

## Chapter 10: TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

### Purpose Of These Requirements

Transporting children in child care is a high risk activity. Child care operators, staff, and parents need to be aware that transporting children requires careful planning and proactive, protective measures to ensure the safety of children and staff. Any time children are transported there is a potential for problems to occur. Careful planning reduces the risk of harm or injury to children and reduces liability for child care operators and their programs. The purpose of transportation requirements is to establish standards for the safe transportation of children and staff.

Transportation services include transportation to and from the center, to and/or from a public/private school program, to and/or from the child's home, and to and/or from off premise activities such as field trips and educational outings.

#### **Important information:**

The rules governing the transportation of children apply to all child care centers regardless of who provides the transportation service. If the child care center contracts with an outside or independent agency, the center is still responsible for making sure the transportation provider meets and maintains compliance with applicable transportation requirements.

### SECTION 1: VEHICLES

#### **CHILD CARE RULE .1002**

##### **Safe Vehicles**

- ★ All vehicles used to transport children must be in good repair, safe, and free of hazards.
- ★ Vehicles must be insured for liability as required by State laws governing transportation of passengers.
- ★ Vehicles used to transport children in snow, ice, and other hazardous weather conditions must be equipped with snow tires, chains, or other safety equipment as appropriate.

- Vehicles used to transport children must be safe and well maintained.
- HH** - It is best practice to stock vehicles with a fully charged fire extinguisher and a functional spare tire in case of an emergency.
- Hazards are torn upholstery that allows children to remove the interior padding or hurt themselves, broken windows, and holes in the floor or roof, etc.
- Vehicles must be properly registered, insured, and have passed an annual State inspection. Verification must be on file for review by a Division representative.

- ☑ Adequate insurance coverage protects both the children and the child care program. Insurance reduces risks, because most insurance companies require that a vehicle meet health and safety regulations before they issue or renew a policy.
- ☑ The following safety checks should be conducted on a regular basis to ensure:
  - Seatbelts are secured to vehicle
  - Lights and signals are in working order
  - Doors open/close properly
  - Seats are securely bolted to the floor of the vehicle
  - Engine hoses are not cracked
  - Windshield wipers work properly
  - Good tread and pressure in all tires
  - Locks are in working order
  - All fluids are full (brake, wiper, transmission, power steering, etc)
  - Engine belts are not worn or frayed

## SECTION 2: RATIOS

### **CHILD CARE RULE .1004 Ratios During Transportation**

- ★ Child care programs must maintain appropriate staff-child ratios on any vehicle used to transport children.
- ★ When children are being transported, the same staff-child ratios required for a child care program applies. Ratios for the youngest child in the vehicle must be maintained at all times.
- ★ When three or more children under the age of two years are being transported, the driver cannot be counted in the staff-child ratio.

- ☑ You must maintain the applicable staff-child ratios based on your license type. The staff-child ratios are as follows:

Minimum Standards		Enhanced Standards		Enhanced Standards at 7 points level	
Infants	1:5	Infants	1:5	Infants	1:4
Toddlers	1:6	Toddlers	1:6	Toddlers	1:5
Twos	1:10	Twos		Twos	1:8
Threes	1:15	Threes	1:10	Threes	1:9
Fours	1:20	Fours	1:13	Fours	1:12
Five-Twelve	1:25	Fives	1:15	Fives	1:14
		Six -	1:20	Six -	1:19
		Twelve		Twelve	

 Children under the age of three cannot be transported to participate in off premise activities, unless it is part of the child’s Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP). Off premise activities refer to activities that occur outside of licensed or approved space such as field trip activities but do not include routine pick up and drop off of children less then three years of age.

 Refer to Chapter 6 – Children’s Records and Activities for off premise activity requirements.

 Public school programs may transport children on a regular public school bus, on its normal route without additional monitors to maintain staff-child ratio, as long as the school implements safe transportation procedures created by the Division. A copy of these procedures, **Requirements for Preschool Children on Public School Buses**, is available in the resource section.

 A **Public School Off-Site Verification form for Transportation Requirements** is located in the resource section. This form is used to verify transportation requirements and vehicles that are stored off-site from the public school program.

 The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration provides recommendations on best practices for transporting preschool age children on a school bus. For more information visit [www.buckleupnc.org](http://www.buckleupnc.org). Search the Contacts and Resources tab for the following resources: “NHTSA Guidelines for the Safe Transportation of Pre-school Age Children in School Buses” 2/99 and “A Guide for the Transportation of Preschoolers and Children With Disabilities for North Carolina Public Schools: Transportation Policies, Guidelines and Best Practices 11” 6/08.

## SECTION 3: PROCEDURES

### CHILD CARE RULE .1003

#### Safe Procedures

- ★ Each center must establish safe procedures for pick-up and delivery of children.
- ★ These procedures must be communicated to parents, and a copy must be posted in the center where they can easily be seen.
- ★ Centers licensed for 3 –12 children located in a residence are not required to post these procedures.
- ★ The driver or other adult in the vehicle must assure that all children are received by a responsible person who is indicated on the child’s application or as authorized by the parent.
- ★ When children are transported, staff in each vehicle must have a functioning cellular telephone or other two-way voice communication device with them for use in an emergency.

- ☑ Children can only be released to individuals indicated on the child’s application or as authorized by the parent or guardian.
- HH –Staff should check the authorized individual’s identifying information such as a driver's license to verify their identity.
- 📁 An example of safe procedures for pick-up and delivery is located in the resource section. Refer to the resource sheet titled **Establishing Safe Procedures for Pick-up and Delivery** to assist you with creating your safety procedures.
- 🔔 Public school programs may transport children on a regular public school bus, on its normal route without additional monitors to maintain staff-child ratio, as long as the school implements safe transportation procedures created by the Division. A copy of these procedures, **Requirements for Preschool Children on Public School Buses**, is available in the resource section.
- ★ To be eligible for the most points available in program standards for the issuance of a Two-Five Star Rated License, a center must have written operational policies that includes information on safety procedures. Refer to Chapter 17 – Star Rated License for specific details on enhanced operational policies.

## CHILD CARE RULE .1003

### Driver

- ★ A first-aid kit must be located in each vehicle used on a regular basis to transport children. The first-aid kit shall be firmly mounted or otherwise secured if kept in the passenger area.
- ★ Emergency and identifying information about each child must be in the vehicle whenever children are being transported.
- ★ The driver must be at least 21 years old or a duly licensed school bus driver and have a valid driver's license of the type required under North Carolina Motor Vehicle Law for the vehicle being driven or comparable license from the state in which the driver resides and no convictions of Driving While Impaired (DWI) or any other impaired driving offense within the last 3 years.
- ★ Children may never be left alone in a vehicle and must always be attended by an adult.
- ★ Children must be loaded and unloaded from curbside, or in a safe, off-street area, out of the flow of traffic, so they are protected from all traffic hazards.

- ☑ Be prepared and have a plan in place to handle emergency situations such as a vehicle accident, having a flat tire, severe weather, or vehicle failure.
- ☑ The NC law requires any driver of a vehicle which accommodates or seats more than 15 people (including the driver) to obtain a commercial driver's license (CDL). Contact the NC Division of Motor Vehicles for more information on obtaining a CDL [1100 New Bern Avenue Raleigh, NC 27697-0001 (919) 733-4241].
- ☑ Children must be adequately supervised at all times.
- HH** –You may establish more stringent requirements concerning a drivers driving record.
- HH-** Including a photograph of each child with his/her emergency information will enable easier identification in case of an emergency. Remember to update photos as children get older.
- 📁 See resource section for a guide to **Stocking a First Aid Kit**.

## CHILD CARE RULE .1003

### Vehicle

- ★ Before children are transported, written permission from the parent must be obtained which must include when and where the child is to be transported, expected time of departure and arrival, and the name of the transportation provider.
- ★ Parents may give standing permission, valid for up to 12 months, for routine transport of children to and from the center.
- ★ For routine transport of children to and from the center, staff must have a list of the children being transported. Staff members must use the list to check attendance as children board the vehicle and as they depart the vehicle. A list of all children being transported must be available at the center.
- ★ Each person in the vehicle must be seated in the manufacturer's designated areas. No child may ride in the load carrying area or floor of a vehicle.

- ☑ Make sure cellular telephones or two-way voice communication devices are fully charged and in working condition. For the safety of the children and staff being transported, these devices should only be used in emergency situations.
- 📁 Sample **Permission Slip for Field Trip** and **Blanket Permission for Routine Transport of Children** forms are located in the resource section.
- 💻 For additional transportation safety resources, refer to the **SUPERvision Series – Get Ready, Get Set, Go!** training curriculum. It is located on the Division's web site at [www.ncchildcare.net](http://www.ncchildcare.net) under provider resources.
- 📁 **Field Trip and Transportation Safety Checklist** on safe transportation practices is available in the resource section.

## SECTION 4: RESTRAINTS

### CHILD CARE RULE .1001

#### Seat Restraints

- ★ Each adult and child must be restrained with an individual seat belt or appropriate child restraint device when the vehicle is in motion.
- ★ Only one person can occupy each seat belt or child restraint device.
- ★ Children may not occupy the front seat if the vehicle is equipped with an operational passenger side airbag.
- ★ Except for when children under 2 years of age are transported, the restraint requirements in this Rule do not apply to vehicles not required by federal or state law to be equipped with seat restraints.

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#### **FOR EXAMPLE**

Public transportation such as school buses, city buses and taxi cabs are not required to have seat belts. If a center uses one of these methods of transportation, child restraint seats are not required for children over the age of two.

- HH** – If using public transportation know the route and schedule so children and staff will not have to wait for long periods of time. Plan how to pay fares. Plan to ride when there will not be crowded conditions and identify safe locations to board and exit the vehicle. Keep the distance and time spent traveling appropriate for the age of the children.

- ☑ If you are interested in purchasing a 12 to 15 passenger van there are some limitations to consider. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration requires any person selling or leasing a new vehicle for use as a school bus to sell or lease a vehicle that meets all applicable federal standards applicable to school buses. Conventional 12 to 15 passenger vans do not meet these standards; therefore new conventional 12 to 15 passenger vans cannot be sold or leased to child care programs to transport school age children to and from school or related events. For more information visit NHTSA's web site at [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov).

-  Refer to the resource section for a copy of the **North Carolina Child Passenger Safety Law**.



For the requirements for the transportation of children by child care centers in North Carolina see [www.buckleupnc.org](http://www.buckleupnc.org).

# RESOURCE SECTION

## Chapter 10: TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

**The following pages contain resource materials discussed in or related to the preceding chapter.**

Some of the resources are forms created by the Division of Child Development and must be used by licensed child care centers. Other materials are provided as a resource only for child care centers and can be used at the discretion of the center.

Center operators may also wish to use this section to add any additional resource materials they have that are related to the chapter or information that is specific to their child care center.