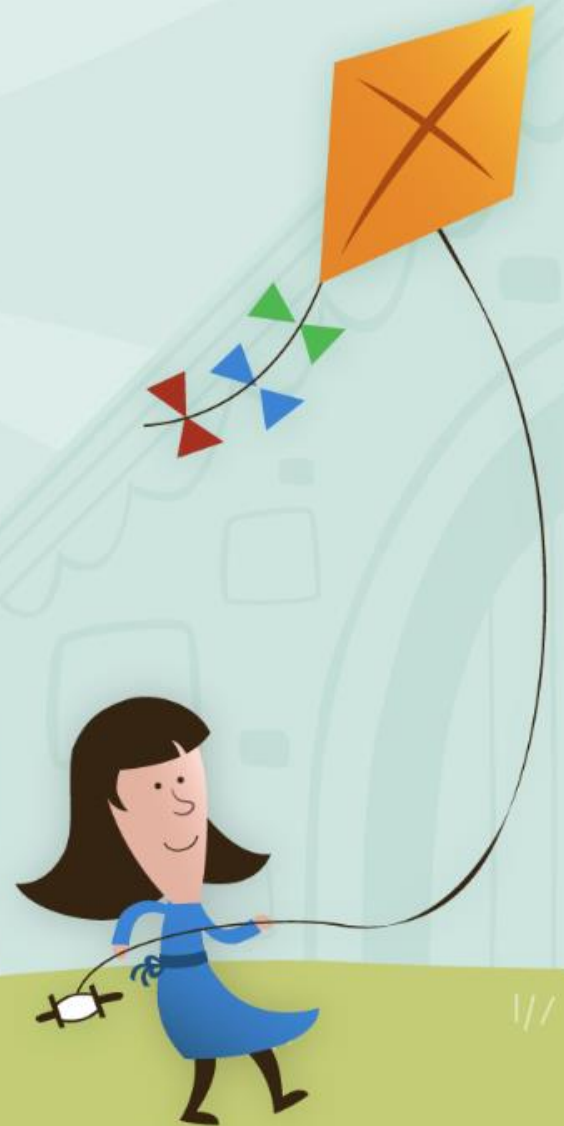


# School Bus Driver and Aide

Albemarle County Transportation Services



# Your job is crucial to education of special needs children.



You may be...

A child's only access to the world beyond the 4 walls of their home...

The most consistent adult in a child's life

The encouragement a child needs to keep trying

To a special needs child, your job is definitely incredibly special! ❤️



# Legally Speaking...

- **Special Education:** specially designed instruction, **at no cost** to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability
- **IDEA:** Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - law that guides how special education services are provided
- **FAPE:** Free and Appropriate Public Education – Every effort must be made to meet the standards of a student's IEP at no cost to the child's family.
- **IEP:** Individualized Education Program – plan that includes all aspects of a child's education, including transportation.
- **LRE:** Least Restrictive Environment – special needs students are to be included in 'regular' student learning environments and activities whenever appropriate.

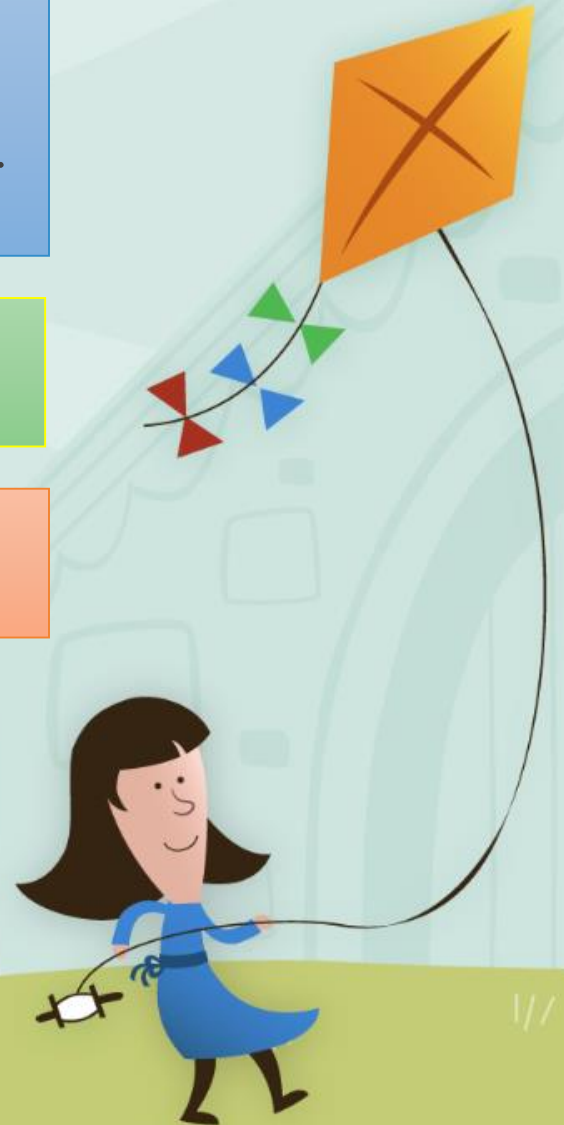


## Confidentially Speaking...

Individuals who may be involved in writing a student's IEP:  
School psychologist, student's teacher, school representative, student's parent(s),  
speech therapist, physical therapist, special needs coordinator, and transportation staff.

A student's school record must be kept confidential. You are not permitted to discuss a student's personal information with anyone outside of the IEP planning team.

IEP's are not "one size fits all". They are student specific regardless of label or disability. Never assume that what you did for one student must be done for another.



# Special Needs Bus Assistant Responsibilities...

- Insure the safety of the students when loading, riding, and unloading the bus
- Have a teamwork approach and attitude of cooperation and trust
- Communicate professionally and courteously with the parents, driver, teachers, administrative staff and transportation staff
- Be on time and reliable
- Have a genuine concern and willingness to provide the utmost care for students that ride their bus
- Complete paperwork efficiently and on time



# Special Needs Bus Driver Responsibilities

- Meet all requirements of an Albemarle County school bus driver
- Insure the safety of the students when loading, riding, and unloading the bus
- Have a teamwork approach and attitude of cooperation and trust
- Communicate professionally and courteously with the parents, transportation assistant, teachers, administrative staff and transportation staff
- Be on time and reliable
- Have a genuine concern and willingness to provide the utmost care for students that ride their bus
- Work with transportation assistant in insuring that paperwork is completed efficiently and on time





In order for students to have the best possible experience...



Drivers and Assistants must have the best possible attitude!



# Wheelchair Securement Checklist:

- Wheelchair is forward facing
- Wheelchair is centered inside the anchorage strips
- Brakes are set and/or power is off
- Straps are attached properly (not attached to the wheels or any detachable portion of the chair)
- Straps are not twisted or crossed – hooks are secured
- Chair has zero forward/reverse movement**





# 7-Point Securement System

- 4 Points to secure the wheelchair- all 4 “corners”
- 3 Points to secure the student shoulder, pelvis, and torso– shoulder belt must be secured to the vehicle
- Remember: the wheelchair securement system is tested for the student to be forward facing and must be used accordingly for the ultimate safety for each student.



# For student safety and comfort~



- Position the lap belt over the pelvic bones, not the abdomen
- Adjust the lap belt so it is snug
- Shoulder belt should not cross the student's face or neck
- Never place the shoulder belt under the student's arm where it could cross the rib cage
- Never twist the belts – they should lie flat against student's body
- Smile and speak to the student explaining what you are doing at each step
- Be aware of each student's personal space, and respect their individuality

# The Wheelchair Lift – Manual Chairs



- Open and secure the lift door (attach chain to prevent the wind from moving the door and to prevent injury)
- Lower the lift until the flap rests entirely on the ground and unfold outboard roll stop. Make sure it is level on the ground.
- Back the student onto the lift
  - REMEMBER: Be cautious to not injure the student during this process. Be sure to not allow arms or legs to come in contact with the side, rails, or working mechanisms of the lift.
- Ensure student faces away from the school bus and secure with lift belt
- Wheelchair brakes and roll locks must be in the locked position
- Hold on to wheelchair until it is completely lifted and is securely in the hands of SPED driver or assistant on the bus.
- NEVER ride the lift with a student



# Wheelchair Lift: Motorized Wheelchairs

- Unless clearly stated on the IEP, the student must NEVER “drive” their chair onto the lift.
- Disengage the motor (turn off power) and push the chair onto the lift manually.
- Make sure that you are informed about the unique challenges to securing motorized wheelchairs – do not be afraid to ask!
- Lock wheelchair brakes before securing to the bus
- Wheel chair must be forward facing
- Position the student on the bus according to their IEP – which may have student out of their wheelchair and on a regular forward facing seat.
- Be reassuring and explain to the student what you are doing as you work to safely secure them on the bus.



# Supervision

## At School:

- Most students will be greeted by either a teacher, teaching assistant, or school staff and escorted into the school.
- Never drop off a student who requires supervision unless there is qualified school staff supervision.



## At Home or Stop:

- Each student will have specifications as to with whom they can be released.
- Follow the manifest and call dispatch if you are in doubt or have questions on child's safety.
- Never drop off a child without following proper supervision protocol as specified on the manifest.





**Under IDEA (Individuals with Disability Education Act) umbrella, there are 13 unique conditions in which a student may be affected.**

**1. Other Health Impairment: Limits a child's strength, energy, or alertness**

- **Most Common Example: ADHD and ADD**

**2. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): Covers a wide range of symptoms and skills, but mainly affects a child's social and communication skills. ASD may also significantly impact behavior. ASD does not automatically mean there are learning deficits. Autistic children are often very bright, creative, and imaginative.**

**3. Specific Learning Disability (SLD): affects a child's ability to read, write, listen, speak, reason, or do math**  
**Examples: Dyslexia, auditory processing disorder, non-verbal learning disability**



# IDEA : 13 Unique conditions continued

## 4. Emotional Disturbance:

- **Examples:** anxiety disorder, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and depression.

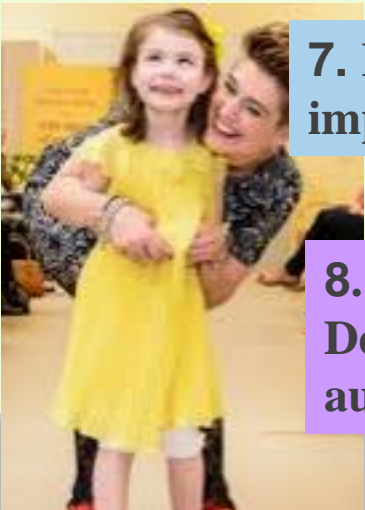
## 5. Speech or language impairment: struggles in verbal communication

- **Examples:** stuttering, impaired articulation, language or voice impairment

6. **Visual Impairment – Including Blindness** (If eyewear can correct the issue, the vision impairment does not qualify.)

7. **Deafness:** Children with a diagnosis of deafness have a severe hearing impairment. (Creating an inability to process language through hearing.)

8. **Hearing Impaired:** hearing loss that does not meet the requirements of Deafness. **Important:** there is a difference between loss of hearing and an auditory processing disorder.



## IDEA: 13 unique Conditions continued...

**9. Deaf-Blindness:** children with both hearing and vision impairments

**10. Orthopedic Impairment:** Any impairment to a child's body, no matter what the cause, is considered an orthopedic impairment.

- **Examples:** cerebral palsy, birth defects, growth deficits, accidents

**11. Intellectual Disability:** below-average intellectual ability, poor communication, self-care and social skills.

- **Example:** Down syndrome

**12. Traumatic Brain Injury:** Brain injury caused by physical force

- **Example:** Injured in a car accident

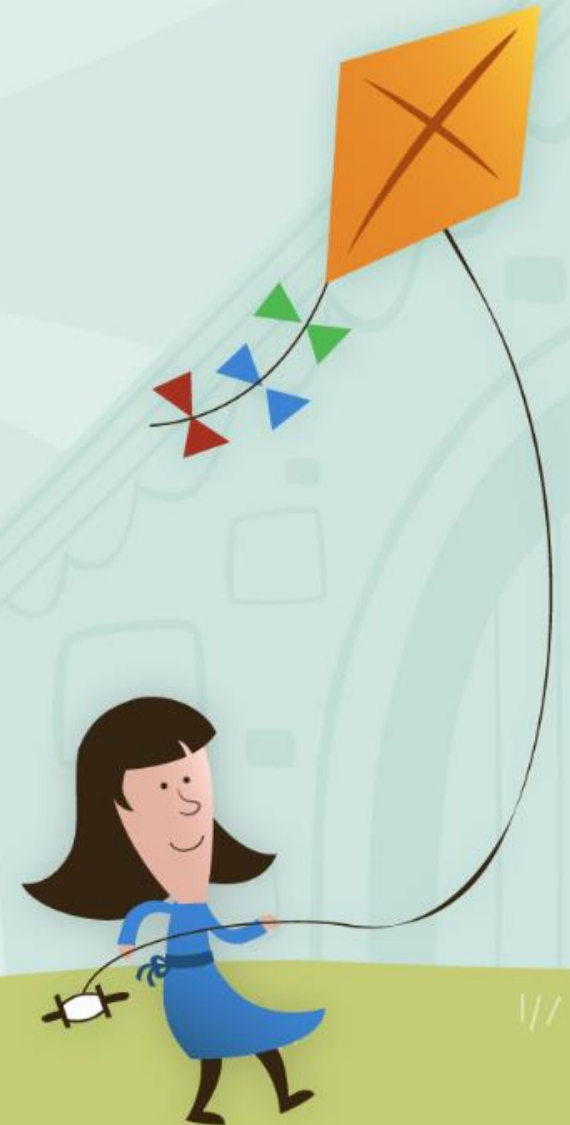
**13. Multiple Disabilities:** Children with multiple disabilities have more than one condition covered by IDEA. Having multiple issues creates educational needs that can't be met in a program for any one condition.





# The Seating Plan – As a team consider...

- Who is medically fragile?
- Who is prone to seizures?
- Who is young and in need of a safety seat?
- Who has a respiratory condition?



## Also carefully consider...

- Which students need the least help?
- Which need the most assistance?
- Who might possibly be a helper?

In the U.S. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), **least restrictive environment (LRE)** means that a student who has a disability should have the opportunity to be educated with non-disabled peers, to the greatest extent appropriate.

- Which students are socially well-adapted?
- What are the student to student issues?
- Which students need the closest supervision?

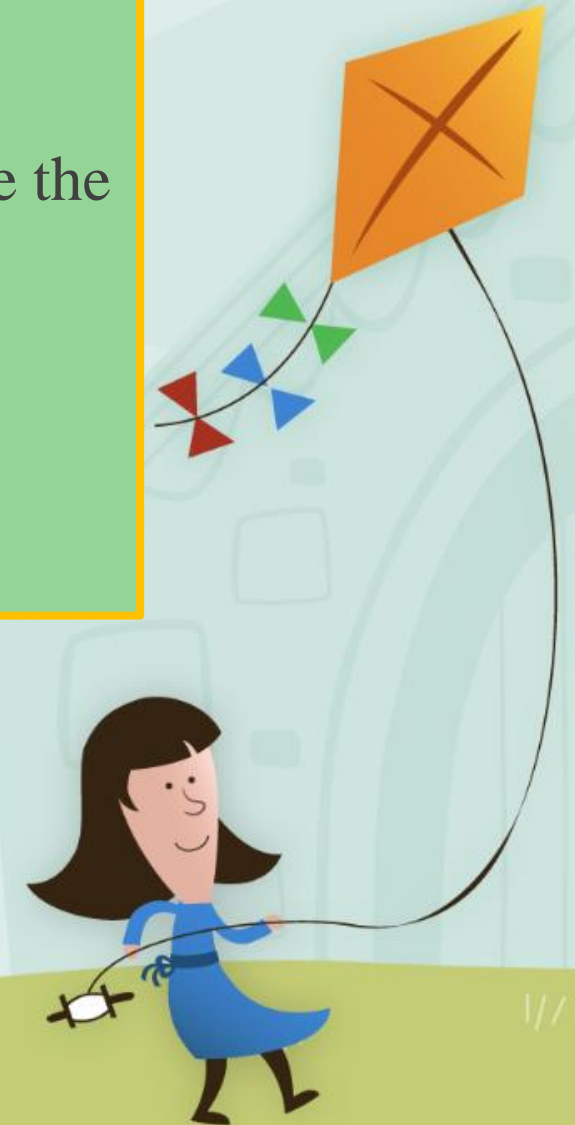


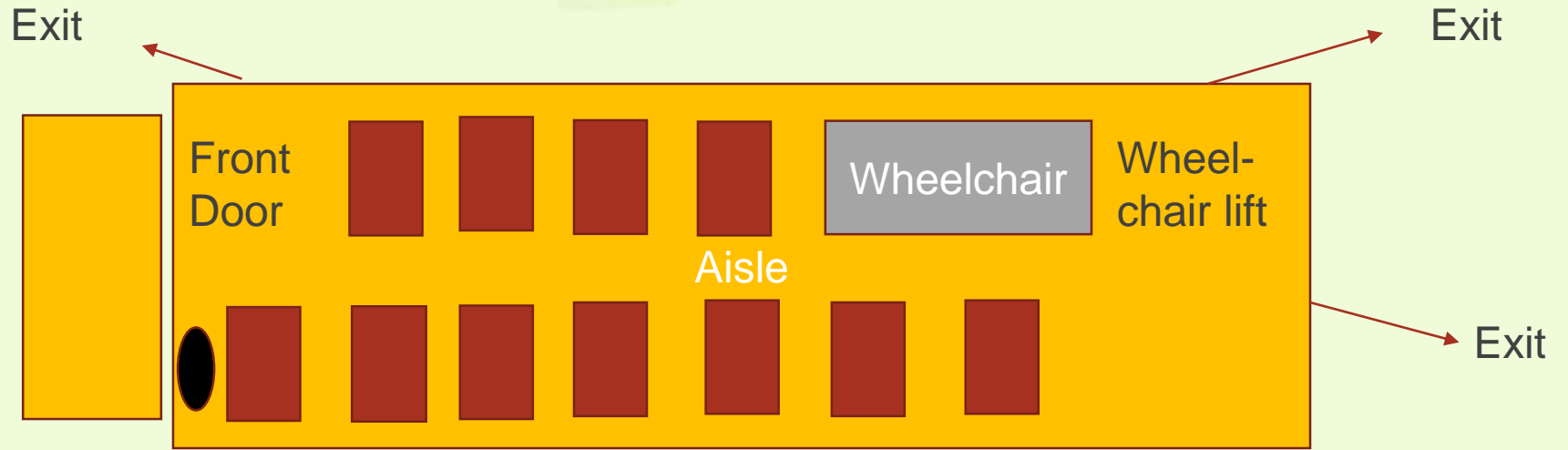
Consider...

- What are the driver's responsibilities during an evacuation?
- What are the assistant's responsibilities?
- If the driver is incapacitated, does the assistant know how to secure the bus, radio for help, and operate safety windows and doors?

As a team...

Create a seating plan and evacuation plan that provides for the safest outcome of your students that you both understand and agree on.





Things to include in the written seating and evacuation plan:

- ✓ A diagram of the seating pattern that identifies where each student sits.
- ✓ Information on how to evacuate each student.
- ✓ Any special behavioral/health concerns to address in an emergency
- ✓ The location of emergency evacuation equipment and exits.



Consider...if you were not on your bus, and an accident took place, would the sub driver and/or assistant know how to safely care for the students?

## **In case of Emergency:**

1. Stop as soon as possible in a safe place: off the traveled roadway, preferably in a parking lot or driveway. Be aware of street names or identifying markers of your location.

2. Stay calm and secure the vehicle:

-Put the transmission in PARK, set the emergency brake, turn off ignition, take the keys.

3. Contact dispatch

4. If appropriate, use warning devices to alert other motorists you are stopped.



## If you decide to evacuate:

1. Explain to the students what you are doing using simple, concise directions. Use this approach with both the students and outside help if you need to enlist it.
2. Use all exits if needed.
3. Once students are off the school bus, move them to a safe place away from the school bus.
4. Do not release the students to anyone unless authorized to do so by the police.



*Your job is as invaluable as the precious children we serve.  
You are not alone...we are all in this together.*



Click on the Link Below

[Special Needs Driver and Aide](#)

