

Student Safety & Independence Training for Families Program

Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What is the Student Safety & Independence Training for Families Program?

The Student Safety & Independence Training for Families program is an initiative designed to empower families with the knowledge and resources to promote the safety skills of their own children with disabilities. Students with disabilities benefit from explicitly learning skills to ensure safety, leading to more freedom and independence, an increase in self-esteem, and more opportunities for jobs and independent living in the future. If each skill is embedded and practiced until the student has demonstrated mastery, they should be able to travel using the city's transit systems and pedestrian routes rather than yellow busing or other special transportation, ultimately improving availability of specialized transportation for those students who need it most. This program fosters independence, enhances community inclusion, and builds a network of support among families navigating similar challenges.

This program is **not** considered a full “travel training” program, which is a program where specially designed instruction is provided on a one-to-one basis by specifically trained NYCPS personnel. To refer a student for travel training, call 212-802-1625 or email d75traveltraining@schools.nyc.gov.

2. Who is this program for?

This program is designed to be most impactful for NYC families of students with disabilities other than blindness or visual impairments between the ages of 14 and 21. Families of students currently traveling by yellow bus to and from school who are interested in building their child’s independence through learning to travel safely in their community utilizing public transportation are invited to participate.

If your child is blind or is diagnosed with low vision, they may receive orientation & mobility training to improve their ability to be aware of and move safely in their environments. For more information about this related service, speak to your child’s IEP team, or contact [Educational Vision Services](#).

3. Why should I participate?

Independent travel can increase your child’s access to education, employment, and social opportunities—and boost their confidence! This program offers families training, tools, and support to safely guide their child toward that goal. It also builds community among families with shared experiences and challenges.

4. What skills will families learn?

Families will receive training on:

- The 9 essential safety and independence skills used by expert travel trainers
- Understanding intersections and pedestrian safety
- Mapping and planning safe travel routes
- Using tools like transit maps, cue cards, and identification cards
- Problem-solving skills for unexpected situations (e.g., missed stops, getting lost)
- Strategies for social interaction and navigating public spaces

5. What’s the total time commitment?

The program includes:

- 5 virtual workshops on Zoom (~10 hours total; families may attend live or review recorded sessions)

- Optional virtual office hours for continued support (~4 hours total)
- Guided practice sessions with your child in your community (flexible timing – we suggest practicing skills to personal engagements as well as to and from school daily to familiarize your child with the route & practice responding to unplanned changes)
- Opportunity to reconvene your child's IEP team to review transportation recommendations (time/duration will vary; with your consent, the IEP may also be amended to make these changes without a meeting)

6. Do I have to change my child's IEP to participate in the program?

If you participate in and complete the training, to receive the OMNY cards to begin applying the skills learned with your child in the community, you must agree to amend their IEP to remove the specialized busing recommendation. This is because the goal of the program is to support students in traveling independently. The amendment may be completed with your consent and in agreement with the IEP team, either with or without a full IEP meeting.

7. Can I change my mind after agreeing to participate?

Yes. If you decide that your child is not ready for independent travel, you may request an IEP meeting at any time to revisit the transportation recommendation. However, if you return to specialized busing, you will be required to return both the parent and student OMNY cards.

8. When and how do I apply?

To apply, submit [this form](#). If you have trouble completing the form, reach out to FamilySafetyTraining@schools.nyc.gov for support.

Live training sessions are typically offered in the summer or early fall. Visit the [Other Special Education Services](#) page to check for upcoming training dates.

A limited number of spots are available for the live sessions, so we encourage early applications! Recorded sessions are available on a rolling basis.

9. Is the training only for parents, or can an adult sibling or other designated adult attend the training and support my child while traveling?

Only the parent/guardian can consent to participate in this program and agree to amend the IEP. If the parent/guardian wishes to have another adult attend the training and travel with their child, they must

designate a specific adult (over the age of 18) who will attend the full training and supervise the student while traveling.

10. What happens after the training?

Families will begin practicing skills with their children in familiar community settings. The goal is for students to gradually build confidence and independence so they may begin traveling on their own as soon as possible. Families can request to reconvene IEP meetings to revise transportation recommendations as appropriate (contact your IEP team to make this change).

11. What Happens if I don't complete all five training sessions?

Families must complete all five sessions to receive the OMNY cards and participate fully in the program. The sessions build on each other to ensure that you are equipped to safely support your child.

12. What if I'm nervous about teaching my child to travel?

That's completely understandable—and common. Many families feel unsure at first. This program was designed specifically for family members or guardians with no prior training experience. You'll be guided step-by-step by trained instructors, hear from other families who have done this successfully, and receive resources and materials to support your journey.

This program is built around supporting you in making the decision to allow your child to travel independently. If, after completing training and practicing with your child, you do not feel your child is ready, you can meet with your IEP team to discuss returning to special transportation.

13. Is there a cost to participate?

No. This program is free for families. Eligible families may receive OMNY cards for use during travel training. If a family chooses to return to specialized transportation after the program, the OMNY card(s) must be returned.

14. Will this replace the yellow bus or curb-to-school transportation?

Participation in this program can lead to changes in your child's transportation recommendation if you and the IEP team agree they are ready for more independent travel after completing the training program. If at any time a family wishes to return to special transportation, they may request an IEP meeting to discuss the need for busing/to determine whether there is a need for specialized transportation to be

recommended on the IEP.

15. What support is available during and after the program?

- Weekly virtual workshops
- Virtual peer discussion and office hours
- Downloadable resources and social stories
- Direct access to trained travel instructors and mentors
- Ongoing evaluation and opportunity to share feedback

16. Who is facilitating the training sessions?

The curriculum and materials provided in this pilot are developed by the District 75 Office of Travel Training, which is part of the Division of Inclusive and Accessible Learning. The program is grounded in five decades of travel training expertise and designed with student and family needs at its core.