

Child Passenger Safety on School Buses



NATIONAL TRAINING



Handout • Introduction

COURSE RESOURCES

- School bus-related resources that support this training are available online. Bookmark the following web page for future reference. The **Child Occupant Protection Glossary** is available on this site.

<https://cpsboard.org/school-bus>

TERMINOLOGY

- In the school bus industry, child restraints are referred to as **Child Safety Restraint Systems** or **CSRS**.
- **Children with disabilities:** Use person-first terminology. State the “child” first and then add the disability (i.e., a “child with Down Syndrome” rather than a “Down Syndrome child”).
 - Terminology changes as society changes. The term “special needs” is less-used today, with government and social agencies updating their terminology to include “children with disabilities” and “accommodation for needs” in place of “special needs.”

LAWS AND GUIDELINES

Who establishes occupant protection laws for children?

Federal Government

- **NHTSA Guideline for the Safe Transportation of Pre-school Age Children in School Buses** was issued in 1999, based on NHTSA testing of preschool-size dummies seated on school bus seating.
- The guideline states that preschool-age children in a school bus should be properly secured in a CSRS that:
 - Is appropriate for the child's age, weight, height and developmental level.
 - Meets FMVSS 213.
 - Is properly secured to the school bus seat, using anchorages that meet FMVSS.

<https://one.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/buses/Guide1999/prekfinal.htm>

- Head Start program

- 🔗 <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/head-start-program-performance-standards-showcase/regulations-overview>

- Search “Transportation” to find [1303 Subpart F](#), the performance standards for Head Start transportation.

States

- GHSA (Governor’s Highway Safety Association) state child passenger safety laws

- 🔗 <https://www.ghsa.org/state-laws>

- These laws pertain to general transportation of children in the state, and often school bus transportation is exempt. To learn more in your state about laws related to school buses, contact your state's director of pupil transportation.
 - Find a listing of state directors at:

- 🔗 <https://nasdpts.org/State-Director-Map>

Local

- School District Rules and Policies

- Contact your local education authorities (LEAs) to learn about the rules and child transportation policies in your area.

CSRS/School Bus Manufacturers

- Manufacturers of CSRS (child safety restraint systems) and buses establish their own use guidelines and instructions while also meeting government requirements.

- Links to major CSRS and bus manufactures can be found in the Introduction Module resources on cpsboard.org/school-bus.
 - Use your Internet search engine to locate manufacturer resources.
 - CSRS manufacturer contact information is also supplied on CSRS labels and in instruction manuals.

- NHTSA’s car seat **Ease-of-Use Ratings** let you compare how easy it is to use certain car seat features in passenger vehicles (which may provide useful information for certain ease-of-use features of conventional CSRS used on school buses, as well).

- 🔗 <https://www.nhtsa.gov/car-seats-and-booster-seats/car-seat-ease-use-ratings>

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY RESOURCES

- **National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS)**. This organization of state transportation officials provides contact information for each state’s transportation director; position statements; and other resources on its website.

- 🔗 <https://nasdpts.org>

- **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).** NHTSA’s school bus safety page provides information on school bus regulations, seat belts on school buses, and bus stop safety.
<https://nhtsa.gov/road-safety/school-bus-safety>
- **American School Bus Council (ASBC).** This educational site, formed through a collaboration of trade organizations (National Association of Pupil Transportation and National School Transportation Association, NASDPTS and the major school bus manufacturers), provides information to promote the safety and value of school buses.
<https://www.americanschoolbuscouncil.org/>
- **National Congress on School Transportation (NCST).** This organization convenes delegates from each state every five years to maintain the student transportation industry’s voluntary set of guidelines. Its website, hosted by NASDPTS, includes a link to the National School Transportation Specification and Procedures document.
<https://nasdpts.org/ncst-nstsp>
- **National Safety Council (NSC).** The National Safety Council’s page on school bus safety provides safety tips for at the bus stop, around the bus stop, on the bus and getting on/off the bus.
<https://www.nsc.org/community-safety/safety-topics/school-safety/buses-safest-transportation-for-school-children>
- **Safe Ride News.** Safe Ride News, a publisher of printed and online resources for the child passenger safety field, publishes materials that focus on the safety of preschoolers and children with disabilities on school buses.
<https://www.saferidenews.com>

PROGRESS CHECK

- What term does the school bus industry use to refer to child restraints on school buses?

- Which federal agency developed and oversees this training?

- At what ages do children attend Early Head Start? Head Start?

