

Transportation Services Guidance For Children with Disabilities

Introduction:

In accordance with Head Start Performance Standards, Head Start programs must ensure there are school buses or allowable alternate vehicles adapted or designed for transportation of children with disabilities available as necessary to transport such children enrolled in the program. Whenever possible, children with disabilities must be transported in the same vehicles used to transport other children enrolled in the Head Start program.

Federal Compliance:

DFSS Head Start agencies must also ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.S. 12101 et.seq.), the Health and Human Services regulations at 45 CFR Part 84, implementing section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), in addition to the Head Start Performance Standards for children with disabilities (45 CFR Part 1308), as they apply to transportation services.

Eligibility for Transportation Services by the Local Education Agency (LEA):

When a child with suspected and/or identified disability is referred to the Local Education Agency (LEA) for a special education evaluation, a full and individual evaluation is completed for the child in the relevant domains of development. Following the full and individual evaluation, an Eligibility Determination meeting is held to review the findings of the full and individual evaluation and to determine the child's eligibility for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Under IDEA, transportation is defined as a related service. Travel training is also included under IDEA and is specifically defined. In brief, travel training refers to special instruction that enables a child with a disability to develop an awareness and understanding of his/her environment and to learn the skills needed to travel safely between his/her environments, for example, between home and school.

Transportation includes travel to and from school and between schools; travel in and around school buildings; and specialized equipment such as special or adapted buses, lifts and ramps, if required to provide special transportation for a child with a disability.

FAQs:

-Who Determines Eligibility for Transportation at the LEA?

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) Team who completed the child's full and individual evaluation will review and determine the child's eligibility for transportation services. The Team is responsible for determining if transportation is required to assist the child with a disability to benefit from special education and related services, and how the transportation services should be implemented. Note: IDEA does not require the LEA to transport children with disabilities in separate vehicles, but rather, encourages that



children should be transported with their non-disabled peers as part of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for children with disabilities.

-How Can DFSS Head Start Support the Child and Family in Receiving Transportation Through the LEA?

DFSS Head Start will assist the LEA in identifying any special transportation requirements for a child with a disability when preparing the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and will ensure that special transportation requirements in a child's IEP are followed, including: special pick-up and drop-off requirements, special seating requirements, special equipment needs, special assistance that may be required and any special training for bus drivers and bus monitors.

-Who Can I Contact for Additional Information or Specific Questions Regarding Transportation Services for Children with Disabilities?

Please contact DFSS/CPS Disabilities Subject Matter Experts at 312 743-1598.

CPS Student Transportation is also available for questions regarding children receiving services at CPS facilities at 773 533-2860.

Adapted from the U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC (November, 2009), OSERSguidance@ed.gov, Transportation

