

# IDEA & BUS DRIVER TRAINING

Transportation is a related service under the IDEA. With the new (reauthorized) IDEA, we will likely need to start writing behavior intervention plans for students when there are problems on the bus. We need to train our bus drivers to deal with situations.

Strategies and Tips	Strategies and Tips (con't)
<p><b>1. Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <b>Do not yell or scream at students.</b> “If I have to tell you one more time to stop fooling around, I’m stopping the bus and throwing all of you out!” Getting angry and making threats like that show the students that you’ve lost control. Plus, they know you won’t throw them off the bus, so why should they listen at all.</li> <li>· <b>Don’t plead or beg.</b> “For the third time, won’t you all sit down?” Who’s the boss here? You have the right and responsibility to expect the students to behave and that must be reflected in your words and attitude.</li> <li>· <b>Don’t use the word try.</b> “Can’t you just try to keep your hands to yourself?” You don’t want your passengers to try anything, you want them to do it. So say so: “Sarah, pick up your books and walk quietly off the bus.”</li> <li>· <b>Start your sentences with a directive.</b> Tell students what to do, not what they shouldn’t do. “Joe, stop jumping up and down.”</li> <li>· <b>Use verbal praise to encourage and reinforce continued good behavior.</b> Use your communication skills for encouraging positive behavior as well as disciplining. “Thanks, Lisa. I really appreciate that you... (fill in the blank).” “Josh, I’m really proud of the way you... helped the kindergartners get on the bus. “Good for you, Kevin, you... rode all the way home without my having to tell you to sit down.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. Phrases to Buy Time with Angry Parents:</b></p> <p>You have a busload of students and an irate parent comes at you. What to do? The following phrases allow you a minute or so to collect your thoughts and plan for the best approach in dealing with the angry parent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· “Wait just a second while I get some paper and pen to write down all of your concerns.”</li> <li>· “I need to finish my route now. Is there a time when I can call you so we can talk more about this?”</li> <li>· “I need to hear your concerns, but I can’t discuss this in front of the kids. Is there a time we can talk more about this?”</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Tips for Dealing With Aggressive Parents:</b></p> <p><b>Do:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Listen.</li> <li>· Write down what the parents say.</li> <li>· When they slow down, ask them what else is bothering them.</li> <li>· Ask them to clarify any complaints that are too general.</li> <li>· Show them the list and ask if it’s complete.</li> <li>· Ask them for suggestions for solving any of the problems they’ve listed.</li> <li>· Write down the suggestions.</li> <li>· As they speak louder, you speak softer.</li> </ul> <p><b>Don’t:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Argue.</li> <li>· Defend or become defensive.</li> <li>· Promise things you can’t produce.</li> <li>· Own problems that belong to others.</li> <li>· Raise your voice.</li> <li>· Belittle or minimize the problem.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Positive Reinforcement Ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Allow students to choose whom they want to sit with as a reward.</li> <li>· Let them know when they do a good job.</li> <li>· Praise them.</li> <li>· Use eye and voice contact upon entering bus.</li> <li>· Stress safety when dealing with playful behavior.</li> <li>· Be consistent.</li> <li>· Institute games.</li> <li>· Use stickers.</li> <li>· Compliment students on something every day.</li> <li>· Give older students responsibility.</li> <li>· Play verbal games.</li> <li>· Show respect.</li> <li>· Greet each student as they get on the bus in morning and say goodbye as they get off.</li> <li>· Report good behavior to principal/assistant principal.</li> <li>· Offer a surprise at the end of a set period of time for best behavior.</li> <li>· Reward good behavior with being first on the bus when loading at school.</li> <li>· Inform parents of good behavior by note, phone or in person.</li> <li>· Smile.</li> <li>· Use students’ names.</li> <li>· Pass out unusual books and toys to well behaving students while they are riding on the bus.</li> <li>· Ask if they have had a good day.</li> <li>· Introduce yourself and have them repeat your name.</li> <li>· Get to know students’ personalities and match them with others with similar personalities for seating.</li> <li>· Use hand stamps or stars recognizing good behavior for parents to see.</li> <li>· Allow students to be helpers (e.g., count students as they unload at school).</li> <li>· Give a pat on the back for doing a good job.</li> <li>· Hand out Popsicles at the end of the year.</li> </ul> <p><i>Source: These ideas were generated by bus drivers at a training on managing behavior.</i></p>

Diana Browning Wright, from information contained in an article in *Special Educator, LRP, 1998* about a bus training program in Leander, Texas. Training was developed by N. Tarvin & B. LaCaze, “Transportation Training: ABC’s of Behavior Management”, Leander Independent School District.