

TRANSPORATION POLICIES

A. TRANSPORATION SERVICES

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A. General

Efforts are put forth to ensure that a lack of transportation is not a barrier to attending Head Start. Prospective families receive information regarding the types of transportation services and assistance offered by the program.

Transportation Service Area

Specifics of the transportation service area are determined on an annual basis and are based on such factors numbers of children enrolled from each community or geographic area. Center directors and bus drivers work together in developing annual bus routes and determining necessary changes to the routes throughout the year. Staff work individually with families in addressing transportation services when the family is not within the determined transporting area.

Safety Equipment

Each vehicle transporting children is equipped with the following:

- A communication system to call for assistance in case of an emergency
- A charged fire extinguisher mounted near the drivers seat and a sign indicating it's location
- A first aid kit and a sign indicating it's location
- A seat belt cutter for use in emergency evacuation and a sign indicating it's location
- A reverse beeper
- No auxiliary seating, such as temporary or folding seats are used
- A lock box for storage of medication

Accidents

All accidents must be reported in accordance with Illinois Secretary of State and Southern Illinois University requirements.

Pick up and Release of Children

Children are to be picked up and dropped off at the locations listed on their Emergency Data form and released to only parents/guardians or those individuals that parents/guardians have listed on the Emergency Data form. When the parent /guardian or designated adult is not home or at the approved drop off location, the child will not be released from the bus. Written notification from parents/guardians is required to change pick-up/drop-off locations. Unless written notification is provided there can be no change in these locations. No changes in pick-up/drop-off locations will be made based on a phone request. Up to date transportation lists and attendance sheets are maintained to ensure all children are accounted.

B. Child Restraint Systems

Each vehicle used to transport children is equipped with height and weight appropriate child safety restraint systems. Buses are equipped with an approved harness system and car seats are available for use on other agency vehicles. Children will be placed in the appropriate child restraint any time they are transported by SIUC Head Start.

C. Required Use of School Bus or Alternative Allowable Vehicle

Children can only be transported to and from centers on regularly scheduled daily routes in school buses. An alternative allowable vehicle is available to use for non-routine transportation.

Purchasing of busses is coordinated with the SIUC Purchasing Department and Travel Service, in compliance with federal and state standards.

D. Maintenance

Annual state safety inspections are completed semi - annually on all vehicles and preventative maintenance is conducted per a set schedule. In addition, drivers complete a daily pre-trip inspection prior to the first route of the day and report any needed repairs.

E. Inspection of New Vehicles 3

SIUC procurement policies ensure bid announcements for busses and alternative allowable vehicles include correct specifications and reason for use. Vehicles are examined to determine if they are equipped in accordance with bid specifications and to ensure manufacturer's certificate is included.

F. Operation of Vehicles

Authorized Use of Vehicles -- Agency vehicles are to be used strictly for business and are not to be used for personal use under any circumstances. Compliance with local, state, and federal laws, policies and procedures must be observed. Vehicles are used for the transportation of parents, children and staff that are associated with the daily operations of the program. Only Head Start staff, children, parents, and volunteers may ride in an agency vehicle.

Agency vehicles (vans, buses) are to be parked at their respective center or central office.

Agency vehicles should be refueled before the gas gauge reaches the one-quarter mark.

Bus windows should not be lowered past the indicated line.

No smoking, food, or drink is allowed in agency vehicles.

All personal items brought by children must fit in and be transported in the child's backpack. Rolling backpacks are not allowed.

Bus aisles, doors, and emergency exits must remain unobstructed. Backpacks are to be stored under the seat.

Children, monitors, and any other adults on board must be seated and properly restrained when the bus is in motion. The only exception is when a bus monitor is assisting children.

As per Illinois law (Public Act 92-0730) cell phones can not be used while the school bus is in operation. Cell phone use is only allowed in the case of a major emergency.

G. Driver Qualifications

Bus drivers must have a current and valid Illinois CDL driver's license, an Illinois school bus driver permit, and a physical examination, which includes a drug and initial TB test. State of Illinois requirements and regulations are followed in regard to revoked or suspended licenses. Procedures are in place for interviewing, securing background checks, and current driving record. Individuals not meeting the above requirements are rejected.

H. Driver and Monitor Training

Bus drivers and monitors participate in training and development on a regular basis to ensure state and federal training regulations are met. Drivers attend a refresher course annually presented by the Illinois Secretary of State. The refresher course is a requirement of annual bus permit renewal. Drivers also receive certification in CPR and First Aid.

Road performance observations are completed annually by supervisors and incorporated into the annual performance evaluation.

I. Trip Routing

Routes are determined by bus drivers and approved by center directors to ensure routes have been established that follow safety federal and state safety regulations. Procedures are in place for use of alternate routes in the case of hazardous conditions.

Routes must be set up to limit each child's route to one hour or less whenever possible and to ensure that children are picked up curbside with the exception of one way streets.

Drivers must limit their wait at each house to one (1) minute.

Routes must not exceed maximum capacity of each bus.

Parents/guardians or designated adults are responsible for escorting their children to and from the bus.

Routes must be developed to minimize the need to back up or make U turns and stops must be located to minimize traffic disruptions as much as is possible.

J. Safety Education

Parents/guardians must be provided training on transportation and pedestrian training during parent orientation to work in partnership with drivers and monitors to assure the safe transport of their children.

Teachers must receive training on providing children instruction on transportation and pedestrian training and ensure such training is developmentally appropriate and is provided to children within the first 30 days of the program year with additional safety activities provided throughout the year.

Bus evacuation drills must be conducted within the first 30 days of attendance (generally in September), in January, and April.

K. Children with Disabilities

SIUC Head Start is committed to upholding the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ensuring that no person, adult or child shall solely because of his/her special need/disability be excluded from participation. The agency has a bus equipped/designed for transportation of children with disabilities and is made available to whichever center has the need based on the child's IEP or medical referral.

L. Coordinated Transportation

SIUC Head Start must identify the cost of providing direct versus contractual services and explore the options of participating in coordinated public/private transportation systems, if available. Other human service agencies providing transportation services must be identified.