



Guidance

Determining the Need for Special Education Transportation

**Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education
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This document provides guidance on how to determine the need for special education transportation for students with individualized education programs (IEPs) consistent with least restrictive environment (LRE) requirements 34 CFR §300.114 for safe travel to and from school, field trips, and sports/extracurricular activities.

What is Special Education Transportation?

Special education transportation is transportation provided with vehicles which only transport students with disabilities. When a vehicle transports both students with and without disabilities, the vehicle is not considered special education transportation, even if the vehicle is equipped with a ramp or a lift. Special education transportation is a nonacademic service 34 CFR §§300.107 and 300.34 (a)(c)(16), which is included in LRE requirements for nonacademic settings described under 300.117.

The IEP Team Determines the Need for Special Education Transportation Based on Student Data

To determine special education transportation needs, the IEP Team must consider the unique circumstances of the individual student. Transporting a student with special education transportation removes them from the opportunity to participate with their nondisabled peers and should be used only when necessary to meet the student's needs 34 CFR §300.117. Cost should NOT be a factor unless the district would incur significant additional expenses to transport the student with their peers without disabilities.

Factors to Consider

- The nature and extent of the student's disability: Look beyond the student's eligibility area and consider the unique disability-related issues which affect the student.

- Behavioral issues: Accommodations on transportation with peers without disabilities may be sufficient to support students engaging in maladaptive behaviors, while behaviors that pose a safety risk to self or others may require special transportation.
- Medical or safety issues: Due to their disability, some students with IEPs may require transportation-specific accommodations such as air-conditioning, one-to-one assistance, and/or a sign language interpreter.
- The need for specialized equipment: Some students with IEPs may require specific equipment to help them get to their destination safely. For example, a wheelchair lift, booster seat, and/or safety harness.
- Potential harmful effect: IEP Teams should consider factors such as the length of time the student will be on the vehicle when determining how to meet the student's needs.

Range of Transportation Options

Transportation to and from school, as well as nonacademic and extracurricular activities, includes the following options which range from less restrictive to more restrictive environments based on a student's individual needs:

- Regular school bus with or without supplementary aids and services.
- Transportation in a vehicle only with other students with disabilities.
- Transportation in a vehicle without other students.

Types of Special Education Transportation

Types of transportation range from less restrictive to more restrictive based on a student's individual needs:

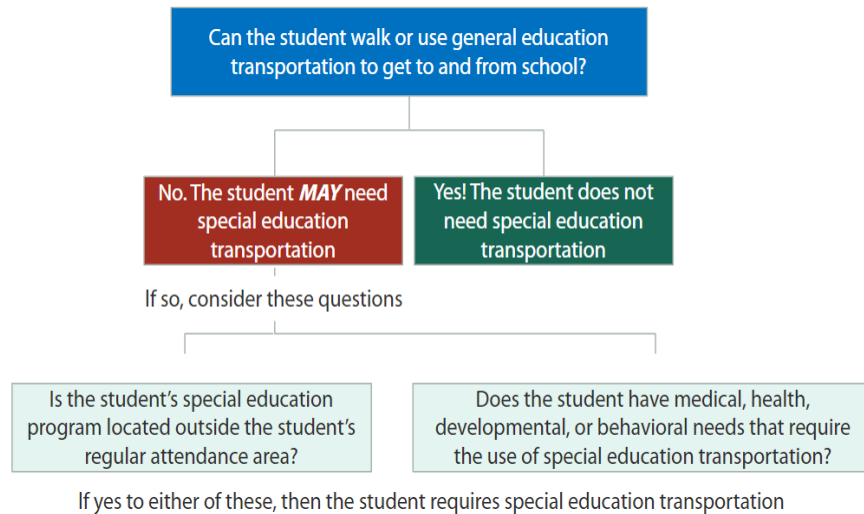
- Corner to corner: The student can independently travel from the designated drop-off and pick-up location at a corner near the student's home.
- Curb to curb: The transportation drop-off and pick-up are at the student's driveway. An adult should be at the driveway to receive the student unless special permission is granted. If the student requires an escort into the school, then the specific requirements should be documented within the IEP.

- Door to door: The designated drop-off and pick-up are at the closest vicinity to the student’s door. Parental assistance may be necessary to safely assist the student from the vehicle if the student’s needs are a safety concern; the specific requirements should be documented within the student’s IEP.

Special Education Transportation: Determining Need and Type

Although special education transportation must be considered for each student with an IEP, it is not an automatic entitlement for all students receiving special education programs and services. Most students with disabilities are able to be transported to and from school and extracurricular activities with students without disabilities. When considering the need for special education transportation, the IEP Team must consider supplementary aids and services to ensure the student’s needs are met in the LRE.

The flowchart below provides the questions IEP Teams should consider when determining the need for special education transportation. Specifically, can the student walk or use general education transportation to get to and from school? If the answer is yes, the student does not need special education transportation. If the answer is no, the student may need special education transportation. In that case, the IEP Team would also need to consider whether the student's special education program is located outside the student's regular attendance area or whether the student has medical, health, developmental, or behavioral needs that requires the use of special education transportation? If the answer is yes to either of these questions, the student requires special education transportation.



This flowchart is adopted from [IEP Boot Camp: Writing Meaningful and Compliant IEPs](#).

Resource Documents

- LRE Scenarios: IEP Team Training Guide to Increase IDEA Compliance (LRP Media Group)
- [IEP Boot Camp: Writing Meaningful and Compliant IEPs](#)
- [Questions and Answers on Serving Children with Disabilities Eligible for Transportation](#)
- [Pupil Transportation](#)