



# Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

## Arranging Transportation Services

NYC students can get MetroCards or busing depending on their grade and how far they live from school. Students who have disabilities, live in shelters or are in foster care can get busing based on other factors.

**Know your [rights](#)! Call or email the DOE until transportation is in place.**

### Who is eligible for different kinds of transportation services?

- **MetroCards:** All school-age students who live more than ½ mile from school are eligible for full fare MetroCards.
- **Busing based on grade/distance:** To get busing based on grade and distance, students must live in the same district (or for citywide programs in the same borough). Check the DOE's [website](#) for more information.
  - **Students in grades K–2** who live ½ mile or more from their school are eligible for busing to school from a designated bus stop if their school participates in a bus program.
  - **Students in grades 3–6** who live one mile or more from their school are eligible for busing to school from a designated bus stop if their school participates in a bus program.
  - **Exceptions:** There are exceptions to these rules for students in temporary housing, foster care, with medical needs, and more. See the DOE's [list of exceptions](#) for more information.
- **Specialized Transportation for Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities can get specialized busing if they need it because of their disability. Some reasons for needing specialized transportation are chronic medical needs, orthopedic issues, behavior or emotional needs, or other safety concerns. The IEP or 504 plan should list all necessary accommodations such as curb to school transportation, limited travel time, climate control, lift bus, two seats for a student who needs a paraprofessional or nurse to accompany them, etc. If your child needs specialized transportation but it's not on their IEP or 504 plan, ask your child's doctor to fill out the [Medical Accommodations Request Form](#). Submit it to your child's school well before the start of the school year or as soon as it's needed and follow up if you have not heard back.
- **Preschool Students:** The DOE does not provide bus service to 3-K and Pre-K programs except under limited circumstances for students in temporary housing or students in foster care. However, preschool students with an IEP recommending a special class or a special class in an integrated setting have the right to busing regardless of need. Contact [EarlyChildhoodBusing@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:EarlyChildhoodBusing@schools.nyc.gov) if transportation is not in place, and see AFC's [Early Childhood Education Guide](#) for more information.
- **Students in temporary housing:** The McKinney-Vento act gives students in temporary housing the right to transportation to and from school. Students in temporary housing can get busing or a MetroCard, and parents of younger students in temporary housing can also get a free MetroCard to take their child to and from school. Learn more in AFC's [Tip Sheet for Students in Temporary Housing](#)

### How do I know if my child's bus route or accommodations are set up?

Call your child's school or check under "transportation" on your [MyStudent account page](#). If you don't have a MyStudent account, ask your school to help you create one.

The bus company should call you with pick-up and drop-off information the week before school. If they don't, call them and find out your child's pickup time. The bus will not wait more than a minute or two.

You should also check to make sure the bus company knows about any accommodations your child needs. If your child's IEP or 504 plan requires accommodations that aren't in place yet, talk to your school or CSE if your child is attending a non-public school.

### ***My child isn't being picked up on time. What can I do?***

If the bus is coming before or after the pickup time, call the bus company, your child's school and OPT. You should file a complaint and get a complaint number. Follow the complaint process outlined below.

Your child should not have to leave class early to get on the bus. If this is happening, ask your child's school and OPT to work with the bus company to come up with a later afternoon pickup time.

### ***Help! The bus driver, matron or other students are rude to my child.***

Your child has a right to a safe and respectful environment when they travel to school. If your child is being treated inappropriately by bus staff or other students you can complain to the school, or to OPT.

### ***What if we move?***

If you move during the school year, inform the school of your new address immediately; the school will change the address in the system and ask OPT for a new bus route. The process will take a few days.

### ***What if my busing isn't in place yet and I must find another way to get my child to school?***

Check the [DOE'S website](#) for the most current information on ridesharing/reimbursement.

### ***Where do I go for help with transportation issues?***

**STEP 1: Call the school to ask about the transportation status.** If there is no bus route, ask the school to enter the address and to contact OPT immediately. Typically, it takes OPT 5–7 days to route a student after the school puts it in.

If transportation has been set up but there are issues, ask the school to complain to OPT and give you a complaint number.

**STEP 2: Contact OPT at (718) 392-8855 or <https://supporthub.schools.nyc/family-questions/Transportation>.** Describe what is going on and ask to file a complaint. Write down the complaint number. **TIP: if you stay on hold, you will eventually get to someone even if the recording tells you to call your school.**

**STEP 3: Follow up with OPT and the school.** Call back every day there is a problem and keep a log of the complaint numbers and issues. If it is not fixed, ask to speak with a supervisor at OPT.

**STEP 4: Contact Special Education or file a complaint.** If calling OPT isn't fixing the issue you can contact the Central Special Education office at [specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov) or (718) 935-2007. If your child has an IEP, you have the right to file an impartial hearing over busing issues. You can also file a complaint with the [State Education Department](#) or the [Office of Civil Rights](#).

**ADVOCACY TIP:**  
Have the student's NYC ID number (a 9-digit number assigned to every NYC public school student) handy when you call OPT.

***Still have more questions? Please call the Jill Chaifetz Education Helpline:***

Monday through Thursday • 10 am to 4 pm • 1-866-427-6033 (toll free) • [www.advocatesforchildren.org](http://www.advocatesforchildren.org)

*This Tip Sheet does not constitute legal advice. It attempts to summarize existing policies or laws without stating the opinion of*

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