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Providing accessible transportation to your summer program can help lead to higher attendance rates, as transportation may be a primary barrier to students getting to program sites.

Transportation planning should begin in the spring (if not sooner), identifying neighborhoods where your participants live, and if viable public transportation routes exist near their homes.

Boston sites employ a variety of transportation options, including providing free transit passes (MBTA passes; for middle/high school students) and hiring outside transportation vendors (especially for younger students, such as elementary school students). When coordinating transportation, there are three key areas of focus: planning and monitoring, staffing, and pick up/drop off policies.

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## **A. Planning & Monitoring**

Planning and monitoring transportation can help make for a seamless transition to and from your site.

Here are some strategies for creating and implementing a successful plan for transportation:

- Identify appropriate bus/van size needed for each route, in terms of cost and logistical efficiency.
- Ensure route time is practical. Long routes can cause behavior issues and staffing issues. To plan routes, an effective tool is Google Maps. Through Google, site leadership can place “pins” at students’ summer addresses and then plan stops/efficient routes. Alternatively, many transportation vendors have software designed to produce efficient routes.
- Identify a current staff position to assume the responsibility of bus monitor. An ideal bus monitor would be: polite, patient, and bi-lingual; someone who could staff the same bus route on a consistent basis; a relationship builder who can establish rapport with bus drivers and families. This person may have the most frequent contact with families on a daily basis.
- Realize routes may need to be adjusted during the start of the program based on feedback from families, bus monitors, and site leadership. Also, your student roster may shift based on attrition and accessing a wait list, thus causing adjustments in routes.

## **B. Transportation Staff**

Designating staff responsibility for transportation planning and implementation is crucial to ensuring that your transportation is value added for students and families.

Here are some strategies for delineating duties for transportations success:

- Nominate a coordinator/central contact for pre-summer planning and communication with families. Some key transportation responsibilities could include:
  - Review bus routes and provide feedback to program leadership to determine if routes are practical and accessible for all families.
  - Disseminate bus stop information (and, if applicable, transportation consent) to families.
  - Attend first days of programming and be responsible for:
    - Talking to bus monitors and program leadership about who has not attended.
    - Calling families of students who are absent.
    - Possessing In-depth knowledge of bus routes when calling families of absent students during first days of programming – to direct them to next day’s bus stop.
- Ensure that there are 1-2 staff persons (i.e. bus monitors) on each bus.
- Acquire materials, in advance, for bus monitor(s):
  - Cell phone/bus phone
  - Program shirt with ID
  - Roster with each student’s name, designated bus stop location, guardian name and contact numbers (including cell), emergency contacts
  - Mini first aid kit, student medications (if applicable)
  - Camp songs, trivia games to keep students engaged (if necessary)

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## **C. Transportation Policies**

Communicating transportation policies to families in the spring ensures that expectations are clear for the summer ahead.

Here are some strategies for setting and enforcing uniform policies on transportation:

- Create policies regarding transportation logistics, behavior while on bus, parental/guardian tardiness during pick-up or drop-off times.
- Obtain parental consent to transportation policies in advance of summer. This is particularly relevant if, for example, parents/guardians are charged with a late fee if they do not pick up their child from a bus stop on time. Consider translating the consent

## BEST PRACTICES: TRANSPORTATION

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form and identify a staff person or organization that can fulfill translation requests. Take a look here at a sample [transportation consent form](#) for ideas for your program.

- Ensure that your expectations around student behavior on the bus are consistent with your site's overall student behavior code. Check out [this resource](#) for ways to think through your site's student behavior code.