

Washita Valley Community Action Council Head Start Program Transportation Manual

Introduction

Transportation is one part of a large system of services provided to children and families. It plays an important role in supporting the overall goals of the program. Washita Valley Head Start children are transported to their local centers in the following ways:

- By their parents or other family members
- By other parents at times
- Members of the community
- Public School
- Head Start buses
- Washita Valley Transit System

Washita Valley Community Action Council Head Start has identified the true costs of providing transportation in order to compare the costs of providing transportation directly versus contracting for the service. Washita Valley contracts transportation services with public school systems and in Chickasha with the Washita Valley Transit System.

Head Start children depend on transportation personnel to provide them with a safe ride to and from Head Start centers. Transportation services are established as the mutual responsibility of the transportation personnel, administrative staff, and parents of children using transportation services.

Transportation providers must have the knowledge and skills to adequately provide for the safety of Head Start children transported in agency vehicles. It is imperative that staff providing transportation services be familiar with this Head Start Transportation Manual, State Commercial Drivers' Regulations, Federal Department of Transportation Regulations, Oklahoma DHS Child Care Licensing Regulations, and Part 1310 of the Head Start Performance Standards.

General Guidelines

This manual contains specific and detailed information to provide guidance for the transportation services for Head Start children which are provided by Washita Valley Head Start or contracted by Washita Valley Community Action Council Head Start.

Section A: Staffing

Staffing: The following positions and roles are essential for the safe and efficient operation of a transportation program.

Facility Maintenance/Transportation Supervisor and/or Transit Route Supervisor

This position is responsible for the overall operation of the Head Start transportation program ensuring the safe and efficient transport of children between Head Start and home and to special services as needed. Major responsibilities include but are not limited to the following.

- Setting up a system and ensuring maintenance of the buses and/or vans, ensuring that they are kept clean and in safe repair at all times;
- Working with the Human Resource Manager to ensure drivers have the proper licenses and training to comply with all local, state and federal regulations.
- Working with the Human Resource Manager to ensure random drug and alcohol testing of drivers and monitors;
- Training, supervising and evaluating drivers including substitutes.
- Monitoring bus routes to comply with regulations;
- In cooperation with the Procurement Clerk/Administrative Assistant, arranging for cost-effective vehicle maintenance agreements with vendors;

See program job description for specific job duties for the position assigned to oversee transportation services in the local program.

2. Driver's Role

This position is responsible for assisting with the transportation of children between Head Start and home including special services as well as helping to keep the buses clean and in safe operating condition at all times. Major responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

- Performs daily pre-trip safety inspection of the bus, including maintenance of fire and safety supplies on the bus and monitors and maintains all vehicle fluid levels.
- Keeps the interior and exterior of the bus clean.
- Drives for regular class days, transition activities, and other services as needed.
- Follows the safest and most efficient routes possible given the location of the children and center, as determined with the staff person in charge of transportation services or his/her designee(s).
- Obeys all applicable laws and regulations to ensure the safety of passengers.

- Shares information on a daily basis with classroom staff, such as conversation with parents and observations of children.
- Ensures that the bus is empty at the end of each run and that all children are accounted for.
- Maintains required paperwork for vehicle/fueling, maintenance and program requirements.
- Performs emergency bus evacuation drills at least three times per year.
- Follows Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations, Commercial Driver's License (CDL) rules and other local transportation and state child care regulations as applicable.

See program job description for specific job duties.

3. Bus Monitor Role

This position is responsible for assisting the Driver to carry out functions associated with the operation of transportation services. The role of the Bus Monitor is to focus on the children as riders so that the Driver can focus on safe driving. The Bus Monitor shares the primary responsibility for the supervision and safety of the children on the bus during its operation. The Bus Monitor needs to be knowledgeable about young children's development in order to respond to their individual and group needs.

Major responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following.

- Assist as requested to perform pre-trip safety checklist for the interior and exterior of the bus including maintenance of fire and safety supplies and child restraints.
- Greets parents/guardians and children at pick up and drop off and assists with signing children on and off the bus.
- Interacts with children during bus route for socializing and educational experiences.
- Ensures that children remain seated and that child restraints are properly adjusted and worn at all times.
- Communicates with parents/guardians as needed.
- Ensures that the bus is empty at the end of each run and that all children are accounted for.

- Knowledge of the same rules of driving as the driver.

See program job description for specific job duties

4. Parent's/Guardian's Role

Head Start parents/guardians must be aware of the transportation requirements affecting their children. This is accomplished by having parents/guardian sign transportation agreement outlining rules and requirements of participation. Parents/legal guardians or individuals whom they identify as able to pick up their child, must be responsible for escorting children to the vehicle, and receiving them upon their return. Parents/guardians sign the child on/off the bus using the sign-in sheets with the Driver or Bus Monitor.

Major responsibilities of parent/guardian include but are not limited to the following.

- Respecting the bus schedule: Having children ready when the bus arrives in the morning and having someone who is authorized on the child's application or on the Transportation Request/Agreement form to receive the child in the afternoon.
- Notifying the center when the child will not be riding the bus.
- Notifying the center of transportation concerns.

Section B: Training

Training: Transportation personnel will receive training provided by Washita Valley Transportation Supervisors or other professionals knowledgeable about transporting young children. Training for each transportation staff member is maintained by the Human Resource Manager.

Comprehensive training for transportation staff is mandated in Head Start Performance Standards 1310.17 and includes the following topics:

1. Bus Drivers

Drivers *must* receive training in the following areas prior to transporting any Washita Valley Head Start child and at least annually thereafter:

A combination of classroom and behind the wheel instruction sufficient to enable each driver to:

- Operate the vehicle in a safe and efficient manner;
- Safely run a fixed route, including loading and unloading children, stopping at railroad crossings, and performing other specialized driving maneuvers;
- Administer basic first aid in case of injury;

- Handle emergency situations, including vehicle evacuation procedures;
- Operate any special equipment, such as wheelchair lifts, assistance devices or special occupant restraints;
- Conduct routine maintenance and pre-trip inspections of the vehicle;
- Maintain accurate records as necessary.

Drivers *must also* receive training in following areas:

- The goals and underlying philosophy of Head Start and the ways they are implemented by the program.
- Washita Valley's plan for identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.
- In addition to Head Start training, drivers will be required to complete the initial and annual refresher training required for acquiring and maintaining the CDL driver's permit.

2. Bus Monitors

Bus Monitors *must* receive training in the following areas prior to being assigned to a bus transporting Head Start children and annually thereafter:

- Child boarding and exiting procedures;
- Use of child restraint systems;
- Required paperwork;
- Emergency evacuation procedures;
- Use of special equipment, if applicable;
- Child pick-up and release procedures;
- Pre-and post-trip vehicle check;
- First Aide and CPR.
- Curriculum activities while children are on the bus.

3. Parents

Parents whose children use the Head Start transportation service *must* receive training in the following areas within 30 days of program start date or within 30 days of the date their child begins to ride the bus. Parents will read and sign a Transportation Request/Agreement form prior to their child riding the bus, and will receive training by their center director or classroom teacher on the following:

- Pedestrian safety, to include the need for an adult to accompany the child to and from the bus stop;
- Training on how to reinforce the learning that their children receive in Head Start related to bus safety.

4. Children

All children *must* receive training in the following areas within 30 days of the program start date or 30 days from the date they begin to ride the bus. The training is to be included on the weekly lesson plan.

- Safe riding practices;
- Safety procedures for boarding and leaving the bus;
- Safety procedures in crossing the street to and from the bus at stops;
- Recognition of the danger zones around the bus;
- Emergency evacuation procedures, including participation in an emergency evacuation drill.

Section D: Safety

Safety: The safe transportation of Head Start children is the priority of Washita Valley Head Start transportation services. To ensure that the transportation services are safe, Head Start employees must adhere to the following requirements.

1. Equipment and Supplies: Equipment and supplies must be checked monthly using the equipment checklist located on the bus inspection form, and deficiencies corrected immediately. If safe operation of the bus is jeopardized by supplies that are missing or equipment that is faulty, the bus *must* not operate until the deficiency is corrected.

Supplies that must be checked:

- First Aide Kit – First Aide Kits are to be checked by the driver at the beginning of the school year and monthly thereafter to ensure that items are not missing from

its contents and that all items are usable. Missing items must be reported immediately to the Health Manager, who will replace the items. **A sign must indicate the location of the First Aid kit.**

- Fire Extinguisher – Fire Extinguishers are to be checked monthly by the driver. Remove it from its bracket, checking to see if it is charged, shake well to ensure that the chemicals inside have not solidified, and replace securely back in it bracket. **A sign must indicate its location on the bus.**
- Seat Belt Cutter – A seat belt cutter must be available on board vehicles for use in an emergency evacuation. **A sign must indicate its secured location on the bus.**
- Child Restraint Systems – Child restraint systems have to be adjusted for the child’s height and weight and the bus monitor must check the fit of the child restraint each time the child is buckled into the restraint.
- Communication system – Each bus must have a two-way communication system on board to call for assistance in case of an emergency (cell phone, two way radio, etc.) The communication system must be checked daily for proper operation. The bus must not run without a working communication system.
- Emergency contact information – A photocopy of the emergency contact information collected at enrollment and maintained in the child’s file must be kept on board the bus at all times. The information must updated when family information changes.
- Emergency supplies – A flashlight, extra batteries, and drinking water must be kept on board all buses. In cold weather, emergency blankets must be on the bus. The driver must check these supplies on a monthly basis.
- Blood Borne Pathogen Clean-up Kit – Each bus must carry a blood borne pathogen kit. The kit must be checked monthly by the driver to ensure that all items are serviceable. Items needed must be reported to the Head Start Health Manager, or Washita Valley Transit Transportation Manager.

2. Basic Procedures

- Pre-trip inspections – The driver with the help of the bus monitor if requested, must perform a pre-trip inspection of the bus daily. (See Pre-Trip Inspection Form for a detailed list of each item to be inspected) Pre-trips are done before the first route of the day. If there are any defects found during a pre-trip inspection or any other time, these defects need to be corrected. The type of defect found would determine whether or not the vehicle can be used to transport children. If the defect is found to be a major defect that poses danger to passengers, the driver, or other motorists, the vehicle must not be used and will be excluded from use until the defect is corrected. If the defect is minor, it must be corrected within

a reasonable time. All pre-trip inspections must be documented and maintained on record for at least three years by the Transportation Supervisor for Chickasha and by the Facility Maintenance Supervisor for other sites.

- Post-trip inspections – Post-trip inspections must be done immediately at the end of every route to ensure all children have exited. This responsibility must be shared by the driver and the bus monitor. Documentation of post-trip inspections is required and is submitted to the Transportation Supervisor at Chickasha and the Facility Maintenance Supervisor for all other sites. Post trip inspections must include:

a) Ensuring that no children are left in the vehicle!!

- b) Picking up trash/sweeping the vehicle.
- c) Taking items left on the bus to the office/classroom.
- d) Locking the vehicle.

- All baggage must be secured on the bus. Children’s backpacks will be buckled with them in the child restraint system and bus materials will be kept in a container which is secured with a strap.

- Mechanical breakdowns – The following procedures will be followed:

- a) Move the bus to the safest location off the road (if possible), turn off the ignition switch, remove the key, and set the handbrake.
- b) Determine if it’s safe for the children to remain on the bus. In most situations the children will be kept on the bus until a replacement bus arrives. If remaining on the bus is unsafe for any reason (fire, dangerous traffic, etc.) the children must be evacuated and moved to a safe location.

- c) Set up emergency reflectors.

- d) Call the supervisor of transportation services, or Head Start Director with the following information:

- Bus number
- Names of all individuals on the bus (children, driver, and bus monitor)
- Location of disabled bus
- Type of breakdown
- Whether or not you need a relief bus.

- Accident involving the vehicle

- a) If the vehicle is moveable, it must be removed from traffic.
- b) Stay calm. A dangerous situation can be prevented by keeping cool. The children will follow your example.
- c) Use these instructions.
 - If there is danger in staying on the bus (fire, etc.) then EVACUATE. Otherwise, the driver, monitor, and children remain on the bus
 - DRIVER turns off the ignition, sets hand brake, and turns on flashers.
 - The DRIVER and MONITOR check quickly to see if each other is in good condition (uninjured and not in shock)
 - MONITOR goes to front of bus and makes eye contact with the children to see if there are any obvious injuries. MONITOR asks children if anyone is hurt and tells them to keep their seat belts buckled.
 - DRIVER radios/calls 911 or other emergency number, and asks for any needed assistance such as police, ambulance.
 - DRIVER sets up emergency reflectors in front of and behind the bus.
- d) IF YOU NEED TO EVACUATE:
 - DRIVER decides which bus exit to use and opens it.
 - MONITOR checks for injured children who may need extra help to evacuate.
 - DRIVER, beginning with the seat closest to the evacuation exit, tells children to unbuckle (helps them to unbuckle) and helps them to exit.
 - MONITOR, who is outside the bus, helps children to the ground. While doing this, check again to see if children are OK. Have children hold hands and stay close to the bus.
 - DRIVER AND MONITOR walks with the children to a safe area at least 100 feet from the bus. Driver takes phone, first aid kit, blood borne pathogen kit, and emergency contact information along.

- DRIVER and MONITOR attend to any injured children, administer first aid to them, and make them comfortable. If anyone is bleeding, use the fluids kit to reduce the risk of infection to others.
 - DRIVER fills out Accident Report Form.
 - DRIVER gets names, addresses and phone numbers of witnesses. Record them on accident form.
 - Do not give anyone, except the police, your home phone number or address.
 - If you damage an unoccupied vehicle, leave a note on the windshield with your name, Head Start's phone number and supervisor's name. If you damage private property such as a fence, give property owner your name, Head Start's phone number and your supervisor's name.
- e) POST CRASH FOLLOW-UP. Do not skip any of these steps.
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recommends that all child safety restraints that have been involved in a major accident must be destroyed as their protective integrity has been compromised.
 - The program's mental health consultant should be notified so arrangements can be made for post crash follow-up for the children, staff, and parents as needed. In a major crash, this will occur for children prior to their riding the bus again.
- f) Driver becomes incapacitated: When the driver is not functioning at full capacity, the safety of all passengers is at risk. Transportation staff should be trained in recognizing and dealing with driver impairment, including reporting and how to obtain emergency medical assistance while on the road.
- g) Bus being pursued: In the event a driver suspects the bus is being pursued, the following steps will be taken.
- Dial 911 or other emergency number, and give them information as requested, and follow their instructions.
 - Keep the vehicle moving and proceed to the nearest local law enforcement facility or nearest public facility.
 - If you are blocked or stopped by the pursuing vehicle, do not open the door or let anyone onto the bus.
 - Call the Dispatcher or Head Start Director and ask them to call 911.

- Do not allow any adult who appears to be threatening onto the bus.
- h) Medical emergency – Drivers and monitors will be certified in first aid, including CPR and first aide for choking. Call 911 or the nearest emergency number.
- i) Child restraints – Restraints must be adjusted according the manufacturer’s specifications. If you do not have these specifications, transportation staff should check with the manufacturer of the vehicle to obtain the specifications. Drivers and bus Monitors must be trained on the proper adjustment of these devices and must check for correct fit each time they buckle a child into the restraint.
- j) Emergency evacuation drills – Washita Valley Head Start requires at least three bus evacuation drills to be conducted during the program year including the one during the first 30 days which must be conducted on the vehicle that the child will be riding. Emergency evacuations drills are an important part of providing the children with instruction in safe transportation practices and practicing procedures that may need to be used in an emergency.

Use the Emergency Evacuation Drill form to properly plan for the evacuation drill. Children and staff must receive instruction in the classroom, and on the bus prior to the drill so they understand what is going to occur.

The following steps will be followed in conducting emergency vehicle evacuation drills.

- Stop the vehicle, set parking brake, put manual transmission in gear, turn off the engine, and remove the key. Driver and the monitor unfasten their seatbelts.
- Driver stands, faces the children, and gets their attention.
- Driver explains to the children that they are going to direct them through a drill and that they should exit in the same order in a real emergency.
- Instruct the children that they and the bus monitor are going to move quickly through the bus unfastening child restraints, but that they should remain seated until told to stand.
- When all child restraints have been unbuckled, open the front (rear) door and instruct the bus monitor to stand outside the opened door to count the children (verify with sign-in sheet) and assist them as they leave the bus.
- Step just behind the first occupied seats and turn facing the front of the vehicle. As you go past the seats, tell the children to stand up.

- Starting with the right-hand seat, tell the child nearest the aisle to walk to the open door, stay near the bus monitor, and hold hands when they get off the bus. Hold your left arm out, to keep the children from leaving the left-hand seat.
 - When the children from the right-hand seat have cleared the aisle, tell the children in the left-hand seats to follow the other children.
 - Continue this procedure until the vehicle is empty.
 - Check to see that everyone is off the bus.
 - Once all the children have exited the vehicle, instruct the bus monitor to take the children to a safe place determined by the driver.
 - Go to the children and compliment them on a job well done.
 - Bring the children back to the bus and reload the vehicle.
- k) Weather related – The driver must be aware of the weather at all times and be prepared both physically and mentally to take appropriate action when needed. If the bus is equipped with a radio, tune the station that reports weather conditions, otherwise keep in contact with the center by phone or radio.
- l) Inclement weather – Head Start center closures follow the public school closures.

Section E: Discipline and Conduct

1. Child discipline – The long-term goal for children enrolled in our program is to provide a setting where the children can develop a sense of inner control, and can begin to understand the reasons for limits being set, and develop a sense of respect for oneself and for others.

When behavior problems arise, staff are encouraged to look at bus routines, the environment, and the individual needs of the child to help overcome the behavior.

See Washita Valley Head Start’s Behavior and Guidance Plan for ideas and techniques for positive child guidance.
2. Driver and monitor conduct – Drivers and bus monitors must follow the Standards of Conduct that are outlined in the Personnel Policies and Procedures. The following rules must be followed while driving the bus.
 - No food, gum, or drinks are allowed on Head Start buses.
 - Smoking or chewing tobacco is prohibited on buses.

- Use of inappropriate language around children is prohibited.
- Adult conversations not involving the children must be avoided, unless it is related to pick-up/ drop-off or safe bus operations.

Section F: Administrative Procedures

1. Required paperwork (children)
 - a) Transportation Request/Agreement –This form is to be filled out by the parent/guardian to request bus service for their child and to agree to Washita Valley Head Start bus rules and regulations. The form will be maintained in the Center Director’s office.
 - b) Sign-in/out sheet – Each bus is required to sign-in/out all children entering and leaving the bus. The driver and monitor must ensure that children are only released to persons whose names are listed on the enrollment application or on the Transportation Agreement/Request form.

2. Required paperwork (bus)
 - a) Mileage log – Each driver is required to document all mileage. This log is turned into the transportation supervisor along with all receipts at the end of the month.
 - b) Pre-trip inspections – Each driver is required to inspect his/her vehicle daily and document the results on the Vehicle Pre-Trip Inspection Form. These forms are to be given to the Transit Route Supervisor for Chickasha and the Facility Maintenance/Transportation Supervisor for all other centers at the end of the month. (Exception: Washita Valley Transit receives forms weekly).
 - c) The forms must be filed by the specific vehicle and kept for at least three years.
 - Bus maintenance requisition/purchase order.
 - Accident Report Forms
 - Annual Safety Check
 - On-going maintenance

Children with Disabilities

Washita Valley CAC Head Start must ensure there are school buses or allowable alternate vehicles adapted or designed for transportation of children with disabilities available as necessary to transport such children enrolled in the program. Whenever

possible, children with disabilities must be transported in the same vehicles used to transport other children enrolled in the Head Start program.

Washita Valley Head Start must ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.S. 12101 et.seq.), the Health and Human Services regulations at 45 CFR Part 84, implementing section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), and the Head Start Performance Standards for children with disabilities (45 CFR Part 1308) as they apply to transportation services.

Washita Valley Head Start will specify any special transportation requirements for a child with a disability when preparing the child's Individual Education Program (IEP) and will ensure that in all cases special transportation requirements in a child's IEP are followed, including:

- special pick-up and drop-off requirements
- special seating requirements
- special equipment needs
- special assistance that may be required and
- any special training for bus drivers and monitors

Washita Valley CAC Head Start's primary goal is to provide the least restrictive option, where possible. This continues through the formation of the individualized transportation plan, which typically takes place at the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting. Head Start works closely with our public school partners allowing for integration of preschool students on traditional transportation services when it is possible.

This policy complies with Performance Standard Section 1310. Developed and approved by Policy Council March, 2004. Revised July 19, 2011. Approved by Policy Council, July 19, 2011, Approved by Governing Board August 2, 2011.