



FACT SHEET: UNDERSTANDING TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS IN ILLINOIS

What is Transportation as a Related Service?

Transportation is considered a related service under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) if it is necessary for a student to benefit from their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Transportation includes:

- Travel to and from school and between schools.
- Travel in and around school buildings.
- Specialized equipment (e.g., lifts, ramps) if required.

Key Points for Families in Illinois

1. Eligibility for Transportation Services

- The IEP team determines whether transportation is necessary.
- Factors considered include the student's disability, distance from school, mobility challenges, and behavioral needs.

2. 1:1 Aides on the Bus

- If a student requires a 1:1 aide for safety or support during transportation, this must be documented in their IEP.
- Aides may assist with behavior management, medical needs, or communication.

3. Contracted Bus Services

- Illinois schools may contract transportation services to private companies.
- These contractors must adhere to the IEP requirements, including specialized equipment and trained personnel (e.g., drivers and aides).

4. Specialized Equipment and Accommodations

- If the student requires a wheelchair lift, harness, or car seat, this should be included in the IEP.
- Accommodations for sensory needs (e.g., noise-canceling headphones) or medical equipment must also be specified.

5. Distance Limits and Door-to-Door Services

- Students eligible for transportation services may require door-to-door or curb-to-curb transportation depending on their needs.
- Distance from home to school is a common consideration but is secondary to the student's safety and disability-related needs.

Family Matters is not a legal services agency and cannot provide legal advice or legal representation. Information received from Family Matters is not intended as legal advice and should not be used as a substitution for legal advice.



FACT SHEET: UNDERSTANDING TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS IN ILLINOIS

What Should Parents Do?

- During the IEP Meeting:
 - Discuss your child’s unique transportation needs with the team.
 - Ensure that supports like a 1:1 aide or specialized equipment are documented.
 - Confirm whether the transportation provider can meet all the documented requirements.
- If Issues Arise:
 - Report concerns about transportation directly to the school district.
 - Keep documentation of incidents (e.g., delays, safety issues, or unmet accommodations).
 - Request an IEP meeting if services need adjustment.

Dispute Resolution Options

If the school district fails to provide adequate transportation:

- File a Complaint: Contact the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to file a formal complaint.
- Request Mediation or Due Process: Families have the right to seek mediation or due process to resolve disputes regarding transportation.

Resources for Families

- Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
- [Transportation Guidelines](#)
- Contact: (217) 782-4321
- Family Matters Parent Training and Information Center (PTIC)
- www.fmptic.org
- Contact: (866) 436-7842
- U.S. Department of Education
- IDEA Transportation Guidance: www.ed.gov
- Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)
- School Transportation Safety: www.idot.illinois.gov



The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H328M200072. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer David Emenheiser.