



## CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES - TRANSPORTATION (IEP Section 15 and Section 504 Plan - Transportation)

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### PURPOSE

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The IDEA includes transportation within its definition of "related services." Transportation includes travel to and from and between schools, travel in and around school buildings, and specialized equipment if required to provide transportation to a student with a disability. Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, transportation may also be available for students with disabilities. The IEP/Section 504 team is responsible for determining if transportation is required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education, and how the transportation services should be implemented. The IEP/Section 504 Plan should describe the transportation services to be provided, including transportation to enable a student with disabilities to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities in the manner necessary to afford the student an equal opportunity for participation in those services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of that student.

**NOTE:** Special education services can include travel training. Travel training is instruction that enables students with significant disabilities, and any other students with disabilities who require this instruction, to develop an awareness of the environment in which they live, and to learn the skills necessary to move effectively and safely from place to place within that environment.

Specialized transportation services can be a fundamental component of the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that will assist students in preparing for employment and independent living in their communities. Therefore, IEP/Section 504 teams should consider the need for both transportation and travel training when planning for a student's postsecondary transition needs.

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### CONTENTS

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This packet includes the following documentation:

- Procedures - Step-by-step detail of how transportation as a related service is committed throughout the District
- Roles and Responsibilities - Breakdown of roles and responsibilities for staff involved in the process of committing transportation as a related service
- Guidelines - Guiding principles to consider when determining whether a student needs transportation as a related service



## PROCEDURES

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### PRIOR TO IEP /SECTION 504 MEETING

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1. If the school members of the IEP/Section 504 team anticipate the need for transportation based on preliminary information and the student attends a charter, contract or options school, the local school district representative/Section 504 Coordinator must alert the Office of Diverse Learner Supports + Services ("ODLSS") District Representative three weeks (15 school days) prior to the IEP/Section 504 meeting and include him/her on the *Notice of Conference*.

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### AT IEP/SECTION 504 MEETING

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2. The IEP/Section 504 team determines the student's need for transportation as a related service using a) the Guidelines to facilitate the discussion and b) the relevant transportation section of the IEP/Section 504 Plan.
3. If the student is determined to need transportation services, the student's parent/guardian must be asked to accept or decline the services by selecting "Yes" or "No" to the question: "Does the parent accept transportation as a related service?"  
**NOTE:** If the student's parent/guardian selects "No", the parent signs the *Parent Non-Acceptance of IEP/Section 504 Services Letter* and the IEP/Section 504 team uploads the letter into SSM.
4. If the parent/guardian accepts transportation services, the IEP/Section 504 team determines whether the student needs any accommodations, services, and/or equipment including:
  - Bus Aide
  - Nurse on Bus
  - Air Conditioning
  - Pick-up/Drop-off Other than Home
  - Presence of Adult at Drop-off Location Not Required
  - Car seat, harness, wheelchair lift or other specialized equipment
  - Other Accommodations or Supports
5. The IEP/Section 504 team indicates the duration for which transportation services are to be provided. The team selects one of the following:
  - Life of the IEP/Section 504 Plan
  - Current school year
  - Next school year
  - On a temporary basis with specific start and end dates and a justification
6. The team determines whether the student should be considered for Travel Training Services.  
**NOTE:** If the team decides the student is at a level where s/he may benefit from Travel Training Services, the parent/guardian is asked to sign the *Travel Training Request and Parental Consent* form. The forms are then uploaded in SSM.

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### POST-IEP/SECTION 504 MEETING

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7. If the student is referred and the parent/guardian provided consent for the Travel Training Services evaluation, the Travel Training Team evaluates the student's need for and ability to benefit from Travel Training Services.



8. If the parent/guardian accepts transportation at the time of the IEP/Section 504 meeting but at a later date decides to transport the student, the parent/guardian must notify the local school district representative/504 Coordinator of the new decision.

**NOTE:** Local school district representative/Section 504 Coordinator must ensure the IEP is revised or a new Section 504 Plan is drafted to reflect the new parent/guardian decision and in accordance with the applicable procedural safeguards.



## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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### SCHOOL MEMBERS OF THE IEP/SECTION 504 TEAM

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*General education teacher(s), special education teacher(s), Related Service Provider(s), local school district representative/Section 504 Coordinator*

- If the student attends a charter, contract or options school, alert the ODLSS District Representative three weeks (15 school days) prior to an IEP/Section 504 meeting that is anticipated to recommend the commitment of transportation services.
- If the student attends a charter, contract or options school, schedule a planning meeting with the ODLSS District Representative prior to the IEP/Section 504 meeting to review available data and other relevant information in preparation for the IEP/Section 504 meeting.
- Participate in the IEP/Section 504 team's determination of the student's need for transportation using the Guidelines to facilitate the discussion.
- Participate in the IEP/Section 504 team's determination of what, if any, additional accommodations, services, or equipment are required.
- Participate in the IEP/Section 504 team's determination of the duration of the transportation services.
- Participate in the IEP/Section 504 team's determination of whether the student should participate in Travel Training Services.

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### SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

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- Review weekly the DQI Transportation Report:
  - If the parent has accepted transportation as a related service, ensure the designated school staff person has entered into SIM the request for transportation.
  - If the parent has declined to accept transportation as a related service, ensure the IEP is revised to reflect this rejection or a new Section 504 Plan is drafted pursuant to the applicable procedural safeguards to reflect parent decline of transportation services.

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### ODLSS DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

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- Attend a preparation meeting with the school members of the charter, contract or options school IEP/Section 504 team members prior to the IEP meeting to review available information.
- If a student is attending a charter, contract or options school, the ODLSS District Representative participate on the IEP team as the District Representative at the meeting unless s/he delegates the role to the local school district representative.
- If the preliminary information does not appear to support a need for transportation services, attend the IEP/Section 504 meeting as the District Representative for the charter, contract or options school and participate in the team's decision-making.



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## **PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S)**

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- Participate in the IEP/Section 504 team's determination of the student's need for transportation using the Guidelines to facilitate the discussion.
- Accept or decline transportation as a related service, if applicable.
- Participate in the IEP/Section 504 team's determination of what, if any, additional accommodations, services, or equipment are required.
- Participate in the IEP/Section 504 team's determination of the duration of the transportation services.
- If the parent/guardian accepts transportation at the time of the IEP meeting, but at a later date decides to transport the student, the parent/guardian must notify the local school district representative to revise the IEP.
- Participate in the IEP/Section 504 team's determination of whether the student should participate in Travel Training Services.
- Provide consent for Travel Training Services, if applicable.



## GUIDELINES

An IEP/Section 504 team may decide that a student with disabilities needs transportation services only if documentation shows that **ONE OR MORE** of the following guiding principles is met:

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### **GUIDELINE 1: STUDENT IN NEIGHBORHOOD (ZONED) SCHOOL OR SCHOOL OF CHOICE**

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Parents/guardians may apply to schools of choice as an alternative to having their children attend the neighborhood school (i.e. zoned school). When the parent/guardian of a student with disability chooses to send his/her child to a school of choice (e.g., magnet school, selective enrollment school, charter school, another school that is not the student's neighborhood school, etc.), it is presumed that the student will not receive transportation as a related service. Distance between the home and school of choice, on its own, is not the basis for FAPE-based transportation unless one of the four guidelines or other special circumstances exist (and are documented) supporting the need of an individual student with a disability, as determined by the IEP/Section 504 team. The student may qualify for non-FAPE-based transportation if provided for in a Board policy for all students who attend the school of choice.

If a student is attending a charter, contract or options school, the ODLSS District Representative **MUST** be part of the IEP team and act as the District representative at the meeting unless he or she delegates the role to the local school district representative.

A student who attends his/her neighborhood school or school of choice, who has a disability that prevents him/her travelling to school in a manner comparable to same-aged peers without disabilities is eligible for CPS-provided transportation when **AT LEAST ONE** of the following guiding principles are discussed and documented:

- A. **The student has a physical or orthopedic condition** and, as documented on the IEP/Section 504 Plan:
- Uses a wheel chair to ambulate;
  - Uses a walker to ambulate;
  - Wears orthotics and is unable to walk the distance from home to school; or
  - Has displayed significant limitations with endurance due to the physical or orthopedic condition when transitioning, when moving throughout the school building, or when participating in P.E. or recess.
- B. **The student has a chronic or persistent medical condition** and, as documented on the IEP/Section 504 Plan:
- Requires monitoring by a nurse;
  - Requires monitoring by a delegated care aide or other adult other than a nurse;
  - Relies on specialized medical equipment (e.g. oxygen tank, tracheotomy tube, catheter, etc.) that is not readily transportable in a non-adapted or standard vehicle;
  - Requires limited exposure to environmental elements (e.g. extreme temperatures, extreme pollen levels, extended exposure to sun); or
  - Is otherwise unable to walk the distance from home to school.
- C. **The student demonstrates a pattern of behavior that is dangerous to the student or others while traveling to and from school, and requires constant adult supervision, as documented on the IEP/Section 504 Plan.**



D. **The student has an intellectual, sensory, communication, hearing, vision, or other condition** and, as documented on the IEP/Section 504 Plan:

- Is unable to assess risk or advocate for his/her personal safety;
- Lacks the ability to navigate an established route to and from school;
- Reacts to unwanted stimuli or attention from others in a manner that is dangerous; or
- Lacks the ability to travel to school without getting lost or avoiding dangerous traffic situations.

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### **GUIDELINE 2: ODLSS-ASSIGNED SCHOOL**

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A student who attends an ODLSS-assigned school is presumed to qualify for transportation services when:

**ODLSS personnel assign a student to a school that the student would not otherwise have attended based on one or more of the following specialized programs and/or reasons:**

- Significantly modified curriculum with intensive supports;
- Oral/aural program or total communication program for students who are deaf/hard of hearing;
- Program for students with visual impairments;
- Preschool Inclusive Program (known as Blended);
- Preschool Program with Intensive Support (known as Early Childhood Special Education);
- Multi-sensory program;
- Separate day school; and/or
- Accessible school.

**NOTE:** If the assigned school is located closer to the student's home than his/her zoned school, the IEP/Section 504 team should revisit the student's need for transportation under Guidelines 1 or 4.

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### **GUIDELINE 3: STUDENTS SIX YEARS OF AGE OR YOUNGER**

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The nature of the student's disability prevents the student from traveling to and from school in a manner comparable to similarly aged students without disabilities. Students age six or younger generally do not have the developmental capacity to travel to school safely without a parent/guardian or caregiver. It is expected that students with disabilities in this age group will travel to and from school with their parents/guardians or caregivers unless the IEP/Section 504 team determines otherwise based on Guidelines 1, 2 or 4.

**NOTE:** If a preschool student with disabilities requires transportation as a related service and the parent/guardian request pick-up/drop-off at or to another location, such as to a community-based Head Start program, child care or park district program, CPS – Student Transportation Services Department has three different forms to request a change in pick-up/drop-off location and to facilitate the route.

If the student requires a different pick-up/drop-off location in order to receive a FAPE in a non-CPS location, such as a Head Start site, this decision must be supported and documented in the IEP as a special accommodation, the location must be identified in the IEP and a separate form (“Purple Form”) must be completed.



If the student does not require a different pick-up/drop-off location in order to receive a FAPE but the parent would like CPS to provide transportation to the program, the parent and school can complete the *CPS Child Day Care Bus Stop Change Request for Student with Disabilities* form (“Blue Form”)<sup>1</sup> or the *CPS Park Kids Program Request* form (“Green Form”). The criteria for “Blue Form” and “Green Form” eligibility are found within the respective forms. The “Blue Form” and “Green Form” should be completed outside of the IEP team meeting process.

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#### **GUIDELINE 4: SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

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The student has a special circumstance that is documented and requires transportation services.

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#### **ACCEPT/DECLINE OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

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When a student is determined to need transportation services, the parent/guardian must decide whether to accept or decline the services. The parent/guardian’s decision of whether to accept or decline transportation services must be reflected on both the IEP/Section 504 Plan and the *Parent Non-Acceptance of IEP/Section 504 Services Letter*. If the parent/guardian provides notice (oral or written) to the local school district representative after the IEP/Section 504 meeting that he/she has changed his/her mind regarding accepting or declining transportation services, the IEP must be revised to reflect the parent/guardian’s new decision following the procedural safeguards for IEP revision meetings. If the student has a Section 504 Plan, a new Section 504 Plan must be developed following the Section 504 procedural safeguards.

If the parent/guardian accepts transportation services, the IEP/Section 504 team then determines whether the student needs any accommodations (e.g., bus aide, nurse, air conditioning, pick-up/drop-off other than home, presence of adult at drop-off location not required, car seat, harness, wheelchair lift or other specialized equipment, or other accommodations or supports) while traveling on the bus. The IEP/Section 504 team must also decide whether the student needs transportation as a related service for the life of the IEP/Section 504 Plan, only this school year, only the next school year, or on a temporary basis with specific start and end dates and a justification.

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<sup>1</sup>The “Blue Form” (Day/Child Care Bus Stop Change Request) and “Green Form” (Chicago Park District – Park Kids Program Request) may also be used for students with disabilities in grades kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup>.



The following requirements apply to the IEP/Section 504 team's determination that one or more of the below services, accommodations or specialized equipment is required for the student to travel safely to and from school.

Identified Need	Personnel Required at IEP/504 Meeting	Action to be Taken
Bus Aide	IEP Team	Document the information supporting need for bus aide, such as the student:: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a wheelchair or walker to ambulate;</li> <li>• Has a documented medical condition that requires constant monitoring by a delegated care aide or another adult other than a nurse;</li> <li>• Has demonstrated a pattern of behavior that is considered dangerous to self or others while traveling to and from school and requires adult supervision;</li> <li>• Requires a car seat, harness, use of a wheelchair lift; or</li> <li>• Travels with oxygen as required by a doctor's order.</li> </ul>
Nurse on the Bus	CPS nurse	Participate and review documentation of the student's medical need.
Air Conditioning	CPS nurse	Participate and review documentation of the student's medical need.
Pick-Up/Drop-Off Location Other than Home For FAPE-Based Reasons	ODLSS District Representative MUST act as the District representative	Participate and review documentation of the student's need for this arrangement. <sup>2</sup>
Presence of Adult at Drop-Off Location Not Required <sup>3</sup>	Parent/guardian	Document in writing the preference for a student who is in the 6th grade or higher.
	IEP Team	Approve documentation showing that, in light of factors such as the student's age and his/her disability, the student has demonstrated the necessary maturity and ability to be dropped off without a receiving adult.
Other (Medical)	CPS nurse	Review the documented basis of student need and note agreement with recommendation of other team members.

<sup>2</sup> Parent/guardian convenience is never a justification for the IEP team to customize a student's pick-up/drop-off location.

<sup>3</sup> When a student receives IEP/Section 504 required transportation services, the student's parents/guardians are expected to meet the bus at the curb for pick-up/drop-off.



## Transportation Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. If a parent cannot transport his/her child to school because of personal circumstances, should the IEP/Section 504 team include transportation as a related services in the student's IEP/Section 504 Plan?**

No; parents' ability or availability to provide transportation for their child is not a basis for transportation as a related service. If the IEP/Section 504 team determines that the student does not need transportation as a related service, it is the responsibility of the parent to transport or arrange transportation for their child.

- 2. Why might a student who previously received transportation as a related service no longer receive the same service at a later date?**

The need for related services, including transportation, is determined on a yearly basis based on a student's individual needs and continued development as well as current information, which is reviewed at least annually during the student's IEP or Section 504 meeting.

- 3. A student has the same disability as his/her sibling or another student, why might one receive transportation as a related service and not the other?**

All IEP/Section 504 related service decisions, including transportation, are made based on individual student needs.

- 4. If a student returns to his/her neighborhood school or school of choice after previously attending an ODLSS-assigned school, should the neighborhood school or school of choice IEP/Section 504 team revise the student's IEP or draft a new Section 504 Plan to remove transportation or wait until the student's annual review?**

A meeting should be scheduled upon enrollment in the neighborhood school or school of choice to determine whether the student's need for transportation as a related service is impacted by the change in school location. The student may or may not continue to need transportation. The IEP/Section 504 team should use the Guidelines to facilitate this discussion.

- 5. If a student receives transportation as a related service and moves to a new address, will he/she still receive transportation?**

The student will continue to receive transportation at least until his/her next IEP or Section 504 meeting, when the need for transportation as a related service will be reviewed.

- 6. May a student under 6 years old receive transportation as a related service?**

Students age six or younger generally do not have the developmental capacity to travel to school safely without a parent or caregiver. Therefore, it is expected that students with disabilities in this age group will travel to and from school with their parents or caregivers unless a student's disability-based needs are such that he/she needs transportation as a related service. However, if a student's IEP calls for placement in Preschool Inclusive Program (i.e., blended program) or a Preschool Program with Intensive Support, he/she will receive transportation as a related service if needed to access the program.



**7. Do students who attend both an approved community-based Head Start program or daycare program and a CPS Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program automatically receive transportation as a related service?**

No; attendance in a Head Start program does not mean that a student needs transportation as a related service. The student's need for transportation services is determined by the IEP/Section 504 team as outlined in these Procedures and Guidelines.

**8. If a student is eligible for transportation as a related service and attends a child care program or community-based Head Start program can the student be transported to those programs rather than from and to the home?**

If a student with a disability requires transportation from or to another location in order to receive a FAPE, such as to a community-based Head Start program, this decision must be supported and documented in the IEP as a special accommodation. The location must be identified and a separate form ("Purple Form") must be completed so that the transportation route can be facilitated by the CPS – Student Transportation Services Department. If the student does not require this special accommodation in order to receive a FAPE but the parent would like CPS to provide transportation to the program, the parent and school can complete the *CPS Child Day Care Bus Stop Change Request for Student with Disabilities* form ("Blue Form"). The criteria for "Blue Form" eligibility is found within that form.

**9. How is student eligibility for ODLSS's Travel Training Services determined?**

High school students who receive transportation as a related service may be referred for Travel Training Services by the team. The ODLSS Travel Training Team conducts an evaluation with parent consent and then the team determines eligibility on a case-by-case basis.

**10. If a parent requests an unattended drop-off location after school, but the IEP/Section 504 team feels that the student is not sufficiently mature or able to be left without supervision due to his/her age or disability, what data and/or other information is needed to make this determination?**

All students receiving transportation as a related service are required to have an adult present to receive the student. If there is written consent from the parent or guardian, students who are in 6th grade or older can be released without an adult present. However, an IEP/Section 504 team must first determine that the student has the maturity level and ability to be dropped off without adult supervision by considering evaluative data of the student's social/emotional, adaptive/independent functioning, and other relevant skills in light of his/her age and disability.

**11. May a sibling of a student with disabilities who receives transportation as a related service ride the bus?**

Parents/guardians may use the *Sibling Transportation Request* form to request transportation for their children who are either not disabled or who do not receive transportation as a related services and attend the same school as a sibling who receives transportation as a related service. This option is only available for students in grades K-8. The *Sibling Transportation Request* process is not an IEP/Section 504 process and MUST NOT be included in the IEP/Section 504 Plan of the sibling who does not receive transportation as a related service.



**12. May students who receive transportation as a related service be dropped off at a Park District location after school?**

Typically, transportation as a related service is offered curb-to-curb, (home-to-school and school-to-home). If the student is participating in a Chicago Park District program after school, the parent may consider completing an application for *Park Kids Program Request* ("Green Form"), available through the Student Transportation Department. All applications are subject to approval from the Student Transportation Department.

**13. If a student with disabilities is temporarily displaced from home (homeless) can the student receive transportation?**

The student's homeless status is not a basis for receiving transportation as a related service on an IEP/Section 504 Plan. The IEP/Section 504 team must follow these Procedures and Guidelines to determine whether there is a disability-based need for transportation services. If not, the school's Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) clerk/liaison should determine whether the student qualifies for STLS transportation outside of the IEP/Section 504 process.