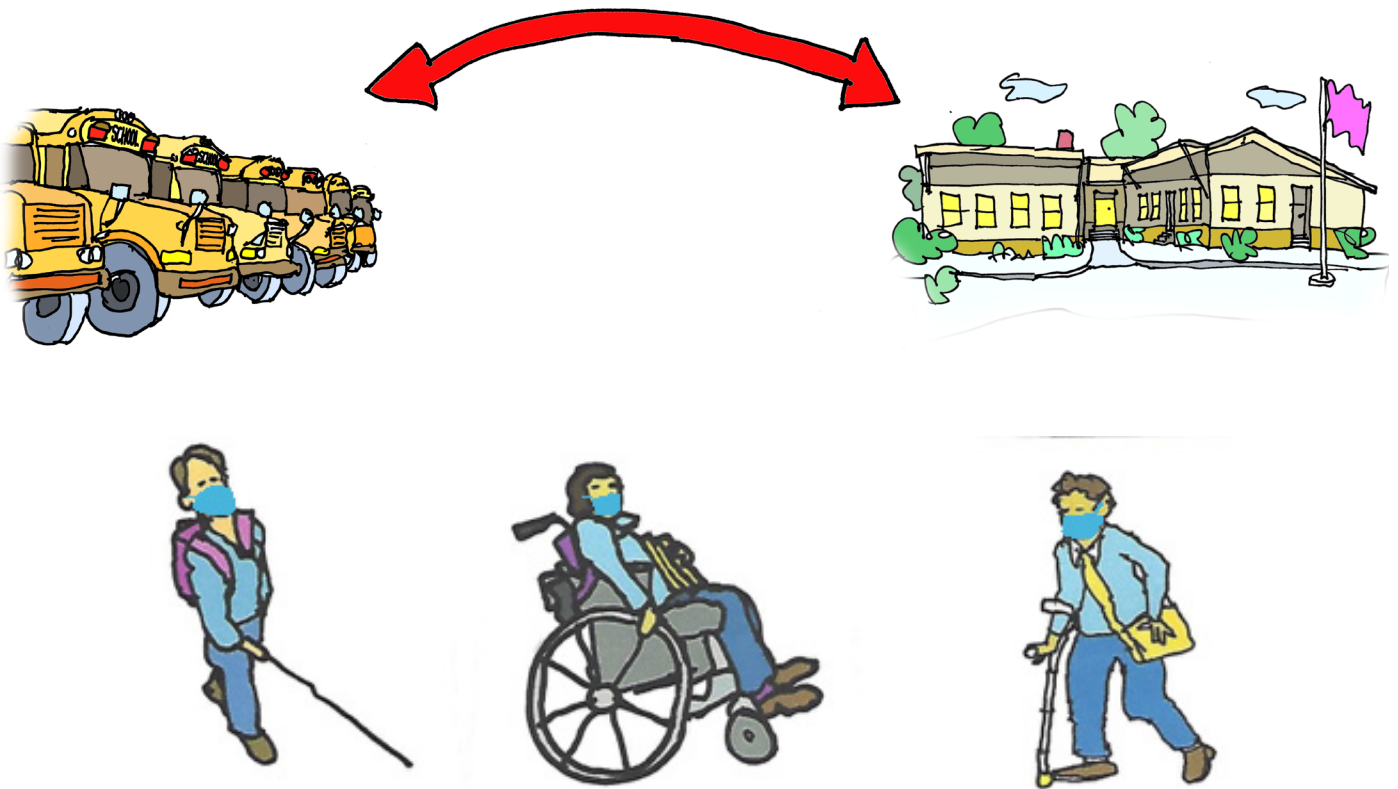


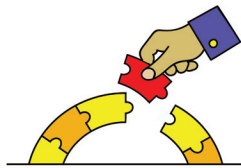
“Bridging the Gap between Home and School”

LET’S GET CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES TO SCHOOL



**Education and Transportation officials
need to *WORK TOGETHER*
so that no child is ignored.**

- Illustration by Eli Noyes for Access Exchange International (AEI), San Francisco, USA
- Translation of this poster is encouraged.



LET'S GET CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES TO SCHOOL

School transportation materials for education and transport officials in a time of pandemic

Compiled and published by
Access Exchange International (AEI)
San Francisco, California, USA
<www.globlride-sf.org>
tom@globalride-sf.org
telephone 1-415-661-6355

Materials compiled by **Pete Meslin**, Retired Director of Transportation,
Newport-Mesa Unified School District, California, USA; lead author of
Access and Mobility: A Guide for Transporting Students with Disabilities in California

Project Coordinator: **Tom Rickert**, Executive Director, Access Exchange International;
Coordinator of AEI's guide *Bridging the Gap: Your role in transporting children with
disabilities to school in developing countries*

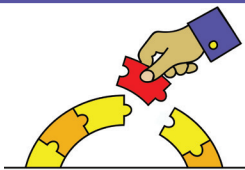
Layout and design: **Janett Jiménez**, architect, Mexico City, consultant to federal and
state governments in Mexico on access to the built environment and transportation

Cover images by **Eli Noyes**, Alligator Planet LLC, San Francisco; assistance with design
and images by **Daniela Briseño**, **Alejandro Camacho** and **Jamie Osborne**

Translation or reproduction of these materials is encouraged for
non-commercial purposes only.

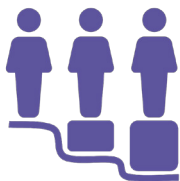
Disclaimer

This work includes practices which may not be relevant in some countries or which may vary from country to country and no endorsement is implied. Instructions on how to perform any specific procedure may not apply in every circumstance. Always follow all laws and regulations in your country. Always follow manufacturer's instructions when using any equipment related to student transport.



Suggestions for School Transport Planners

Asking the right questions will take us a long way towards addressing school transportation problems. This document provides a starting point for thinking about prioritizing your planning in the face of the global pandemic. Most of these questions apply to all students, not just to students with disabilities.



Equity for students with disabilities. Have you made allowance for students with disabilities to be transported to school? If public transport is their only option, are you discussing transport options with public transport operators? Have you considered that contracting with private or public transport operators may be an option? Can school hours be adjusted to better accommodate public transport? Will school bus drivers or support personnel need to change? To what level and with what hours?

Funding. Is funding available or other provisions made for needed personnel, vehicles, cleaning supplies, and personal protective equipment? Can you identify additional sources of funding?

Service scheduling and routing scenarios. There are many different scenarios for reducing class sizes to allow for social separation. Different groups of students may attend morning and afternoon classes, or alternate classroom instruction so that groups meet every other day or every other week.



Is care being taken to plan transport for students with special needs to assure an inclusive school environment? Are school officials aware that school transport requirements and costs will vary with each scenario?



What days and times will transport be required? Are opportunities available to operate more efficiently?

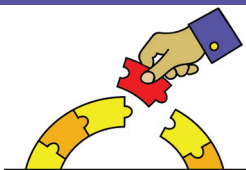


Some schools may plan to keep students together by class, in “cohorts,” as they move from one activity to another. Will transportation providers have to revise routes to accommodate such a plan? Knowing what educators are planning is essential. Have you made transportation needs clear to those (including parents) involved in planning?

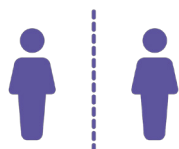
Bus Stops. Will you have to split stops or routes to maintain reasonable spatial separation of students while they wait for transportation and when they are on board? Will you have to create new stops to limit the number of students gathered at stops?

Unique situations. Some students with disabilities may have unique requirements regarding transport. Have you accommodated their needs?

Parent information. Parents may need to make accommodations, for example when an adult is required to be present at home for pickups or drop-offs. How will information be shared with parents?



Suggestions for School Transport Planners



Social distancing & seating plans. Students and staff should always maintain required social distancing. All students will need special orientation about social distancing and other COVID related measures. How will you address student behavior where students may wish to be closer than the social distancing requirements? Whether one uses seating guidelines of one student per bench seat or a less stringent standard, assigned seating should be used. How will assignments be made for different categories of students with disabilities? How will you space your seats, keeping in mind that seats should not be removed? Some recommend seating every other row. Would that be possible in your operation? Will you have to add vehicles or make other accommodations?



Masks. When students are required to wear masks you will be faced with new challenges. How will you identify the names of students wearing masks? If see-through masks are available, do you plan to use such masks for transport personnel when students are present who benefit from lip reading? Some students of primary school age or younger may not be able to wear masks. How will your transport operation align itself with school policies on requiring masks or making exceptions for younger students at school?



Student temperatures. Some sources recommend taking students' temperatures when they board the bus. What will you do if a student fails the temperature test? Would the student be required to return home? Would their parents be required to remain at home until the temperature is taken?

Cleaning vehicles. Any vehicle that transports students must be cleaned frequently – at least at the end of every run. How will you perform this cleaning? Will the driver do it or will a separate team do it? Will you have to schedule routes differently or add vehicles to allow time for cleaning? Do you have cleaning material on hand, a reliable supply chain, and funds for more cleaning materials as needed?

Alternatives to transport. How will you accommodate students who do not meet the criteria for a ride? For example, can you get these students to school by walking or using parent volunteers to form carpools, to serve as crossing guards, or to accompany students who must walk?

Distance learning. Some school systems may plan on “distance learning” (also called “online learning”), or on some combination of classroom teaching with distance learning. Not all households will have access to distance learning tools. What role will transportation play in this process?

Hold true to your core values. We are in a period of transition, your core values should guide your way. You will have to work with educators, teachers, parents, public officials, and others. You may have to offer options that are uncomfortable. You must adjust and adapt frequently. Our goals need to include the best transportation possible for students with disabilities. Communicate frequently with your school, transport staff, and parents.



Tools for Successful School Transport

(Social separation is per local regulations:

See suggestions for planners)

Considerations for seating

- Reduce outside stimulation for students with autism
 - Sit away from window
 - Cover window in certain cases
- Sit in front to reduce bumpiness and noise
- Sit away from other students as necessary
- Consider using a seating chart
- Seat students with interactions between them in mind rather than where the student likes

Routing considerations

- Consider order of pickup to reduce problem behaviors
- Consider changing PM routes to reduce behaviors of students who have problems at school
- Consider picking up stops with the most students first
- Assign students tasks like taking attendance

Working with the schools

- Make transportation part of classroom behavior support plans
- Consider impact on students of dropping students at one location vs. another
- Consider driver escorting students to the classroom
- Report on student progress to educators frequently

Working with parents

- Get to know parents
- Share info from parents with educators and vice-versa
- Work towards student independence: they are often more capable than we think
- Work with parents to determine appropriate bus stops

Working with the community

- Select bus stops that work with the community
 - Consider the time of day for the stop
 - Consider the traffic on the street
- Learning the community areas of danger and trouble could prove beneficial

Transporting wheelchairs

- Students should be positioned forward facing in all cases
- Tie-downs should be used as directed by the manufacturer
- A “dry” or test run is recommended to see if everything works
- The wheelchair **MUST BE** in good working condition with brakes working



Improving Student Safety and Behaviour

Use limits. The key here is that limits need to be simple, clear, and enforceable. This means that limits need not be threatening, especially if they can't be enforced. Never threaten unless you can follow through on the threat.

Use nonthreatening and nonverbal actions. As students exhibit more extreme behavior they tend to hear less. That is, your verbal prompts may not be heard. Use of non-verbal actions tends to have more impact. These prompts have more effect if they are not threatening.

Have empathy. Behaviors can be real to the person showing them even though they may seem odd. These behaviors can be very important and should be paid attention to.

Avoid overreacting. It may be tempting to react quickly to behavior that is inappropriate. However, it is seldom the best way to handle the situation. It is best to remain calm and professional. Remember, the person might be trying to elicit that behavior from you.

Use supportive words. Letting the person know you understand what they are going through is very important.

Ignore challenging questions. Students who are excited may ask challenging questions that are not designed to be answered correctly. Focus on the person asking the question rather than the question itself. Redirect their attention to the issue rather than answering the question.

Choose carefully about which rules to enforce. Offer, instead, reasonable choices that may allow you to escape the situation. A choice is often a good option as long as the choices are reasonable. This is very preferable to arguing.

Let silence do the heavy lifting. Do not mistake silence for the need to respond. Many teachers use silence as the prompt for students to respond. Often silence can be used to encourage appropriate response.

Allow time for decisions. Students process questions at different rates. There is nothing wrong with a long pause before an answer is expected. Students (and adults) often need the time to gather themselves and respond.



Sample Driver Training Curriculum

Covid-related training

- Preparing and cleaning the vehicle
- Guidelines for students riding to school
- Special driver requirements

Student related content

- Specific service requirements of the student(s) being transported
- Specific emergency medical procedures (may including CPR, seizure response, and other procedures required by the student's needs and appropriate law)
- Specific student emergency evacuation plans

Driving skills

- Safe operation of the vehicle for the traffic setting / conditions
- Safe pickup and delivery practices (including proper passing of custody at stops and school sites)
- Map and route document reading
- Proper use of vehicle controls (brakes, lights, steering, etc)
- Vehicle related emergencies

Vehicle / Equipment related content

- Daily pre-trip inspection
- Maintenance requirements
- Vehicle status and requirements for reporting problems
- Correct use of accessibility features (including any lifts, ramps, car-seats, or tie-downs)
- Safe storage of equipment and belongings during transport

Disability related content

- Types of disabilities and their characteristics
- General disability awareness and sensitivity
- Student behavior management
- Safety rules including noise limits, food restrictions, and proper seating
- Dealing with blood borne pathogens and other bodily fluids
- General first aide procedures

Policy / Law compliance contents

- Reporting evidence of child abuse
- Reporting an incident on the vehicle
- Child-care and custody requirements
- Attendance, time-keeping, and other related procedures
- Communications procedures (with parents, school site staff, and transportation office staff)
- Testing for drugs and alcohol use
- Self-reporting of health condition impacting safe driving
- Distracted and inattentive driving
- Customer service
- Traffic laws
- Equipment related laws (e.g. seatbelts and other child safety restraints)
- Driver and vehicle licensing requirements

Evacuation Training



The evacuation training should discuss evacuation procedures and practice those skills. Then a discussion of what worked and did not work should be facilitated.

Ideally an emergency evacuation plan should be drawn up. That plan should be carried on the vehicle and all who drive it should become familiar with it.

When a vehicle needs to be evacuated, the training should ensure that the following questions are answered:

Student specific questions

Do the students need protection?

Each student should have an emergency card that specifies how to evacuate the student. Have such cards been completed and stored on the bus?

Can the students move to the exit in an orderly fashion?

Is the student's disability impacting evacuation? How?

Does the student have medical conditions like allergies, oxygen, or a shunt?

How exactly is the student's behavior apparent in the bus setting?

Does the child's age or cognitive ability require adaptation? How?

Do you know how to correctly use the accessibility features (including any lifts, ramps, car-seats, or tie-downs)?

Do you know how to use all the special equipment on the vehicle (like wheelchairs)?

Do you know how to effectively communicate with all students?

Are certain students required to evacuate first or last?

Do you know which students need lifting and carrying? Which methods work best? How can you carry them away from the vehicle?

Are there students who can assist in evacuation?

Route / equipment specific questions

Might an aiding piece of equipment like a guide rope be helpful?

Are there route specific constraints like hills or lakes?

Do you know all paths out of the vehicle and which ones to use when?

Do you know how to ask for help and from whom?



Student Information for Drivers / Schools

School _____

- New Student
- Discontinue Transportation
- Update Information

This information on each student with a disability can be modified according to specific situations.

TRANSPORTATION REQUEST

Updated _____

Name: First _____ Last _____ Nickname _____ Grade _____

Student ID # _____ Parent/Guardian Name _____ Phone # _____

Addresses or vehicle stop locations

Pick up Address _____ Phone # _____

Drop off Address _____ Phone # _____

PLEASE MARK APPROPRIATE BOXES AND PROVIDE ADDITIONAL DETAIL IN THE NOTES SECTION

Special Equipment

- Wheelchair
- Walker / cane
- Car seat
- Safety vest
- Oxygen transported

Medical Factors

- Hearing impaired
- Visually impaired
- Tracheotomy
- Medical assistant required
- Suctioning required
- Seizures (type/frequency/duration) _____
- Monitor airway
- Insulin dependent
- Severe allergies (describe)

Safety Factors

- Walks to bus unassisted
- Walks to bus but needs assistance
- Preferential seating (describe)
- Requires assistance walking
- Aggressive / dangerous behavior
- May run away
- Must be secured in vehicle
- Unable to communicate
- Difficulty following directions
- Medication to be transported
- Must be met by _____

Notes and other descriptions

Information on this form supersedes all prior forms.

Authorized by _____

Date _____



Driver Update on Student Status

Student's Name _____ Date _____

School _____ Grade _____

Driver _____ Route _____ AM PM

Current service guidelines

Bus stop: At residence Nearest

Local bus stop: Must be met Car seat Vest Wheelchair Aide

Other: _____

Does the student acknowledge you when entering the bus?

No Yes (explain) _____

Does the student engage in conversation with you (bus driver) or other students while in route to their destination?

What level of supervision / assistance is necessary for this student? (i.e. verbal cues, continual prompting)

In your opinion, is the student capable of walking to his/her home if the bus stop was located a little bit further from her/his home, as a transition to greater independence? (explain)



Supervisor's Report of Injury or Accident

Employee or Student Name _____ Age _____

Date of incident _____ Time of incident _____ AM
 PM

Date reported _____ Time reported _____ AM
 PM

Accident location (where on school campus or route) _____

Type of injury (describe any injury and list all affected body parts) _____

Date any medical treatment requested _____

Describe how the accident occurred _____

Name and contact information of any witnesses _____

What steps have been taken to prevent similar accidents? _____
