

# **Parent Handbook**

## **Monroe County Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education Transportation**



Revised July 2023

## **PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **Transporter**

Bus Company: **Ontario Bus Inc.**

Phone Number: (585) 993-4252

Email: [MCmailbox@ontariobus.us](mailto:MCmailbox@ontariobus.us)

No-Reply Text Line: For cancellations only. (585) 981-1196

\*See Page 5 for more info\*

Driver: \_\_\_\_\_ Route #(s): \_\_\_\_\_

### **Early Intervention Group or Preschool Program**

My child attends: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Program/School Transportation Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **Monroe County Department of Public Health Early Childhood Development Program**

Transportation Liaison: Karen Bechtold (585) 690-2210  
karenbechtold@monroecounty.gov

### **Notes**

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## INTRODUCTION

This parent's handbook is developed to provide information concerning bus transportation for your child within the Early Intervention and Preschool Programs. This book also contains important information regarding policies and procedures and important contact information. Please read through this handbook now and save it for future reference. This will help ensure your child's transportation experience is successful.



If you prefer to drive your child to and from program/school, parent reimbursement is available. This arrangement requires that parent transportation be written on your child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Please contact your Early Intervention Service Coordinator or Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) Chairperson for details.



### Steps in the process

1. The need for transportation services is discussed at your child's IFSP or IEP meeting.
2. If it is determined that transportation company services are needed, this must be documented on your child's IFSP or IEP. Monroe County may contract with one or more transportation companies to provide transportation services for all children.
3. Your child's program provider is responsible for completing a **Transportation Request Form (TRF)**. It is critical to provide the most up to date and accurate information. Make sure you inform your child's program/school of any changes in contact information so the provider can update the **Transportation Request Form**. These include **current address, phone numbers, and emergency contact information**. Please make sure to list any and all adults that you would like to be authorized to receive your child when dropped off from program. All adults should be prepared to show identification. This is for the safety and protection of your child.
4. Your child's program provider sends the **Transportation Request Form** to the transportation company.
5. The transportation company routes the children and notifies the parent of pick up and drop off times. *These times are subject to change.*
6. Please be aware that it may take the transporter **up to five business days** to make a change in pick up or drop off location or a change in times and days of the week for program/school. *School vacation days do not count as business days.*

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Monroe County Department of Public Health is committed to assuring that your child receives safe and efficient transportation that gets your child to program on time. To achieve this, it is important to have positive communication and cooperation among parents, program providers, the transportation company and the County. Please work with your program/school and transporter to resolve issues/concerns. **Good communication is key to good problem solving!** The following section outlines the primary responsibilities of those involved.

### **General Parent Responsibilities**

**To cancel - 90 minutes before pick up time**

**Call: (585) 993-4252**

**No-reply text line -cancellations only: (585) 981-1196**

#### **1. Every Day Matters! For Absences**

Call **(585)993-4252**; Text **(585)981-1196 (absences only)**;  
Email **MCmailbox@ontariobus.us**



- If your child is sick or not attending school for any reason at least 90 minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time.
- If texting/emailing absences: program child's full name, program name, bus route #, dates to be absent, and date to re-start bussing
- Please make every effort to have your child attend program/school every day they are scheduled to attend. Follow your program's/school's guidance regarding student illness.
- If your child becomes ill after being transported to program and the service provider feels the child should be sent home, the parent is responsible for making sure the child is picked up from program.

#### **2. Prior to the bus's arrival**

- Please ensure that you are able to be contacted by the transportation company; provide enough space in your voicemail to leave messages and add Ontario Bus as a contact in cell phones. This is to ensure you will recognize the number when they are attempting to reach you concerning your child.
- Label your child's belongings with his or her name, phone number/address and program/school.
- Items from home should be stored in the backpack, which will be stowed under the child's seat. No electronic or hard toys may be held by the child during the ride. Food and drink are not permitted to be consumed on the bus.
- If your child requires a wheelchair or a walker, the parent must provide it. If you need assistance, please contact your EI Service Coordinator or CPSE Chairperson.
- Any changes needed in your child's transportation equipment, schedule or route should be sent to the Program who will then follow up with the bus company and, if necessary, your child's IFSP or CPSE team.

#### **3. Parent Responsibilities at Pick-up time**

- Transportation is Curb to Curb. You or the caregiver **must accompany the child to the transport vehicle**. Note: If your child will be picked up and/or dropped off at child care, please confirm with your child care provider that they

must bring the child out to the curb at pick up time and come out to receive the child off the bus at drop-off time.

- Please make sure you have your child **ready** for pick up **10 minutes prior** to the scheduled arrival time and be **outside waiting and watching** for the arrival of the vehicle. The driver can only wait **3 minutes** beyond the pickup time. This will help to ensure your child and the others make it to program on time.
- Your driver is **not** allowed to honk the horn. Be aware that buses can be delayed due to traffic, weather and other circumstances.
- Please wait an additional 10 minutes beyond the scheduled pick up time before contacting the transporter if the bus has not arrived.
- To help ensure successful communication between your family and the transportation staff, please consider sharing any information with the driver and/or monitor that would be helpful for them in working with your child.

***Please greet the driver and be courteous to the driver. Good communication between all parties is essential to successful transportation.***

#### **4. Parent Responsibilities at Drop-off**

- Be HOME and prepared to receive your child 10 minutes after dismissal time. Be OUTSIDE waiting and watching for the bus 10 minutes prior to the scheduled drop off time. Meet the bus at the end of the driveway or curb.
- The authorized adult that will be receiving your child must be prepared to show ID, including child care staff. This is for the safety of your child.
- If there is an emergency and you cannot meet the vehicle at the drop off location, you must contact someone listed as your emergency contact to meet the bus. If you are unable to arrange for the emergency contact person to meet the bus, you must notify the bus company **(585) 993-4252** and your program at least one hour prior to drop off time to discuss the situation.

If no one is home to receive your child, and the transporter is unable to reach you or an emergency contact, this is considered a “**lock out**”. In this circumstance, the transporter will reach out to the program and the county for assistance. If no one is able to contact a parent or authorized adult to receive the child, the transporter may need to contact CPS and law enforcement.

#### **5. Parent Responsibilities for Seating Equipment (if applicable)**

- If your child is in need of a safety vest, this will be provided to you by the bus company if indicated on your child’s IEP.
- The vest is to be worn from your home to the bus, and the bus to home daily. You are responsible for maintenance and proper cleanliness of the vest.
- Ontario Bus will provide this vest for use. In the event of loss or irreparable damage to the vest, you will be responsible for the cost of a replacement.

## **TRANSPORTER RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. The transporter must comply with all NYS Department of Education, NYS Department of Health, NYS Department of Transportation and Monroe County rules, regulations and requirements regarding transportation, pupil transportation and transportation of pupils attending Preschool Center Based programs and Early Intervention groups.
2. Transporters are **not allowed to feed** your child.
3. Transportation personnel may not smoke on the transportation vehicle at any time whether or not children are on board. They must follow the policies of all programs with regard to smoking on school grounds.
4. Prior to the first day of service the transporter will deliver notification as to the pickup time and drop off time. Drivers will make stops to each home during dry runs to deliver this information as well as other important information you will need to know. Notification will be provided regarding any changes in your child's pick up and drop of times via phone after you have received the busing information.
5. The driver or monitor is responsible for safely securing your child in a seat prior to the operation of the vehicle. Transportation staff are trained to buckle or fasten your child in the proper seat. If staff cannot secure your child for any reason, please be aware that you may have to receive your child off the bus. Parents and caregivers are not allowed to board the bus for safety and liability purposes.
6. Transporters will transport the children in the shortest time possible. No scheduled one way trip should be longer than 75 minutes or 50 miles, unless prior written approval has been given by the county.
7. The transporter will notify the parent/caregiver and program when a vehicle is running 15 minutes late, except in the case of poor weather conditions.
8. The transporter is required to implement requested changes in pick up/ drop off days and locations and accommodate program schedule changes within 5 business days from receipt of written notification (Transportation Request Form) submitted by the program/school. *School vacation days do not count as business days.*
9. If your child needs to be transported in a wheel chair, the program and transporter will arrange for a vehicle that has the necessary wheelchair restraints on the vehicle.

## **WEATHER/SNOW EMERGENCIES**

No transportation will be provided when your program/school and/or transporter are closed due to weather, dangerous road conditions, natural catastrophe or malfunction in the facility operations. If the school district where your child lives is closed, transportation will not be provided.

## **PROGRAM/SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Your child's program/school is responsible for submitting the **Transportation Request Form** and documentation of the transportation services authorized on the IFSP or IEP to the transporter.
2. The program/school must notify the transporter in writing of any schedule changes or changes in pick-up or drop-off by updating the Transportation Request Form.
3. The program/school will work with the driver and family to address any special situations to support children's communication and behavior needs.
4. The program/school must be prepared to accept children at expected start time and have children ready to board bus at designated dismissal time.
5. The program/school must obtain or assist parents in completing a **Transportation Special Care Plan** when needed. The purpose of the Transportation Special Care Plan is to indicate additional information to which the driver/monitor may need to be aware of (e.g. allergies, seizure disorder, communication/behavioral needs, etc...)
6. If a 1:1 aide or attendant is required for a child, the program must obtain approval from the County. A Transportation Special Care Plan is required when requesting an Attendant or 1:1 Aide.



## **SAFE SEATING EQUIPMENT**

New York State Law requires that all children under the age of eight be in an appropriate *child safety restraint system* while riding in a motor vehicle. An appropriate safety restraint system is one that correctly matches the child's size and weight to the specifications of the manufacturer's system.

**Please note:** The transporter will provide a Pro Tech IV on school buses *unless* the child's size, weight, or developmental status indicate the need for alternate seating, such as car seat, and this is documented on the IFSP or IEP.

A Pro Tech IV is provided on school buses for all children - unless the child's size, weight and/or developmental status indicate the need for alternate seating and this is documented on the IFSP or IEP.

**Pro Tech IV\***



**Car Seat \***



**Safety Vest/Harness\***



\*These are sample pictures and are not necessarily the exact model of seat that may be used in the vehicle.

Some children may need a special safety vest/harness to assist with staying seated. This will be provided by the bus company if indicated on your child's IEP. See page 6 for vest replacement policy.



If your child requires a wheelchair or a walker, you must provide it. The program and transporter will arrange for a vehicle that has the necessary wheelchair restraints and/or ensure for safe storage of walker during transport.

## **MEDICAL ISSUES AND OTHER CONCERNS**

Any medical information or other important information that might affect the safe transportation of your child must be documented. Your program/school provider will work with you to complete the **Transportation Special Care Plan** and obtain your permission to share this information with the transporter. Be sure to inform the program of any allergies, medical conditions, or communication/behavioral needs that may require immediate attention or that would be required to ensure safe and secure transportation for your child.

## **INCIDENTS/ACCIDENTS**

In the event of any accident or medical emergency, the transporter will notify you, the program, and the County immediately. The transporter is also required to call 911 if an accident or medical emergency occurs with children on board.

## **PROBLEM SOLVING & COMMUNICATION**

If you have a concern or problem with your child's transportation, please refer to the following procedure:

- Call the transporter at **(585) 993-4252** and explain your concern. The transporter will respond to you within 24 hours to work on a resolution to your concern.
- If you are unable to resolve your concern with the transporter, contact your child's program/school.
- If there are issues that have been unable to be resolved, contact the Monroe County Early Childhood Development Transportation Liaison at 585-690-2210 for additional assistance.
- The Monroe County Early Childhood Development Transportation Liaison will contact the transporter within 24 hours to assist with a resolution to the concern/problem.
- Good communication between all parties is essential to successful transportation.

## DEFINITIONS

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1-to-1 Aide                   | This aide is assigned to support only one child. A 1-to-1 aide must be authorized on the child's IEP/IFSP and approved by the County.  |
| Attendant                     | A Bus attendant is a support person who is authorized on a child's IEP/IFSP and approved by the County. They can be shared with other children having similar authorization on the bus.  |
| Child                         | An eligible child enrolled in either the Early Intervention (EI) or the Preschool Special Education programs (PSE)   |
| Child Care Location           | A place where care is provided on a regular basis for less than twenty-four (24) hours a day and includes, but is not limited to, a variety of child care services such as day care centers, family-day care homes and care-in homes of persons other than parents. May be referred to as Drop Off Location or Pick-Up Location. |
| Child Safety Restraint System | Any device (except a passenger system lap seat belt or lap/shoulder seat belt), designed for use in a motor vehicle to restrain, seat, or position a child.  |
| County                        | Refers to Monroe County, a municipal corporation of the State of New York.   |
| CPSE                          | Committee on Preschool Special Education: The committee that authorizes Preschool Special Education services, including transportation, for children ages 3-5. Part of the school district.  |
| Driver                        | The operator of a Contractor's vehicle used to transport EI or Preschool Special Education children.   |
| EI                            | Early Intervention Program, ages birth to 3  |
| IEP                           | The Individual Education Plan approved for a Preschool Special Education child by the Local School District pursuant to the New York State Education Law, Section 4410   |
| IFSP                          | The Individualized Family Services Plan approved for an EI Child by the County Early Intervention Official Designate (EIOD) pursuant to Section 2545 of the Public Health Law.   |
| Monitor                       | A Monitor's duties include assisting the driver with the loading/unloading process, proper seating and securing of children, and monitoring of student behavior. Any vehicle carrying four or more children with special needs must have a monitor in accordance with the transporter's contract with Monroe County.             |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Preschool Special Education Program (PSE)          | Program that provides services for children with disabilities ages 3 to 5. Preschool services are arranged through the school district in which the child lives.   |
| Route  | A predetermined course traveled for the transportation of children with special needs to/from a program or group activity at one or several service sites as approved by the County.   |
| Service Coordinator                                | An individual designated by the County who assists the family in attaining evaluations and services and provides ongoing monitoring of the services plan within the Early Intervention Program.  |
| Service Provider                                   | Refers to a contract agency or individual providing services   |
| Service Site                                       | The location to which a child is transported for the purpose of receiving authorized EI or Preschool Special Education services.   |
| Early Childhood Development Transportation Liaison | The individual designated by the County to oversee the EI and Preschool Special Education program transportation services and contract.  |
| Transportation Request Form "TRF"                  | Form completed by the child's EI or Preschool Program and sent to the Transportation company before transportation can begin. This form must be updated whenever there is a change.  |
| Transporter  | A company ("vendor") to whom a transportation contract is awarded for the transportation of Monroe County Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education Children.   |
| Transportation Special Care Plan                   | A form completed by the program indicating any additional alerts to which the driver may need to be made aware. (e.g.: allergy to bee stings, seizure disorder requiring medical intervention, communication/behavioral needs, etc...) |