

DIVISION OF CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Training Module 9

Precautions in Transporting Children

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Transportation

Transporting children is a serious responsibility.

Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death for children and young adults age 5 through 29 years of age according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Using recommended safety practices can prevent most deaths and injuries.

Transporting children safely requires planning, preparation, and training. Your center should have written policies and procedures for the following transportation topics:

- When, why, and how to transport children
- Transportation regulations and recommendations
- Authorization to transport children
- Supervision of children
- Driver qualifications
- Vehicle safety and maintenance.

If you assist with transporting children, you should have training on safety issues such as loading/unloading the vehicle, installing child safety seats, using safety belts, and preparation for emergencies.

Talk with your director or supervisor about your center's transportation policies and procedures.

Staff Requirements

- Be at least twenty-one (21) years of age or the minimum age required by the driver's commercial auto insurance
- Hold a current valid driver's license or commercial driver's license as required by state law. A readable copy of the driver's license must be kept in the employee's record.
- Successfully complete the training course in driver safety that is offered or approved by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education prior to transporting children

Vehicle Requirements

- Comply with Arkansas state laws on transportation for children
- Licensed and maintained in proper working condition
- Verification of commercial vehicle insurance coverage

Precautions in Transporting Children

Requirements for Ratios

- When transporting infants and toddlers, the driver may be counted in the staff/child ratio, but shall not be the only adult. A ratio of one adult for each three infants/toddlers shall be maintained.
- When transporting more than 12 children three years of age and older, the driver may be counted in staff/child ratio, but shall not be the only adult.
- For transporting children kindergarten and above only, a ratio of 1:18 shall be maintained. The driver may be counted in staff/child ratio.

Safety Seats

- A child passenger safety seat is required for any child who is less than 6 years old or weighs less than 60 pounds.
- Any child who is at least 6 years or weighs at least 60 pounds must be restrained by a safety belt (Act 470 of 2001). Conventional school buses are exempt from this requirement except for the transportation of infants/toddlers.
- There must be seating space and an individual, appropriate restraint system provided for each child transported.
- Infants and toddlers may not be transported on school buses that are not equipped to accommodate required child safety seats.

Unfortunately, mistakes when transporting children have resulted in injury and/or death. Because of these mistakes, we now have procedures to help us protect children. It is important to follow these procedures every time you transport children to avoid making any mistakes. **Child passenger safety seats shall be used in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines.**

Transportation Roster

You will use a transportation roster every time you transport children. Use the roster to check children onto the vehicle when they are picked up and to check children off the vehicle when they arrive at the facility.

The driver or a staff member will walk through the vehicle and physically inspect each seat before leaving the vehicle. The person who completed the walk-through inspection signs the roster to verify that all children have exited the vehicle.

The director or a designated staff member reviews the transportation roster and compares the roster with classroom attendance records. The director or designated staff member signs the transportation roster to verify that all children have safely exited the vehicle and arrived in their classrooms.

Precautions in Transporting Children

Child Safety Alarms

Any vehicles designed for or used to transport more than seven (7) passengers and one (1) driver must have approved child safety alarm devices installed. These devices must be properly maintained in working order at all times.

There are three options that can be used with child safety alarm devices that meet the intent of Act 1979 when children are exiting the vehicle. Talk with your director or supervisor about the option you will use.

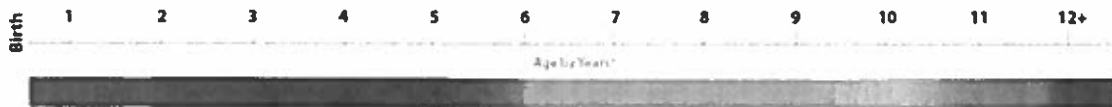
1. Unload all of the children, walk through the vehicle to ensure that no children remain on board and deactivate the alarm. This option will work only if you are able to unload all children in less than one minute.
2. Upon arrival, have one staff member immediately walk through the vehicle to deactivate the alarm system. That staff member will remain near the alarm switch at the back of the vehicle until all children have been unloaded to ensure that no child is left on board. This option requires at least two staff members, one to supervise the children and one to remain inside the vehicle.
3. Upon arrival, deactivate the alarm and unload the children. Immediately after unloading, start the vehicle and move it to a different location for final parking. This will reactivate the alarm and require a final walk through.

Transporting children is a serious responsibility. Make sure you know the requirements for the driver, vehicle, safety seats, and ratios. Follow your center's procedures for using the transportation roster and for loading and unloading children.

Talk with your director or supervisor about any questions you may have before you transport children.

Precautions in Transporting Children

Using the correct car seat or booster seat can be a lifesaver: make sure your child is always buckled in an age- and size-appropriate car seat or booster seat.



REAR-FACING CAR SEAT

Birth up to Age 2*

Buckle children in a rear-facing seat until age 2 or when they reach the upper weight or height limit of that seat.



FORWARD-FACING CAR SEAT

Age 2 up to at least age 5*

When children outgrow their rear-facing seat, they should be buckled in a forward-facing car seat until at least age 5 or when they reach the upper weight or height limit of that seat.



BOOSTER SEAT

Age 5 up until seat belts fit properly*

Once children outgrow their forward-facing seat, they should be buckled in a booster seat until seat belts fit properly. The recommended height for proper seat belt fit is 57 inches tall.



SEAT BELT

Once seat belts fit properly without a booster seat

Children no longer need to use a booster seat once seat belts fit them properly. Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs (not the stomach) and the shoulder belt lays across the chest (not the neck).

Keep children ages 12 and under in the back seat. Never place a rear-facing car seat in front of an active air bag.

**Recommended age ranges for each seat type vary to account for differences in child growth and height/weight limits of car seats and booster seats. Use the car seat or booster seat owner's manual to check installation and the seat height/weight limits, and proper seat use.*

Child safety seat recommendations: American Academy of Pediatrics.
Graphic design: adapted from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/cps



Know the stages -Make sure children are properly buckled up in a car seat, booster seat, or seat belt, whichever is appropriate for their age, height and weight.

Birth up to Age 2: Rear-facing car seat - For the best possible protection, infants and children should be buckled in a rear-facing car seat, in the back seat, until age 2 or when they reach the upper weight or height limits of their particular seat. Check the seat's owner's manual and/or labels on the seat for weight and height limits.

Age 2 up to at least Age 5: Forward-facing car seat - When children outgrow their rear-facing seats they should be buckled in a forward-facing car seat, in the back seat, until at least age 5 or when they reach the upper weight or height limit of their particular seat. Check the seat's owner's manual and/or labels on the seat for weight and height limits.

Precautions in Transporting Children

Age 5 up until seat belts fit properly: Booster seat - Once children outgrow their forward-facing seat, (by reaching the upper height or weight limit of their seat), they should be buckled in a belt positioning booster seat until seat belts fit properly. Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs (not the stomach) and the shoulder belt lays across the chest (not the neck). Remember to keep children properly buckled in the back seat for the best possible protection.

Once Seat Belts Fit Properly without a Booster Seat - Children no longer need to use a booster seat once seat belts fit them properly. Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs (not the stomach) and the shoulder belt lies across the chest (not the neck). For the best possible protection keep children properly buckled in the back seat.

Install and Use Car & Booster Seats Properly - Install and use car seats and booster seats according to the seat's owner's manual or get help installing them from a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician. Find a Technician in your area by going to <http://cert.safekids.org/>

Don't Seat Children in Front of an Airbag - Buckle all children aged 12 and under in the back seat. Airbags can kill young children riding in the front seat. Never place a rear-facing car seat in front of an air bag.

Seat Children in the Middle of the Back Seat - Buckle children in the middle of the back seat when possible, because it is the safest spot in the vehicle.

Use Proper Restraints Every Trip - Buckle children in car seats, booster seats, or seat belts on every trip, no matter how short.

Parents and Caregivers: Always Wear a Seat Belt - Set a good example by always using a seat belt themselves.