

Dutchess County Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education

Transportation Policy

Bus transportation is provided to children who are authorized by their EI/OD in Early Intervention or by their school district in Preschool Special Education to attend a Center-based Program. Transportation is only provided for children who are enrolled in a part-time (2-2.5 hour) or full-time (5.5 hours) Early Intervention Center Based program or Preschool Special Education Center Based program - Special Class (**SC**) or a Special Class Integrated Setting (**SCIS**).

Approved Early Intervention Center Based Programs and 4410 Preschool Programs for Dutchess County are:

Astor - Poughkeepsie, Mt. Alvernia, Wingdale, Beacon

Abilities First – Wappingers, Poughkeepsie, Hyde Park, New Windsor

Mid-Hudson Valley Early Education Center (MHVEEC) – Beacon, Spackenkill, Hyde Park, Poughkeepsie

Anderson Center for Autism - Stanfordville

Out of County programs: Abilities First (Cornwall site), ARC of Greater Hudson Valley, ARC of Columbia County, Center for Spectrum Services, Easter Seals of NY, Learning Together, Hudson Valley CPA/HVECC (EI and Preschool), Wraparound Services of the Hudson Valley, or WestCOP

PLEASE NOTE: ONLY enrolled Early Intervention or Preschool Special Education students are approved to ride in Preschool Transportation vehicles – no siblings or other family members are to be transported in Preschool vehicles.

COVID-19 Health and Safety Requirements

The bus company will be following all health and safety requirements for transporting children in the Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education programs per direction from the CDC and NYSDOH.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for conducting a health check on their child prior to riding the bus. **This may include the following questions:**

Does your child have:

- A fever now or in the past 3 days? _____
- A cough? _____
- Any other symptom of illness (fatigue, runny nose, diarrhea)? _____
- Direct contact with anyone who has experienced any of the above symptoms or had direct contact with someone or been within 6 feet of a COVID-19 symptomatic person? _____
- Traveled outside of the State of NY or United States in the past two weeks or had contact with someone who has? _____

Parents should have a working thermometer in their home and complete a temperature check prior to the child boarding the bus.

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Please check with your child's individual center based program/agency for their policy regarding health checks and how this information will be tracked or shared with the program if so required.

The center based programs may be conducting a temperature check when your child arrives to school each morning. Some programs will be conducting temperature checks during the school day as well. The bus driver/monitor **WILL NOT** be responsible for student health checks.

Please be aware that if your child arrives to school or is noted to have symptoms of illness (cough, fatigue, elevated temperature, etc.) during the school day PARENTS WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSPORTING THEIR CHILD and must pick them up WITHIN ONE HOUR OF NOTIFICATION.

Parents/Guardians should plan as best they can for alternate emergency contacts to ensure your child can return home within the required one hour timeframe.

Children Authorized for Bussing

- ✓ Transportation request forms are submitted to Dutchess County Preschool Transportation Coordinator by Authorized Personnel (Center-based Preschool programs, Ongoing Service Coordinators, and CPSE personnel) and can take up to **two weeks** to arrange transportation.
- ✓ Requests for bussing must be verified by the designated School District or Preschool program prior to processing request.
- ✓ **ALL** student pick-up and drop-off locations must be the same each day and **MUST** be within Dutchess County; We **CANNOT** accommodate multiple pick-up and drop-off locations.
- ✓ Dutchess County Transportation Coordinator will contact parent (s) to review and confirm information submitted.
- ✓ Verified transportation forms are transmitted to the bus company for transportation coordination.
- ✓ The bus company (Total Transportation/MAT Bus Corp.) will contact parent/family to confirm pick-up and drop off times, school location, and emergency contact.
- ✓ In the event of a change of address or pick-up/drop off location, the parent/guardian is responsible for notifying Dutchess County Preschool Transportation Coordinator and the bus company
- ✓ Any changes made due to a move or change in pick-up/drop off location will take at least 2-3 business days to arrange; If a new bus and/or new route is being created to accommodate students, a temporary transportation schedule will be implemented as it could take up to 30 days to finalize a new route.

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Parent Transportation Reimbursement is available to Parents/Guardians or designated caregiver of a student who is authorized by their school district to attend a Center-based Program. Reimbursement at .56 cents per mile can be made for round-trip or one-way with bussing utilized for the other one-way. They will be reimbursed for the mileage from their home to the program and back again. Reimbursement is only provided to parent(s)/guardians or designated family members of a child or children who are enrolled in a part-time (2.5 hour) or full-time (5.5 hours) Special Class **(SC)** or a Special Class Integrated Setting **(SCIS)** an approved 4410 preschool program.

Reimbursement Process

- ✓ Parents/Caregivers/Guardians requests to transport their child to and/or from a Preschool Special Education Center-based program are submitted to the Dutchess County Preschool Transportation Coordinator by Authorized Personnel (Center-based Preschool programs, Ongoing Service Coordinators, and CPSE personnel).
- ✓ Parents/Caregivers/Guardians requests must be verified by the Dutchess County Preschool Transportation Coordinator confirming that a child is approved by their School District to attend a center-based program.
- ✓ Mileage reimbursement is paid to **one** member of the family (parent/caregiver/guardian) one-way or round trip from the child's residence or child care location and is only given for mileage that is incurred when the child is in the vehicle, not for mileage incurred for a parent/guardian's return trip after drop off or pick up when their child is not in the vehicle.
- ✓ Rate of reimbursement is determined in January for the fiscal year (not school year) and may increase/decrease based on the annual federal approved rate adopted by Dutchess County. The current rate is .56 cents per mile and will be updated in January 2022.
- ✓ Trips are calculated to and from the child's residence or child care location, and mileage is verified on Dutchess County GIS before payment is processed.
- ✓ Parents/Caregivers/Guardians are permitted to transport one-way and utilize bussing transportation one-way but must be approved for only one direction (ie. drop off in am or pick up in pm); these one-way transports cannot be interchanged or alternated.

PLEASE NOTE: Children receiving Related Services ONLY are not eligible for Bussing Transportation or Parent Reimbursement

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Snow/Inclement Weather Transportation Policy

Dutchess County Preschool Special Education administrators will determine delays, early releases, and cancellations **for transportation ONLY** for children who are transported on buses for programs located both within Dutchess County and outside of Dutchess County.

We do not announce closure or cancellation for individual Center Based Programs in Early Intervention or Preschool Special Education.

We will be announcing these delays, early releases, and cancellations on Cancellations.com (can be accessed through Poughkeepsie Journal on line), as well as announcing on the following radio stations: WSPK 104.7, WPDH 101.5, WRNQ 92.1.

On Cancellations.com we are listed as:

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Each Center Based program is responsible for communicating their closures to their parents/families, as some programs may opt to remain open when transportation is on a delay, early release, or closure, allowing parents to transport their children to and/or from program. Please speak to your program administrator regarding their delay policy.

NYS Education Department (SED) allows our Preschool programs up to 5 (five) weather/emergency related school closings per school year without make-up days. Any snow/inclement weather/emergency closings that exceed that will have to be made up.

The Center Based programs will issue notices to parents/families in the event they exceed the 5 (five) day allowance and will determine the day(s) that will be selected to make-up any necessary school days missed in excess of 5 school days.

Emergency closures due to power outages, flooding, etc. (natural disaster related events) are also included in the SED missed day allowance.

PLEASE NOTE: The bus company reserves the right to cancel a bus run if they feel a particular road is unsafe or if advised by NYSDOT or Dutchess County DPW of unsafe conditions.