding the disabilities of the students. Attendants should be positioned on the bus in a location that will provide them opportunity to provide effective oversight. This location may vary from trip to trip depending on the time of day and passenger needs. Where services are contracted, responsibilities and direction for safety attendants/aids must be included as contractual requirements.

***The bus driver and attendant should operate as a team in the delivery of transportation services.***

## DEVELOPING EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Specific and detailed procedures to follow during an emergency are essential for the driver to maintain order on the school bus and to keep the students as safe as possible. Some items to consider when developing an emergency procedure plan:

- ❑ It is important to enlist the help of school personnel such as special education teachers, nursing staff, and therapists, and get them involved in the procedure planning process. While all students should be treated with care, it is even more critical to follow proper guidelines with students with disabilities. Certain disabling conditions make the students more susceptible to injury and require special considerations.
- ❑ Drivers and paraprofessionals should receive training in emergency procedures because they are with the students on a daily basis.
- ❑ Each school system should have its own written emergency plan that has been disseminated and discussed with staff.
- ❑ Each bus should have a written evacuation plan. This may also be used as a seating plan designed for each child's individual abilities, restrictions, and location on the bus and on the route.
- ❑ The plan should be developed in cooperation with the personnel in those agencies that will render services during an emergency.
- ❑ School administrators, teachers, transportation personnel, drivers, maintenance, and service personnel should all be instructed in emergency procedures. Some possible events to consider are: *Accidents / Sudden Incapacitated Driver / Bus Breakdown / Inclement Weather Conditions*.

### Practice Drills

If an emergency does occur, it is important for the students to know what to do. This can be accomplished by conducting regularly scheduled drills where bus drivers can practice evacuation instruction and exit plans. Children with special needs are not exempt from these drills and, in fact, may benefit greatly from them. Some students learn faster through regular drills, and certain children with disabilities may be slow and need special assistance during an evacuation. Drills can help both the bus driver and the students feel more comfortable knowing what to expect should an emergency arise.

Some points to consider when planning drills:

- Most students with disabilities may be evacuated during practice drills with proper supervision. The safety of the students during the drill is the number one priority. While speed of evacuation is important, it should never place a child in jeopardy.
- The principal or a person in a supervisory role should supervise the drills. This can help ensure that the evacuation is performed correctly, and it underscores the importance of such drills.
- An emergency evacuation may cause injuries or complicate injuries to certain individuals. Transportation personnel must determine whether a child should or should not be evacuated during a drill. Some students for which an evacuation drill may not be appropriate are:
  - Students with certain physical disabilities,
  - Students who use orthopedic aids to walk,
  - Students who must be belted or strapped in for safety, and
  - Students with serious mobility limitations.
- If it is not possible for a student to participate in evacuation drills, clearly state this in his or her IEP. In these cases, such information must be forwarded to special education coordinators and transportation management personnel in DoDDS and DDESS. It may be appropriate for these students to be present during the drill but not be evacuated. The driver could explain what would occur during an actual emergency, and could practice evacuating such a student using another driver or aide as a model.
- The driver should remain in the bus during the evacuation drill.
- The type of drill should be varied, sometimes exiting from the rear door, the front door, or both doors.

## TIPS FOR TRAINING

Each DoDEA district is responsible for conducting an on-going program of training and staff development for personnel involved in providing services to students with disabilities. Training programs related to transportation of students with disabilities is a critical component of each district's total training program. In planning and conducting training programs, districts need to consider training areas based on district needs and identify target audiences for training. Tips on developing training programs are provided below. (Portions of this material are taken from Transporting the Special Needs Student, Colorado State Pupil Transportation Association, 1991).

### School Administrators and Instructional Staff

As noted at the 11<sup>th</sup> National Standards Conference (NSC, 1990), the persons who make program and transportation decisions for special needs students are usually unfamiliar with transportation capabilities and limitations. The transportation staff presents a significant resource for consultation, advice, and training on vehicles, adaptive devices, transportation policies, etc. According to the National Standard Guidelines, school and educational administrators should have training in the following areas:

- ◆ When transportation staff would be consulted or included in the IEP process.
- ◆ The types of vehicles used for special transportation.
- ◆ The equipment and occupant securement systems used.
- ◆ A knowledge of state/local (in DDESS) or host-nation (if DoDDS) and DoD transportation policies and procedures, including communications and reporting procedures.
- ◆ A general knowledge of the extent of training and skill levels available within the transportation staff.
- ◆ A general knowledge of transportation regulations that could assist in determining if transportation would be appropriate as a related service.
- ◆ A general knowledge of alternative transportation options.
- ◆ A general knowledge of current legislative, legal, and administrative decisions.
- ◆ A general knowledge of the application of least restrictive environment regulations to transportation placements.

## Transportation Administrators

The increased responsibility of special needs transporters suggests that transporters increase their leadership role to a greater degree. Again, the 11<sup>th</sup> National Standards Conference recommended that the following training topics be considered for transportation personnel:

- ◆ Knowledge of federal, state, local (where applicable) and DoD policies and regulations regarding the equipment required on vehicles used for special needs students.
- ◆ Knowledge of special education policies and regulations.
- ◆ Knowledge of operational regulations such as pick-up/drop-off locations, including whether curb-to-school or door-to-school.
- ◆ A general knowledge of special needs regulations, such as student riding time and suspension period limitations.
- ◆ A general knowledge of special needs students' due process rights and procedures.
- ◆ A general knowledge of the student referral, evaluation, and IEP process.
- ◆ A general knowledge of the identity of resource persons and the location and availability of appropriate training.
- ◆ A general knowledge of vehicle staffing requirements, including when an attendant might be needed.

## Passengers

Although drivers and attendants should expect the same standard of behavior from special education students as should be expected from regular education students, passenger training approaches may have to be modified to accommodate certain disability conditions. While training may be varied in how it is presented, any passenger training should include:

1. Bus Rules Keep them simple and easy to understand, and repeat them often. Reinforce their importance by praising students who keep their lap belts on, remain seated, and are cooperative. Enforce the rules using whatever procedures are in place. Keep teachers and parents informed of students' behaviors.
2. Equipment Train students to not tamper with any bus parts, especially lift controls. Regardless of the braking system, always set the parking brake to eliminate the chance of an accident if a student tampers with the gear selector. Always remove the key when the engine is off.
3. Emergencies Students should receive constant information and reminders regarding what would happen in the event of an emergency. Practice drills should be conducted and conversations about the drills should occur frequently. If a student appears to not

understand his/her role in a practice drill, the drill should be repeated until the student's comprehension is apparent.

4. *Eating on the Bus*: To avoid the risk of choking, students should not eat or drink while enroute to school or home. Constant monitoring may be required by the driver or attendant.

### **Parents/Guardians**

Parents and guardians, as well as teachers, can be invaluable in completing any passenger-training program. Each DoDEA district should have a handbook for parents and guardians that outlines the district's expectations and responsibilities. Training for parents and guardians should be centered on the handbook developed locally.

### **Drivers**

Legislation and medical technology will require transporters to extend their service to younger children and children with more severe disabilities. Along with this responsibility will come a greater scrutiny of safety and quality of service. The end result is that, for liability reasons, training programs for drivers and attendants must be carefully designed, implemented, and documented.

Where services are performed under contract, the servicing Area Procurement Office must be consulted regarding training of contractor employees. This is necessary: (1) to preclude actual or perceived violation of federal laws and regulations on personal services contracts; (2) to ensure that any training is both included in the contract(s) and is tailored to contractual requirements; and (3) to address applicable host-nation requirements which may supersede or supplement U.S. standards and recommendations. Normally, this training will be standardized throughout the area level and may be presented at centralized training/train-the-trainer sessions.

Although training needs for each DoD district will vary according to the special needs population to be served, there are basic training components that should be considered. The training should deal specifically with special transportation in addition to the training provided for drivers assigned to regular education routes.

As noted at the 11<sup>th</sup> National Standards Conference: *Drivers and attendants, as direct service providers with hands-on responsibility, must operate special equipment, manage student behavior, administer health care, and serve as a seating specialist in positioning and securing adaptive devices and occupants.*



## **Attendants**

In developing training programs for attendants, it is recommended that, in addition to the basic transportation training program, additional skill development in the following areas is provided:

- ✓ *Stopping the vehicle in an emergency;*
- ✓ *Operating the vehicle in an emergency;*
- ✓ *Basic knowledge of state, local, and DoD regulations; and*
- ✓ *Additional in-service training if assigned to disabled students, particularly those with unique individual needs.*

***Drivers and attendants must have a basic knowledge of applicable state, local, or host-nation laws and regulations on transportation of children and the disabled.***

# GLOSSARY

## **Alternative Educational Setting**

A setting other than the school/program normally attended by the student (e.g., home, library) where a special education student may be placed on an interim basis. The alternative educational setting (AES) must include the services and resources necessary to enable the child to continue receiving services/modifications included in his IEP.

## **Assistive Technology Device**

Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially or off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of children with disabilities.

## **Case Manager**

An educator assigned to an individual student, or group of students, for the purpose of providing oversight and guidance throughout the special education process. Case managers lead the multidisciplinary team and are an integral part of the total special education process.

## **Case Study Committee**

A group of professionals and parents who serve as team members and make decisions regarding the identification, evaluation, IEP development, and placement of each special education student. Membership of the CSC may change depending upon the purpose of a particular meeting.

## **Child Find**

An outreach program with the focus of locating and identifying children and young adults, from birth through age 21 years, who may be in need of special education and related services.

## **Children with Disabilities**

Children ages 3-21 inclusive who, before graduation from high school or completion of the General Education Degree (GED), have one or more impairments as determined by a CSC, and who need special education and related services.

## **Child Safety Restraint System (CSRS)**

Any device (except a passenger system lap seat belt or lap/shoulder seat belt) designed for use in a motor vehicle to restrain, seat, or position a child who weighs less than 50 pounds.

## **Climate-controlled Environment**

A major factor to consider in providing transportation for students who have prescribed temperature needs (e.g., air-conditioning).

## **DoD School Systems**

The Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) and Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) systems.

**Emergency Information Form**

A form kept on the bus that contains special medical information and specialized evacuation plans for individual students, as needed.

**Evaluation**

The process of testing, observing, and collecting information on a student in order to determine if the student has a disability and requires special education and related services.

**Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

Also known as the Buckley Amendment.

**FMVSS**

Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards applicable for U.S.-manufactured vehicles.

**FMVSS 222**

The major federal regulation covering educational vehicle and securement specifications applicable for U.S.-manufactured vehicles.

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**

A mandated requirement that children and youth with disabilities receive a public education appropriate to their needs at no cost to their families.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

A written plan that outlines special education and related services that are required to meet the unique needs of a special education student. The IEP is developed by a Child Study Committee and must be reviewed on an annual basis. More frequent reviews may be conducted when necessary.

**Individualized Transition Services Plan (ITSP)**

A written plan that outlines the services required to provide for the transition of special education students into post-secondary school life. The ITSP is developed by a Child Study Committee and addresses the vocational, recreational, continuing education, and adult/community living skills required for successful transition. The ITSP is included as part of a student's IEP beginning at age 14 years.

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

The educational setting that permits a student with disabilities to have maximum contact with non-disabled peers while meeting the student's special education needs.

**Mediation/Due Process**

A legally established process for the resolution of conflicts concerning a student's identification, evaluation, or placement, or the provision of FAPE. Parents of children with disabilities in the DoD school system are afforded impartial mediation and/or impartial due process hearings and administrative appeals regarding these matters.

**Medically Related Services**

Services provided under professional medical supervision that have been identified by the CSC as required for the student to benefit from special education. These services are noted on the IEP. Examples include physical therapy, occupational therapy, and psychiatric services.

**Non-DoD Placement**

The DoD school system's assignment of a child with a disability to a school or facility not operated by DoD.

**Non-DoD School or Facility**

A public or private school or other institution not operated by DoD. The term includes DDESS special contractual arrangements.

**Orientation and Mobility**

Services provided by qualified personnel to blind or visually impaired students for them to attain systematic orientation and safe movement within their environments in school, home, and the community.

**OSHA**

Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the U.S. Government agency that provides regulatory guidance and oversight with respect to the health and safety of work

**Parent**

The biological father or mother of a child; a person who, by order of a court of competent jurisdiction, has been declared the father or mother of a child by adoption; the legal guardian of a child; or a person in whose household a child resides, if such person stands in loco parentis to that child and contributes at least one-half of the child's support.

**Parental Consent**

The documentation/written approval of a parent of a child with a disability, or suspected of having a disability, that must be obtained prior to initiation of a formal evaluation, initial educational placement, and change in educational placement.

**Personally Identifiable Information**

Data or other information that would make it possible to identify the student with reasonable certainty. Examples include student name, parent/guardian name, home address, social security number, or other personal information.

**Preschool Services for Children with Disabilities (PSCD)**

Special education and related services to children ages 3 to 5 inclusive. Procedures should be in place at each location for students transitioning between the early intervention program and the PSCD program when the child approaches his third birthday.

**Primary Referral Source**

Parents and the DoD Components, including child development centers, pediatric clinics, and newborn nurseries, that suspect an infant or toddler has a disability and brings the child to the attention of the early intervention provider.

**Related Services**

Transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as required to assist a child, ages 3 to 21 inclusive, with a disability to benefit from special education under the child's IEP. The term includes speech therapy and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, orientation and mobility services, recreation, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling services, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluative purposes. The term also includes rehabilitation counseling services, school health services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling. The sources for these services are school, community, and medical treatment facilities (MTFs).

**Restraint**

A device used to restrict the movement of a student. The term "restraint" is often used interchangeably with "seurement."

**School Bus**

A motor vehicle designed for carrying more than 10 persons for the purpose of transporting students to and from school and related events (Amendment to FMVSS 222).

**Service Provider**

Any individual who provides services listed in an IEP or ITSP.

**Special Education**

Specifically designed instruction, including physical education, which is provided at no cost to the parent or guardians to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, and includes instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings.

**Supplemental Aids and Supports**

Equipment, materials, services, and other supports and resources provided in regular education classes or other instructional settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.

**Transportation**

A service that includes: (a) services rendered under the IEP of a child with a disability; (b) travel to and from school and between schools, including travel necessary to permit participation in educational and recreational activities and related services; (c) travel in and around school buildings; and (d) specialized equipment including special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps, if required to provide transportation for a child with a disability.

## RESOURCES

*Access & Mobility.* A guide for transporting students with disabilities in California. Published by the California Association of School Transportation Officials. Copies are available for \$19.95 each, plus \$5 for shipping and handling. Orders may be sent to P.O. Box 71165, Bakersfield, CA 93387. Credit card purchases may be made by calling (661) 852-5900.

*The Bus Stops Here: Defining Transportation Obligations to Students with Disabilities.* Individuals with Disabilities Education Law Report® (Special Report No. 22). Published by LRP Publications, 747 Dresher Road, Suite 500, P.O. Box 980, Horsham, PA 19044, (215) 784-0860, fax. no. (215) 784-9639. The cost is \$23.50 each, plus \$3.50 for shipping and handling.

*National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT).* 1840 Western Avenue, Albany, NY 12203-0647, 1-800-989-6278, [www.napt.org/contents.htm](http://www.napt.org/contents.htm).

*National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.* 400 7<sup>th</sup> Street SW, Washington DC 20590, (888) 327-4236, [www.nhtsa.dot.gov.nhtsa](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov.nhtsa).

*National Transportation Safety Board.* 490 L'Enfant Plaza, SW Washington, DC 20594, (202) 314-6000, [www.nts.gov/info/sources.htm](http://www.nts.gov/info/sources.htm).

*Partners in Special Education: A Parent Guide.* Published by Department of Defense Education Activity, Communications Office. (Available in each DoDEA District office of special education.)

*The Road to Compliance: Legally Transporting Students with Disabilities.* Published by LRP Publications, 747 Dresher Road, Suite 500, P.O. Box 980, Horsham, PA 19044, (215) 784-0860, fax. no. (215) 784-9639. The cost is \$22.50 each, plus \$4.50 for shipping and handling.

*School Bus Fleet.* (888) 239-2455, [www.schoolbusfleet.com](http://www.schoolbusfleet.com).

*School Transportation News (STN).* 700 Torrance Bl., Suite C, P.O. Box 789, Redondo Beach, CA 90277, (310) 792-2226, [www.stnonline.com.stn/index.htm](http://www.stnonline.com.stn/index.htm).

*Special Needs Transportation Handbook* by Dr. Ray Turner. Published by White Buffalo Press, 5306 King George, San Antonio, TX 782229, (210) 614-1396. The cost is \$75 per copy.

*Transporting Students with Disabilities.* Presented by NAPT Special Needs Committee. Author: Linda F. Bluth, Ed.D. Published by the National Association of Pupil Transportation, Executive Park, 4 Tower Place, Albany, NY 12203-0647.

*Transporting Students with Disabilities.* Published by the Federal News Service, Inc. P.O. Box 8548, Silver Spring, MD 20907-8548. Annual subscription rate is \$147.

## APPENDICES

<b>Appendix A</b>	Suggested Training Topics for Drivers and Attendants
<b>Appendix B</b>	Emergency Information Form ( <i>Sample</i> )
<b>Appendix C</b>	A Quick Reference for Bus Drivers
<b>Appendix D</b>	A Quick Reference for Parents

## Suggested Training Topics for Drivers and Attendants

### *Legislative and Regulatory Issues*

DoD Policies and Directives	Definition of Related Services
Definitions of Disabilities	The Special Education Process
Confidentiality of Student Information	Procedural Safeguards/ Due Process
District and School Policies and Practices	Host Nation/State Laws and Regulations

### *Departmental Procedures*

Use of Confidential Medical Information	Length of Bus Ride
Pick-up and Drop-off Location	Disciplinary/suspension Procedures
Latchkey Students	Emergency Procedures
Evacuation Drill Requirements	Driver Expectations and Responsibilities
Position Descriptions	Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

### *Operational Procedures*

Pre-Trip Inspections	Lift Operations
Required Equipment on Board	Maintaining Confidential Information
Evacuation Plans and Seating Charts	Loading and Unloading
Delivery of Students Door-to-Door	Communication with Parents/School
Report Writing/Record Keeping	Equipment Failure Procedures
Reporting Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect	Handling Behavior Problems on the Bus
Route Management	Inclement Weather Procedures
Student Drop-Off Responsibilities	Post-Trip Inspection of Vehicle

### *Student Management*

Techniques for Encouraging Proper Behavior	Managing Unacceptable Behaviors
Communication with School	Communication with Students
Responsibilities of Adults on the Bus	Using Student Leaders

### *Emergency Situations*

Medical Emergencies	Emergency Evacuations
Proper Communication Requirements	Adult and Student Responsibilities
Accident Scene Management	Equipment Failure



***Equipment Installation and Maintenance***

Lifts and Ramps	Proper Placement of Personnel
Placement of Wheelchairs	Wheelchair/Occupant Restraint Systems
Adaptive/Assistive Devices	Car Seats
Harnesses and Hardware	Special Lap Belts
Respirators	Oxygen Tanks
Mobility Tanks	Trays and Accessories
Fire Suppression Systems	Power Cut-Off Switches
Communication Systems	Air Conditioning System
Medical and Emergency Supplies	Troubleshooting and Making Simple Repairs

***Hands-on Training and Practice Exercises***

Loading and Unloading the Vehicle	Operation of the Lift
Lifting Guidelines and Techniques	Operation and Securement of Wheelchairs
Blanket Drag	Practice of First Aid Techniques

While a number of general training areas have been suggested above, each district will be responsible for developing its own curricula for training bus drivers and other transportation personnel to meet their own unique requirements. Administrators need to keep in mind that all state and federal licensing requirements must be met in order to properly license drivers. Any training program should assure that these requirements will be met.

Training topics should be designed to meet the identified needs of the transportation personnel and presented in a way that participants will have a meaningful learning experience. It is recommended that districts develop a training handbook, videotapes, and other audio/visual aids for the training program. It is also recommended that first-aid training be offered at the entry level for each trainee, and that an annual refresher course be offered for all transportation personnel.

Student photo  
for easy  
identification

**EMERGENCY INFORMATION FORM**  
*(Sample)*

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School District: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Specific Program/Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

AM Pick-Up Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

PM Drop-Off Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Information**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mother's Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency/Alternative Contacts:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Medical Information:**

Student's Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital Preference: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**General Statement of Student's Needs as They Relate to Transportation:**

**Seating Options**

\_\_\_\_\_ Bus Seat \_\_\_\_\_ Head Rest \_\_\_\_\_ Foot Rest

\_\_\_\_\_ Bus Seat w/Seatbelt \_\_\_\_\_ Chest Restraint \_\_\_\_\_ Halo

\_\_\_\_\_ Bus Seat w/Chest Restraint and Belt \_\_\_\_\_ Sub-A.S.L.S. Bar \_\_\_\_\_ Seat Belt

\_\_\_\_\_ Car Seat

\_\_\_\_\_ Wheelchair: Recommended Wheelchair Position: \_\_\_\_\_



## A Quick Reference for Bus Drivers

Understanding all that is required of you as a bus driver of students with disabilities can be a challenging job. This reference sheet was developed to give you a broad outline of items to consider in your position as a bus driver. You should consult your supervisor if you have specific items of concern.

1. Make an effort to get to know the students as well as the parents or guardians who wait with them at the bus stop.
2. Consult with the transportation office to learn any special loading or handling requirements.
3. Make an effort to understand aspects of the student's disabling condition that may affect you, the student, or others during the bus route.
4. Understand the proper method of tie down and securement of students, wheelchairs, and special medical equipment such as oxygen tanks.
5. Keep up to date on current loading and lifting techniques, and emergency medical and evacuation procedures.
6. Take notes of any medical or behavioral problems with a student during the route, and report them to the proper authorities.
7. Know the local procedures for what to do when a parent or responsible person is not present to meet the school bus at the bus stop.
8. Every bus should carry an Emergency Information Form for each child with a disabling condition. It should include important information such as contact phone numbers, and medical and other special information.
9. Make sure that the Emergency Information Form is completely filled out and up to date. Keep these documents in a secure and confidential location.
10. On a school vehicle, rules should be kept to a minimum. They should be relevant, meaningful, and positive. They should be written, and may need to be verbalized to students who do not read.
11. While maintaining discipline on the school vehicle, try to focus on encouraging the development of desirable behaviors rather than eliminating undesirable behaviors.
12. In the U.S., be aware of any restraining orders that may be placed on a person or persons and understand the local policy on what to do if someone under a restraining order attempts to pick up the child at the bus stop.
13. Notify route schedulers of any concerns that may require a change of transportation arrangements.
14. Do not change or modify a bus route without permission from the proper authorities.

## **A Quick Reference for Parents**

The amount of information involving your child's transportation needs can be overwhelming. This reference sheet was developed to help you understand what you need to know to ensure that your child has a safe and pleasant experience while going to and from school. This sheet only highlights the vast amount of information available. Your local school administrator should be consulted if you have any detailed questions regarding transportation of your child.

1. If your child has a disability, he/she has a right to a free and appropriate public education as indicated on the Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP may include the related service of transportation.
2. The transportation of your child must be appropriate given the disabling condition.
3. The cost of transporting your child is secondary to the appropriateness of the transportation. Cost is only one determining factor among a choice of available appropriate transportation alternatives.
4. It is important for you to attend the IEP meeting for your child. Transportation should be discussed at this meeting.
5. The IEP could include specific transportation plans for your child if required as a related service.
6. Advise the transportation office of any special needs your child may have involving transportation, including any loading and handling requirements. They will ensure that the transportation provider is made aware of those needs, and will monitor the service provided.
7. Make sure that your child is at the bus stop in plenty of time, as it is generally not possible for the bus to return to the stop a second time.
8. Be sure to have a responsible person accept your child when he/she arrives home from school to avoid having your child returned to school.
9. Notify the transportation office in advance if your child will not attend school on a specific day.
10. The bus should carry an Emergency Information Form for your child. This form includes important information such as contact phone numbers, and medical and other special information. Make sure to give complete and detailed information when filling out the form.
11. Remember to update the information on the Emergency Information Form as needed. Out-of-date medical information or phone numbers may hinder emergency personnel.
12. In the unlikely event of an emergency situation involving your child's bus, please do not go to the scene unless instructed to do so by the proper authorities. Additional parents or onlookers at the scene may hinder emergency personnel.