



OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

GUIDANCE TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS IN PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

Pre-kindergarten education programs must comply with the following Tennessee statutes and State Board of Education rules and regulations:

- Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) Title 49, Chapter 21
- T.C.A. Title 55, Chapter 8
- T.C.A. §55-9-602 (a)(2), *Child passenger restraint systems*
- State Board of Education Rule 0520-1-3-.05(5), *Pre-Kindergarten, kindergarten and grades 1-3*
- State Board of Education Rule 0520-12-1, *School Administered Child Care Rules*
- State Board of Education Rule 0520-1-5, *Pupil Transportation*

All school-administered pre-kindergarten programs are inspected as directed by T.C.A. § 49-1-1101 – 49-1-1109 for compliance with rules by the Department of Education Child Care Program Evaluators.

Go to <http://www.tennesseeanytime.org/laws/laws.html> and click on “Tennessee Code and Constitution” to access the above statute online.

The above listed state board rules may be accessed at: <http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/rules2.htm>

As part of compliance with the above listed laws and rules, early childhood education programs must develop a student transportation plan in conformance with state law and rules adopted by the State Board of Education. This plan must include but shall not be limited to the following provisions:

- If pre-kindergarten students are within close proximity to the pre-K site, the program may determine that it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to escort their child. The parents/guardians are responsible to sign in and sign out their child.
- If the pre-K program determines the parents are able to transport the child to the school, the parents are instructed to follow the drop off procedure policy of the school. A teacher, teacher aid or school official meets the child at the student drop off and notes via list each child as they arrive or leave or has the parent sign an attendance roster.

- If the pre-K program determines that the children most educationally at-risk must be provided bus transportation, the four year-old child may be transported on the school bus as other school children. The local school system's transportation policy for the safe operation of school buses, as mandated by Rule 0520-1-5-.01(6), must include procedures to ensure the safety of the four year-old children. As defined in Rule 0520-12-1-.06(8), the transportation policy and practice must address child safety on entering the vehicle, child safety during transport, supervision during transport, time in transit and child safety on exiting the bus.
 1. The school bus driver must maintain an attendance roster for the pre K children entering and exiting the bus.
 2. The school bus driver must check the bus to be certain that no child is left unattended on the school bus.
 3. The pre-K program must have a process in place to meet the children at the bus and escort them to the pre-K classroom.
 4. On the return route the school bus driver must not leave a pre-K child at the child's home until visually sighting the parent/guardian. If the responsible adult is not present, the school bus driver is to follow the process agreed upon by the local DCS office or Police/Sheriff's office.
- Any 3 year old child, participating in the preschool, must be in the proper child restraint as mandated by T.C.A. § 55-9-602(a)(2) during transport.

Pre-kindergarten programs, administered by the Local Education Agencies, must be in compliance with Rule 0520-1-3-.05(5) Pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and grades 1-3, Chapter 0520-12-1 School-administered Child Care Rules, and Chapter 0520-1-5 Pupil Transportation

For additional guidance regarding Early Childhood Education programs, please contact: Jan Bushing at 615-741-0345 or email Jan.Bushing@tn.gov.