



Early Childhood and Transportation

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1) Are districts required to provide transportation for regular education prekindergarten students?

No. Districts may provide transportation to prekindergarten regular education students but are not required to do so. A district that elects to transport regular education prekindergarten students may claim reimbursement if the student(s) ride on a regular route with other kindergarten through Grade 12 students. Prekindergarten regular education students who are transported on an exclusive prekindergarten route are considered non-reimbursable for claim purposes. Statutory Citation: 105 ILCS 5/29-5 Administrative Rule: 23 Ill Admin Code, Section 120.30(a)

- 2) If a district has a Preschool for All or Preschool for All Expansion program, can transportation be funded from this grant?

Neither grant requires that such transportation be provided, but grantees have the option to provide it for students attending these programs.

- 3) Are districts required to provide door-to-door transportation for prekindergarten or elementary students?

No, unless it is required per the Individualized Education Program (IEP) of a student with disabilities. Parents/guardians are responsible to see that the child is at the scheduled bus stop in time to board the school bus to go to school and be at the bus stop upon the child's return at the end of the school day.

- 4) Are districts required to provide transportation for students with disabilities?

All students with disabilities ages 3-21 with an IEP who require transportation as a necessary related service shall be provided as the child's disability or the program location may require.

- Arrival and departure times shall ensure a full instructional day that is comparable to that of the regular education students. Any deviation from this standard must be based upon the individual needs of the child and reflected in the child's IEP.
- Every effort should be made to limit the child's total travel time to not more than one hour each way to and from the special education facility.
- The special transportation shall be scheduled in such a way that the child's health and ability to relate to the educational experience are not adversely affected.
- Vehicles utilized for special transportation shall be adapted to the specific needs of the children receiving this service.



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- Personnel responsible for special transportation shall be given training that will enable them to understand and appropriately relate to children with disabilities.
- A district that has placed students in a state-operated or nonpublic day program shall provide transportation for the children in that program.

Statutory Citation: 105 ILCS 5/14-1.02 and 14-13.01(b) Administrative Rule: 23 Ill Admin Code, Section 226.750(b)

5) What are district's responsibilities regarding transportation of homeless students?

Homeless students include, but are not limited to, children or youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (commonly referred to as being "doubled up"); are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; are awaiting foster care placement; are staying in public or private places not ordinarily used as sleeping accommodations; are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; or are otherwise not residing in a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. There is no specific time limit on how long a child or youth can be considered homeless. Whether a child or youth meets the definition of homeless depends on the living situation and the individual circumstances.

School districts must ensure that transportation is provided for a homeless child or youth who chooses to continue enrollment in his or her school of origin. The transportation of a homeless child or youth who continues to live in the area served by the LEA where the school of origin is located to and from the school of origin shall be provided or arranged by the LEA where the school of origin is located. If the homeless child's or youth's living arrangements in the area served by Return to top 5 the LEA of origin terminate, and the child or youth, though continuing his or her education in the school of origin, begins living in an area served by another LEA, the LEA of origin and the LEA in which the homeless child or youth is living shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the LEAs are unable to agree upon such method, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally. Parents/guardians shall make a good-faith effort in either scenario to provide or arrange for transportation to the school of origin, including authorizing relatives, friends, or a program for homeless persons to provide the child with transportation; however, it is ultimately the school districts' responsibility to ensure that appropriate transportation is provided and in no event shall appropriate transportation not be provided to a homeless student on any given school day. This is recorded under Regular transportation on the claim, unless the homeless student is a special education student with an IEP.

Questions taken from the "[Pupil Transportation FAQ](#)" and "[Special Education Transportation](#)" document.

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Statutory Citation: 105 ILCS 45/1-1

For additional details on claiming transportation for homeless or foster students, please see:
<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/pupil-transp-faq.pdf>.

- 6) Are districts required to provide transportation outside of their district boundaries?

Districts are not required to provide transportation outside of their boundaries for regular education students. However, students with disabilities must be transported per their IEP. A district may contract with another district to provide transportation for students of that district to and from the activities sponsored by any public school in that district during times when buses or other vehicles used in such transportation are not needed for transporting students of the district so providing that transportation. The district providing transportation shall charge an amount not less than the cost of furnishing that transportation, including a reasonable allowance for depreciation on each vehicle used.

Statutory Citation: 105 ILCS 5/29-3.3

- 7) How do I account for pre-K students who ride one way on a regular route and one way on an exclusive pre-K route?

Regular education pre-K students are to be counted in Line 3a on the pupil transportation claim for pupil head count. They would not be counted as part of the pupil head count when they ride home on an exclusive pre-K route. However, the miles for this exclusive pre-K route would be considered non-reimbursable.

- 8) Is all pre-K transportation considered non-reimbursable?

No, general education pre-K students transportation is not reimbursable. Special education pre-K student transportation is reimbursable if special transportation is listed in the IEP. If there is a combination of both general education and special education preschool-aged students on a route, the miles would be prorated to calculate special education student reimbursement based on the ratio of regular education pre-K students to special education pre-K students.

- 9) Is transportation required as a part of the IEP?

The mandate for a free appropriate public education requires that related services be provided when they are determined to be necessary to help a child with a disability benefit from special education. Transportation as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act includes:

- Travel to and from school and between schools;
- Travel in and around school buildings; and

Questions taken from the "[Pupil Transportation FAQ](#)" and "[Special Education Transportation](#)" document.

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- Specialized equipment (such as special or adaptive buses, lifts, and ramps), if required to provide special transportation for a child with a disability.

10) When is a Local Education Agency (LEA) obligated to provide transportation for a preschool child with a disability between private day care and the child's preschool?

If the IEP team determines that transportation is required to help a preschool child benefit from special education -- and includes transportation as a related service on the child's IEP -- the LEA would be responsible for providing the transportation to and from the setting where the special education and related services are provided

34 CFR §300.34(a) and (c)(16)

11) Are Head Start programs required to provide special services for 3-through 5-year-old children with disabilities?

Head Start programs are required to provide special services for 3- through 5-year-old children with disabilities. They are required to have a "disabilities coordinator" who is responsible for developing a disabilities service plan that provides for the special needs of children with disabilities and their parents. This plan must specify those services to be provided directly by Head Start and those that are provided by other agencies. Transportation is one of the related services addressed under 1308.4(o)(5) of [Head Start Program Performance Standards on Services for Children with Disabilities](#). The Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), an office of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, issued 45 CFR 1310 on January 18, 2001 (Volume 66, Federal Register Number 12). This Final Rule for the Head Start Program implements the statutory provision for establishing requirements for the safety features and safe operation of vehicles used by Head Start agencies to transport children participating in their programs.

Transportation is a related service to be provided to children with disabilities. When transportation to the program site and to special services can be accessed from other agencies, it should be used. When it is not available, program funds are to be used. Use of taxis is an allowable expense if there are no alternatives available and transportation is necessary to enable a child to be served.

12) Does Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) apply to transportation?

Yes, LRE applies to transportation.



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- 13) When is an LEA obligated to provide transportation for a preschool child with a disability between private day care and the child's preschool?

If the IEP team determines that transportation is required to help a preschool child benefit from special education -- and includes transportation as a related service on the child's IEP -- the LEA would be responsible for providing the transportation to and from the setting where the special education and related services are provided.

34 CFR §300.34(a) and (c)(16).

- 14) How can schools determine if special transportation is needed as a related service?

The U.S. Department of Education in "Letter to Hamilton" states that an IEP team should consider "(i)f a child's disabilities create unique needs that make it especially problematic to get the child to school in the same manner that a nondisabled child would get to school in the same circumstances" 25 IDELR 520 (Office of Special Education Programs, 1996)

IEP teams should consider if the unique needs of the child's disability make it difficult for him or her to get to school in the same manner as a nondisabled peer. Other considerations would be if the location of the special education services require the child to receive transportation.