

# Does your child have a disability and ride a school bus? Here's what you need to know.



## Does your child get special education at school because of a disability?

At least once a year the school will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting. This is called an IEP Team meeting. (It used to be called an M Team and some people still use this name.) This meeting decides what help the school will give your child.



The **IEP Team** is a group of people who will decide what kind of help your child will get. You are a member of the IEP Team. It is important for you to attend the meetings. You know more about your child than anyone else does. You should go to the IEP meetings if you want to help decide how the school will help your child.

## What happens when the IEP Team meets?

At the meeting, the team will decide what your child will be taught. They will decide what kind of help your child will get from the school.

They also decide if your child will get transportation.<sup>1</sup> This can be travel to and from school or between schools. It can be travel in and around the school buildings or even special equipment like ramps.<sup>2</sup>

The IEP Team should make sure that children with disabilities get any extra help they need on the bus.<sup>3</sup> If your child is going to ride the school bus, make sure he or she will be safe.

**Make sure the school knows about your child's special needs. Make sure any decisions about transportation are written in your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP).**

Does your child need a **bus with a lift** because he or she is in a wheelchair? Does the bus need equipment so the wheelchair won't roll around? Tell the IEP Team.

Does your child need **air conditioning or heating** because of medical problems? Tell the IEP Team the bus needs this equipment.

Can your child sit safely in the bus? Does your child need a **seat belt**? Does your child need **special seating**? Tell the IEP Team.



Does your child have **medical or behavior problems**? Does your child need an adult along to ride safely on a bus? Tell the IEP Team.

Does your child have medical problems that might make him or her **need a doctor right away**? If so, the bus should have a radio or phone so the driver can call for help. Does the bus driver or assistant need training about what to do if your child has an emergency? Tell the IEP Team if this is important to keep your child safe.



Does your child need **help getting on and off** the bus? Does someone need to check to make sure your child gets off the bus? Does someone need to meet your child when he or she gets off the

bus? Is it okay for the driver to **leave your child** if no one is there to meet him or her? Tell the IEP Team.

The law says that the school has to give children with disabilities the help they need to learn. The IEP Team should decide what each child needs. Make sure the IEP Team knows what your child needs and writes it into the plan.



**Are you having trouble getting a good transportation plan for your child? Below are the parts of the federal law that describe your child's right. Show this to the IEP Team.**

<sup>1</sup> Each disabled child's IEP team must be able to determine the appropriate mode of transportation for a child based on the child's needs. That team makes all other decisions relating to the provision of special education and related services; and transportation is a specific statutory service listed in the definition of related services. It is assumed that most children with disabilities will receive the same transportation provided to nondisabled children, unless the IEP team determines otherwise. However, for some children with disabilities, integrated transportation may not be achieved unless needed accommodations are provided to address each child's unique needs. As with other provisions in these regulations relating to qualified personnel, all personnel who provide required services under this part, including bus drivers, must be appropriately trained. *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Attachment 1 – Analysis of Comments and Changes, Federal Register, Volume 64, No. 48, p.12551, Friday, March 12, 1999.*

<sup>2</sup> Related services means transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. Transportation includes travel to and from school and between schools; travel in and around school buildings; and specialized equipment (such as special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps), if required to provide special transportation for a child with a disability. *34 CFR §300.24*

<sup>3</sup> As with other related services, a public agency must provide transportation as a related service if it is required to assist the disabled child to benefit from special education. In determining whether to include transportation in a child's IEP, and whether the child needs to receive transportation as a related service, it would be appropriate to have at the IEP meeting a person with expertise in that area. In making this determination, the IEP team must consider how the child's disability affects the child's need for transportation, including determining whether the child's disability prevents the child from using the same transportation provided to nondisabled children, or from getting to school in the same manner as nondisabled children. The public agency must ensure that any transportation service included in a child's IEP as a related service is provided at public expense and at no cost to the parents, and that the child's IEP describes the transportation arrangement. *34 CFR, Appendix A to Part 300 – Notice of Interpretation, Federal Register, Vol. 64, No. 48, p. 12479, Friday, March 12, 1999.*

**Need help with special education?**  
These agencies may be able to help.

**Special Education Action Network  
of Tennessee (SPAN-TN)**  
(615) 321-5699

**Tennessee Protection and Advocacy**  
(615) 298-1080

**Support and Training for Exceptional  
Parents (STEP) 1-800-280-7837**

## ***Legal Aid Society***

*of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland*

gives free legal help to people who have low income or are over age 65.

**1-800-238-1443**

**It's a free call.**

**NOTE: This pamphlet is not meant to take the place of advice from a lawyer. All cases are different and need individual attention.** August 2001

# **Tennessee Legal Aid/ Legal Services Offices**

## **Legal Aid Society** of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland

**1-800-238-1443**

**Offices in Clarksville, Columbia, Cooke-  
ville, Gallatin, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Oak  
Ridge, and Tullahoma**

## **West Tennessee Legal Services**

**Jackson Office** 1-800-372-8346

**Dyersburg Office** (731) 285-8181

**Huntingdon Office** (731) 986-8975

**Selmer Office** (731) 645-7961

## **Memphis Area Legal Services**

**Memphis Office** 1-888-207-6386

**Covington Office** (901) 476 -1808

## **Legal Aid of East Tennessee**

**Knoxville Office** (865) 637-0484

**Johnson City Office** 1-800-321-5561

**Kingsport Office** 1-800-821-1309

**Chattanooga Office** 1-800-572-7457

**Cleveland Office** 1-800-445-3219