**Transportation**

The goal of this chapter is to provide information and resources to help youth with disabilities utilize different modes of transportation to be more active and independent.

**Gather information/resources**

* Gather information on your local transportation: Find out when, how, where youth with disabilities face challenges in using public transportation. As a group try to brainstorm possible solutions. Some typical transportation barriers include:
* Hours of operation
* Expense
* Location of transportation routes
* Getting to the bus stop

**Create Self Advocacy Opportunities**

* Plan bus routes and schedule with youth as needed ahead of time.
* “Travel train” with youth if necessary (ride the bus with them the first time or two).
* Do transportation problem-solving scenarios. (ie: What if you miss your bus?)
* Analyze cost of different kinds of transportation. (bus, taxi, subway, paratransit, bicycle, vehicle, ride sharing, uber, etc.)
* Utilize free options. (Any of the members in group homes have transportation you can use? Can youth ride share with each other if they live around the same area? Can those who use motorized AT travel together in nice weather if it is close? Are there any free-cycle programs that help youth get free bicycles?)
* What are the Para-transit options? Are they eligible? Help them apply.
* Are Mobility Managers available in your area?
* Utilize train services (Corral the troops and go together, especially for power chair users.)
* Be creative! Think “outside the box” about alternatives to public transportation. What’s available in your community? Find it and see how it can be used! There are often organizations with vehicles sitting idle that might be glad to get them on the road. For example:
* Vocational Rehabilitation may have accessible vehicles to rent out. (Check with a VR counselor.)
* Churches sometimes have large accessible vans that could be commandeered for your event. (Maybe even for free!)
* More than one CIL in the same area? Check and see. Can you swap rides or services somehow?
* Red Cross or Parks and Rec may have an accessible bus. These can sometimes accommodate 20+ wheelchairs and come with a trained driver. (They usually come with a fee, however.)
* Look for collaborations with other organizations.
* Campus buses at universities may allow others to ride. (University of North Carolina and University of Montana system does. It can be free and you may be able to use meeting rooms as well. Doesn’t hurt to ask!)
* Developmental Disability programs sometimes have vehicles. So do nursing homes, group homes, etc.

**TIPS:** Have meetings where people can easily get access (near bus stops) or actually at a local school. Also provide maps and directions to the meeting space. The less the student has to travel, the more likely they are to attend! Be creative.

* Try hiring a travel trainer as an activity for one or more of your meetings. If working with your CIL, the travel trainer and bus passes used in training can be paid by the CIL. The travel trainer should understand local transportation and can:
* Help get young people where they want to go using public transportation.
* Accompany a person until they are used to traveling.
* Train young people how to read a bus schedule.
* Begin to establish independence from parents.
* Public schools have accessible buses. (Negotiate with them to see if the buses can be used during “off” hours).
* Private schools may also have buses that could be used during off hours.

**TIPS:** Remember *carpooling*! Check everyone’s route and see if you can travel together to get there. It is a good way to get to know each another and build good relationships.

How do you get around town after public transportation stops running? What’s available?

* Check whether buses run later and on weekends.
* Are taxi cabs available?
* What are the limitations or access needs for your friends?

It is important for everyone to know their rights as people with disabilities. In your group, talk about the on-going fight for disability rights and ADAPT’s history of changing transportation practices. Also, get youth to understand the importance of having contact information for their local CIL, teachers or lawyers and others who could help if something goes wrong, or your rights are violated. In addition, it is important to know about local laws, different services that are available and their eligibility requirements.

**TIPS:** Be sure to talk about public transportation safety! What to do if you get lost. Who are safe people? Who to call if you feel like your rights have been violated? How do you navigate streets safety?

**Independence and Private Driving:**

OVERALL make sure that the student is making the CHOICES and is in CONTROL and you are assisting with problem solving.

* Educate youth on options if they want to learn to drive.
* Research the resources, adaptive and assistive technologies that are available as a group. Be sure to look into accommodations the youth may qualify for, that can be used during the test.
* Identify any tests required for use of adaptive driving technology. Usually, there’s no “test”. Any new driver must be trained to use the equipment and show that they can do it.
* See if youth want to put a study group together at your Center or if you have a peer mentor or someone at your CIL that can work one on one with them, this can be an Independent Living Skill Training goal.
* Find out whether a physical or occupational therapy evaluation is required. (Is the person competent and physically able to drive?) Training to use the equipment is usually available.
* Check on your state requirements for driving if you have a disability, and whether other proof of disability is necessary.
* Check in with Vocational Rehabilitation, grants, home and community based services, pass plans, and other funding options to try and purchase a vehicle.

A compilation of activities carried out in youth programs run by the Peer-to-Peer Mentors. Feel free to tweak the activities and use them in ways that best fit your programs! Let us know if you want to add NEW activities to the manual.

Remember to try and make the activities accessible, and use them as a learning opportunity for youth to advocate for accommodations. Use your mentor to help brainstorm ways to make the ideas fit for your group and different abilities.

Last but not least, HAVE FUN.

Thank you!

*APRIL Youth Peer-to-Peer Mentors*