

# Travel Instruction – Familiarization, Orientation and Travel Training

## Module 4



## **Module 4: Travel Instruction – Familiarization, Orientation and Travel Training**

### Learning Objectives

- Increase knowledge regarding the competencies of travel instructors
- Understand differences across travel orientation, familiarization and travel training
- Identify the various sources to gather information for the travel assessment process

## How are Travel Instruction Services Administered?

- Schools, human service organizations, transit agencies, or a combination can provide travel instruction services
- If schools are interested in using the services provided by an external organization, it is important for them to ask questions about the credentials of the organization and the competency of the travel trainers themselves

## Competencies and Considerations for Travel Instruction

- Review Easter Seals Project ACTIONS' Product *Competencies for the Practice of Travel Instruction and Travel Training*
- Review Easter Seals Project ACTIONS' Product *Considerations for Selecting and Hiring Travel Trainers: A Compilation of Resources*

## Learning Activity

### In a small group, consider this case:

- Your district has done a resource mapping of its capacity to offer a full range of travel instruction services to students. This review has determined that the best model of service implementation would be for the district to contract with a local human services organization that has worked with schools for over 10 years to deliver travel instruction. You are on a selection committee asked to review the credentials of organizations which the district can contract.
  - *What questions would be important to ask the organization about its past experience?*
  - *Are there particular competencies of the travel instructors that are important for your students?*
  - *What other factors may influence the committee's decision to enter into a contract with an external organization?*

## Examples of Travel Instruction Programs

These examples are provided to help a learner see the range of organizations offering travel instruction; they are not necessarily examples of the best programs or programs with the best outcomes.

- School-based – Intermediate Unit
  - [NYC Department of Education](#)
  - [Bucks County Intermediate Unit](#)
- Human Services Organization
  - [The Kennedy Center, CT](#)
  - [New Jersey Travel Independence Program \(NJTIP\)](#)
- Transit-based
  - [Regional Transportation Authority \(Chicago\)](#)
  - [Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority](#)
- Combination

# TRAVEL INSTRUCTION MULTI-TIERED PROCESS

## About this Section

- The following provides an overview of the family of travel instruction services
- The content is intended to help learners understand this process and identify opportunities to be involved in travel instruction
- This section is not intended to prepare individuals to be travel trainers

## Travel Instruction

Travel instruction is the array, continuum, or family of services offered to individuals with disabilities, seniors, and others who need assistance to increase their mobility and travel on public transportation independently.

Association on Travel Instruction (ATI) - <http://www.travelinstruction.org/>

## **Travel Orientation**

- Individual or group activity conducted for the purpose of explaining the transportation system

## **Travel Familiarization**

- Individual or group activity to facilitate use of transportation systems with a travel trainer accompanying experienced traveler(s) on a new mode of transportation or route to point out/explain features of access and usability

## Travel Training

- One-to-one short-term instruction provided to an individual who has **previously traveled independently and needs additional training** or support to use a different mode of travel, a different route, mode of transit, or travel to a new destination - or -
- One-to-one comprehensive, specially designed instruction in the skills and behaviors necessary for independent travel on public transportation provided to an **individual who does not have independent travel concepts or skills** to go from point of origin of trip to destination and back

<http://www.travelinstruction.org/travel-training>

[Click to learn about the benefits of travel training from a CPS travel trainer.](#)

## Learning Activity

**In your role, how can you support travel instruction? Discuss ways you can:**

- Provide guidance around hiring travel instructors
- Collaborate on travel orientation and familiarization
- Serve as an intermediary between school and transit
- Support instruction – co-teach content
- Advocate for high quality programs and travel trainers

# TRAVEL TRAINING PROCESS

## Steps in the Travel Training Process

- Student Assessment
- Path of Travel Assessment
- Travel Instruction Plan
- Trip Planning – Natural and Built Environments
- Street Crossings
- Boarding, Riding and Deboarding
- Emergencies, Safety, Contingency Plans

# STUDENT ASSESSMENT

## Student Assessment

- Before travel trainers can provide services to students, they must first learn about the student's current travel skills
- How would you assess your own ability to travel independently in an unknown environment?

## Example of a Student Assessment Process Used in an Urban District

- File Review
- Collateral Contact Notes
- Student Observation
- Face to Face
- Task Analysis

## Student Assessment- File Review

The purpose of reviewing the file is to find out as much relevant information about the student's current level of performance.

- The trainer can review:
  - Psychological assessments
  - Social history
  - Medical history
  - Current and past Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
  - Information on the student's disability
  - Attendance data
  - Behavior and disciplinary Issues
- The trainer gains an understanding of where the student is cognitively, socially, emotionally, and becomes aware of any medical concerns

## Student Assessment- File Review

Other factors to consider:

- Repetition is retention!
  - Attendance history should reflect a minimum of 80%
  - If a student misses one or more days a week on average, it will be difficult for him to retain the instruction being given
  - Travel training is typically multiple consecutive days of instruction
- Behavior
  - The student's actions within the building could possibly be reflective of how he will behave in the community
  - Trainers should review the student's disciplinary file, as safety is the priority in this process

[Link to File  
Review  
Template](#)

## Student Assessment – Collateral Contact Notes

- Collateral contact notes\* provide a mechanism for individuals who have consistent contact with the student to provide written documentation about how they view the student's abilities
  - Can be captured on a simple form handed out by the travel trainer
  - Consider collecting notes from parents/guardians, case managers, special education providers, and related service providers
  - Generally seek to obtain a minimum of three
  - In combination with the file review and observation of the student, these help the travel trainer to obtain multiple perspectives on a student's abilities

*\*Collateral contact notes is a term used by Chicago Public Schools to refer to documentation from school colleagues that provides information about student skills related to travel instruction*

[Link to Collateral Contact Notes](#)

## Student Assessment – Observation

- Travel trainer observes the student in her natural school environment
  - Includes hallways, lunchroom and classrooms
  - The student does not know she is being observed, as it is intended to give the travel trainer a sense of how the student interacts with peers and school staff
  - Look for erratic or impulsive behavior, understanding of personal space, inappropriate staring, or serious issues such as flashing gang signs

## Student Assessment – Observation (cont.)

- If concerns are identified during the file review and observation:
  - The travel trainer should notify the special education provider/IEP team of the concerns so they can be addressed as part of the student’s educational services. This could potentially turn into IEP goals and benchmarks
  - If any safety issues are noticed, the process should be terminated at this point until those issues are addressed

[Link to Student  
Observation  
Assessment](#)

## Student Assessment-Face to Face

- Travel Trainer sits down with the student to ask them skill based questions
  - This is the first time that the student should realize they have been being observed
  - The trainer provides positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior
  - Any inappropriate behavior is discussed and the trainer expresses what is expected of the student while in the community as well as the school
  - The trainer is looking for good eye contact and if the student speaks clearly as these things will be important if the student must advocate for themselves while in the community
  - The trainer is looking to see if the student knows his/her emergency information and can recognize signs in the community

## Student Assessment – Task Analysis

- Travel trainer begins going in the community with the student to provide community-based travel instruction on:
  - Social skills including behavior of self, communicating with others as well as carrying and retrieving personal items
  - Safety skills including problem solving, seeking assistance and awareness of surroundings
  - Pedestrian skills including attention to traffic, traffic signs, traffic signals and crosswalks with the student
  - Public transportation skills including use of a transit card, identifying buses/route numbers, pulling the cord at the appropriate stop and sitting/standing near the front of the bus

## Student Assessment – Progress Notes

- The progress note is included on the task analysis form
  - Written on a daily basis to note the student's abilities and identify any possible areas of concern
  - The travel trainer uses these notes to strategize on methods of instruction to get the student to be an independent traveler

[Link to Student Assessment Progress Notes Template](#)

## Post-Assessment and Final Determination

- The post-assessment and final determination is included on the task analysis
  - The travel trainer assesses the student by shadowing the student in the community (following the student on the travel training route using no prompts and as few interventions as possible) to determine if the student is ready to self-travel
  - The travel training coordinator allocates another travel trainer to ride the bus with the student to observe him traveling independently (unaware that he is being watched) to ensure the student is riding public transportation safely and correctly

## Post-Assessment and Final Determination (cont.)

- Documentation of Results
  - Results are documented of the final day of the task analysis
  - The travel trainer finalizes the summary of the student's progress during the entire task analysis process in the progress notes section

## Post-Assessment and Final Determination

[Post Assessment  
& Final  
Determination  
Template](#)

- If the student has successfully completed the task analysis:
  - Recommendation is made for the student to self-travel
  - Recommendation is documented on the task analysis form
  - An IEP revision meeting is scheduled to discuss changing school bus services to fare cards to reflect that the student is traveling to and from school independently using public transportation if public transit is available to a student
- If the student has not successfully completed the task analysis:
  - A determination is made that the student is not able to self-travel at this time
  - Reasons why student is not recommended for self-travel is documented on task analysis form
  - Recommendations can assist an IEP team with driving IEP goals to build student skills

## Assessment Summary

- Trainees must have basic skills prior to enrolling in a travel training program
- Assessments should be based on the trainee's travel goal, skills and needs
- The assessment process must be respectful, trainee-centered and include the trainee's perspective
- While an organization may have an assessment form, process and policy, practices must reflect the skills and needs of the trainee

# PROVIDING TRAVEL INSTRUCTION

## Providing Travel Instruction

Once it is determined that a student is ready to participate in travel instruction, it is important to determine the level of instruction the student will need.

1. Orientation
2. Familiarization
3. Travel Training

## Travel Instruction – Orientation

- Group or individual activity conducted for the purpose of explaining the transportation systems; options and services available to address individual transportation needs; use of maps and schedules as resources for trip planning; fare system; use of mobility devices while boarding, riding and exiting; vehicular features; and benefits available

- Association of Travel Instruction

[www.travelinstruction.org](http://www.travelinstruction.org)

## Travel Instruction Orientation Training Activities

Trainer can provide an orientation to:

- Teach about transit fare structures and payment media
- Inform riders about equipment on buses and trains
  - Fare payment
  - Securement devices
  - Stop request cords/buttons
  - Stop announcements
  - Ramps and lifts
- Explain the components of the transit system
  - Bus and/or train routes
- Plan trips on transit

## Travel Instruction – Familiarization

- Individual or small group trip activity to facilitate use of transportation systems with a travel trainer accompanying experienced traveler(s) on a new mode of transportation or route to point out/explain features of access and usability.
  - Association of Travel Instruction  
[www.travelinstruction.org](http://www.travelinstruction.org)

## Travel Instruction Familiarization – Training Activities

- Accompanying a student on new trips pointing out:
  - Bus/train features and how to use them
  - Landmarks along bus/train routes
  - Connecting buses and trains
- Practicing safe transit skills in the field
- Practicing safe community pedestrian skills

## Travel Instruction – Travel Training

- One-to-one short-term instruction to an individual who has previously traveled independently and needs additional training or support to use a different mode of travel, a different route, mode of transit, or travel to a new destination; or
- One-to-one comprehensive, specially designed instruction in the skills and behaviors necessary for independent travel on public transportation provided to an individual who does not have independent travel concepts or skills to go from point of origin of trip to destination and back.

- Association of Travel Instruction

[www.travelinstruction.org](http://www.travelinstruction.org)

## Travel Training – Training Activities

- Instructing on a specific transit trip
- Enabling repetitive practice with fade back techniques
  - Demonstrate-Observe-Reteach
  - Slowly fade back, progressively letting student take the lead
  - Follow the student while he completes the trip independently
- Integrating planned mistakes to test student's ability to problem solve

## Discussion Questions

- Why do we review the student's file?
- What kinds of information can help inform the travel instruction process?
- From whom are collateral contact notes requested?
- What information is the travel trainer looking to obtain from a collateral contact note?
- Where does the student observation take place?

## Discussion Questions (cont.)

- What type of behavior(s) could cause further review by the team?
- What is the reason for the face-to-face interview?
- What type of information does the face-to-face interview provide?
- Is travel training right for every trainee?
- What basic skills should a trainee have prior to enrolling in travel training?
- Are there different skills necessary based on the mode of transportation?

## Outcomes of the Assessment Process

- A comprehensive assessment will inform educators, families and students about the kinds of transportation services that are aligned with student functional skills. In turn, assessment outcomes can help educators and travel trainers decide on the level of travel instruction that a student needs.
- The majority of time, students are found capable of using least restrictive kinds of transportation, such as fixed-route public transportation (buses, trains, trolleys, etc.).
- Less often, students may be referred to a human service provider or transit provider who will then complete an “eligibility assessment” to determine whether paratransit services are aligned with student functional skills.

[Learn More About Paratransit](#)

## Paratransit Services

- Sometimes students do not have the functional skills to travel independently on public transportation for some or all of their trips and may be eligible for paratransit services.
- Paratransit services are intended to be a safety net for times in which an individual is unable to use traditional fixed route. Eligibility is based on ability to use fixed route, not by diagnosis alone.
- Paratransit services are less flexible, as it requires advance registration, often one day in advance, and changes to trips throughout the day are often not possible due to the complexity of scheduling.
- Paratransit services operate within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile of the existing fixed route system only on the same days and times.
- Paratransit services can cost up to two times the regular fare on buses and trains, where on fixed route, people with disabilities are often eligible for a reduced fare.

## Learning Activity – Deciding on the Level of Travel Instruction Needed for a Student

The following scenarios describe two different outcomes of the assessment process. Use the discussion questions to help you decide on what outcomes and travel instruction services may be best for each student

**Scenario 1**  
**Bernice**

**Scenario 2**  
**Dennis**

**Congratulations, you have completed Module 4!**



Please take a few minutes and  
provide us with feedback

**Time to move on to Module 5!**