

Transportation Options for Students with Disabilities: Getting to/from School Factsheet for Virginia's Parents

Transportation

Transportation can be an important part of your child's school day. For students with disabilities, transportation is more than just a ride—it can be a **related service** under the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**. This means if your child's disability makes it difficult to get to and from school like students without disabilities, the school may need to provide transportation services in their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

In Virginia, transportation decisions must be made by the **IEP team**, and **parents are full members of the team**. This includes deciding **how** your child gets to and from school—on the standard school bus, using specialized (door-to-door) transportation, or another option.

What Can Transportation Services Look Like?

Transportation services can include a range of supports:

- A monitor or aide riding with your child
- Equipment like a car seat, five-point harness, or a wheelchair lift
- Door-to-door pick-up and drop-off
- A smaller bus or van
- Extra help getting on and off the bus

The school must provide transportation services if it's needed for your child to **access their education**.

What if I Want My Child to Ride the Standard School Bus?

Many parents want their children to ride the **standard school bus with their neighborhood friends**. That's an important conversation to have with the IEP team.

IDEA and Virginia regulations say that children with disabilities should be with students without disabilities as much as possible. This is called the **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**—and it applies to transportation too!

If you feel your child can ride the standard school bus with or without some extra support, bring that up with the team. The IEP team must consider your input and look at your child's needs.

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Questions You Can Ask at the IEP Meeting

- What transportation options are available for my child?
- Will my child ride the standard bus? What accommodations/supports could be added if needed?
- If specialized transportation is recommended, why?
- What would need to happen for my child to transition to riding the standard school bus?
- Can we include transportation goals or supports in the IEP?
- How will the school make sure my child is safe and supported during transportation?
- Will transportation changes affect my child's school schedule or access to services? What does transportation to extracurricular activities look like?

Tips for Parents

- **Know your child** – You are the expert on your child's strengths and needs.
- **Ask for data** – If the school says your child can't ride the regular bus, ask for documentation that supports that decision.
- **Document decisions** – Make sure any transportation decision is clearly written in the IEP, including how and when your child will be picked up and dropped off.
- **Check in regularly** – If your child starts using specialized transportation, ask how it's going. You can always request an IEP meeting to revisit the decision.

Your child's transportation should support their access to school in the **safest, least restrictive, and most inclusive** way possible. As a parent, you have a voice in that decision. Talk openly with your IEP team, ask questions, and make sure transportation is part of the conversation, not an afterthought.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/RESOURCES:

[§ 22.1-221. Transportation of children with disabilities attending public or private special education programs](#)

[Questions and Answers on Serving Children with Disabilities Eligible for Transportation](#)

[Related Services | Virginia Department of Education](#)

[The Virginia Family's Guide to Special Education - VDOE](#)

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