

Travel training tips for parents/carers – Preparing children for independence



Travel training for my child

- Travel training is a decision that some Parent/Carers don't make, it just happens as part of family life.
- What is the right approach for your child?
- For other families it becomes a massive decision that involves lots of planning and preparation.



Things to think about

- Why do we need to do it?
- Who can do it?
- When should you start?
- How do I start?
- What is the school doing to support?
- What can I do?



- Can other family members help?
- Is there a right/wrong way?
- Is there a manual?
- Is there any support/advice?
- Can we refuse to travel train our child?
- We are worried/anxious/concerned.
- What do your other children do? Can they support this idea?



Independent travel = Lifelong skills



- Independent travel is a lifelong skill that your child can learn.
- This skill will enable them to make very different choices through their own life journey.
- For some young people independent travel may always include having a Buddy.
- There is a never a right or wrong time to start preparing for independence. The earlier the better!



- Independent travel is not just for now or for School/College, it's about the future.
- It builds confidence and self esteem.
- It widens your child's social opportunities and also opens up their social circle.



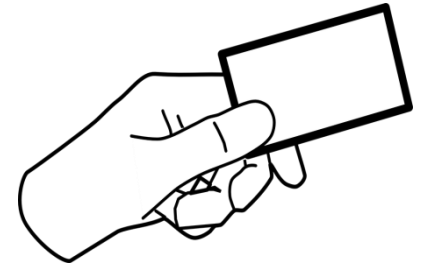
Transitioning to independent travel

When your child starts travelling independently, new skills may need to be taught.

- Being aware of a bus timetable.
- Road safety.
- Personal safety.
- Awareness of time/waiting.
- Awareness of social rules.



Travel pass



- Make sure your child understands that they must have their travel pass on them (and photo ID if applicable).
- Make sure your child has a £2 coin on them should they lose their travel pass.



Emergency contacts

- Make sure your child has a phone with family and friends' contacts details.
- Ensure your child has an I.C.E. contact in their phone (In Case of Emergency).
- You can work with your phone provider to have certain restrictions on your child's phone, such as parental controls, dialling out only or a tracker etc.



Medical needs

- If your child has a medical condition make sure they have their medication or medical equipment on them (such as an inhaler).



- Also, make sure they have an emergency card , SOS talisman bracelet etc. or information on what to do and who to contact if they are unwell.

Road safety



- Road safety awareness can start to be introduced as young as age 4.
- Make sure your child is aware of unsafe locations.
- Make sure your child is aware of unsafe situations.
- Make sure your child knows how to cross a road and walk on a pavement on their own (or with their Buddy).

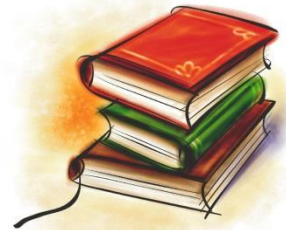
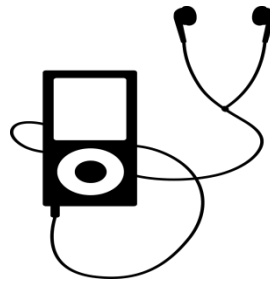
Personal safety



- If travelling on public transport, make your child aware of personal safety, such as not giving their name and contact details to strangers.
- Encourage your child to always sit downstairs on the bus and in the seat next to the aisle.
- Stranger danger awareness.
- If your child has additional needs always ensure they carry an info card with them.

Travelling on the bus/train/taxi

- Encourage your child to pack something for their journey.



- Practice the route with them (LOTS!).
- Queueing, waiting, getting on the bus/train is a social experience they also need to practice lots.



Learning coping skills

Lots of things could happen during the journey, make sure your child is aware of these possibilities and knows what to do and who to contact in case of emergency.

Some children may find it helpful to carry written prompt cards/information.

Possible situations to prepare your child for:

- Your child boarded the wrong bus or train.
- Your child has forgotten/missed their stop.
- The bus/train/taxi is late.
- Your child feels unwell or gets lost.
- Your child loses their travel pass.
- The Bus Stop/Platform has changed.





- The vehicle may break down.
- The vehicle may be in an accident.
- Severe weather conditions.
- An anti social incident by another passenger.
- Non moving traffic gridlocking.
- Removal of the service.



Route planning:

DOs

DON'Ts

DO



- You can use walkit.com to measure/plan a route.
- It is important to find landmarks that don't change to help your child learn their route.
- Learn the home journey first, it is always more familiar.
- Be positive about public transport travel.

DO



- Have a plan B if there are roadworks or a diversion.
- Ensure your child waits for the **next** bus/train – it will come!
- In the event of an accident, ensure your child takes the instructions from the bus/train driver as to further planning their journey and use their **coping strategy** of informing you.

DOs

DON'Ts

Don't



- Don't use Christmas lights as a landmark (or trees)!
- Don't change the "bus rules" on evenings/weekends/family bus trips e.g. stay downstairs.
- Don't share "scare stories" of public transport travel.
- Don't be discouraging.
- Don't give up!!

Your child's first "going alone" journey

- You as the parent/carer must remain calm.
- Be positive about the journey.
- You could choose to follow the bus, however, please don't let your child know you are doing this as you won't always do it.



- Be patient – your child will reach their destination.



- If at first you don't succeed, try try again.
- Encourage, encourage, encourage!

- Celebrate the first successful journey as another success in their lives.



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We can receive applications by email and can discuss your child's journey with you