



Tony Sanders, Chief Executive Officer

School District U-46

Educational Services Center  
355 E. Chicago Street, Elgin, IL 60120-6543

Tel: 847.888.5000 x5007

Fax: 847.608.4173

U-46.org

## FACT SHEET

# Transportation Tips and Reminders for Full-Day Kindergarten Families

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### Transportation Tips and Procedures for Full-Day Kindergarten

- All kindergarteners must wear bus tags that list approved chaperones — the only people who can get these students off the bus.
- Older students who ride the bus can be listed as chaperones.
- School staff will help get kindergarteners off the bus in the morning and back on the right bus in the afternoon.
- Children can only ride their own buses — no changes to go a friend's or a babysitter's house.
- Afternoon buses will be late the first week of school because everyone is moving more slowly and carefully.
- Parents should not drive kindergarteners to school the first week or two as the students and drivers develop consistent routines.

School District U-46 is preparing to safely transport more than 24,000 students from their homes to school and back again this year.

More than 2,600 of the District's kindergarteners will now participate in a District-wide full-day program, which means they will start and end school with their older siblings and elementary school peers. A number of special procedures are in place to help kindergarteners ride comfortably and safely on our yellow buses.

Parents of kindergarten students will receive bus tags from their child's school in advance of the first day of school, August 17. Schools will

give parents one yellow break-away lanyard, two insert cards and a clear plastic ID holder to each kindergartener. Parents need to fill out the tags before the first day of

school, being especially careful to list approved chaperones who will be the only ones allowed to escort kindergartners off the school buses at the end of the day. One insert card will stay with the student and one will be submitted to school and kept on file at the school. Each school will ensure a way to get these bus tags and lanyards to families prior to the 17th; most likely at Back to School events.

Kindergarteners should arrive at their morning bus stop each day already wearing the bus tags on yellow lanyards around their necks. Kindergarteners cannot get on a bus home without these tags, and those who do not have an approved chaperone either riding the bus with them or waiting for them at their bus stop will be brought back to the school at the end of the bus run.

During the first week or two of school, parents should be patient as schools and bus drivers get into a consistent rhythm.

Cheryl DeRoo, principal of Glenbrook Elementary School, asks parents to let their children ride the bus every day the first two full weeks of school to help with the transition.

“What happens a lot of times is parents want to transport their children to school on the first day,” Principal DeRoo said. “If students get a ride in to school, they don’t know where to get off the bus at the end of the day.”

Parents can help their children memorize their addresses before the first day of school and get familiar with their home streets so the students recognize houses and landmarks near their bus stops.

The trip home will take longer than normal the first week of school because bus drivers are still getting to know their routes, the students on them and the parents or other chaperones who should be waiting on the other side. At the schools, teachers are careful to make sure each student boards the right bus and the drivers are methodical about checking each kindergartener’s bus tag to confirm the proper chaperones are present.

As everyone gets to know each other and more efficient routines develop, the bus runs will become more timely and reliable. In the meantime, parents should wait calmly at the bus stops for their children to arrive, knowing delays are completely normal in the first weeks of school.

"After the first few days of school, the newness has worn off and you can pretty much determine a pattern of what time your child will arrive at the bus stop," said Charlotte Coleman, principal of Nature Ridge Elementary School.

Parents who put older children through the District's half-day kindergarten programs should be prepared for busier drop-off and pick-up times now that all of the elementary school grades will be starting and ending school together. School staff members are prepared to be extra careful with kindergarteners, making sure they safely get to where they need to go.

Kids who are signed up for busing are expected to ride their own buses every day. They cannot take alternate buses home with friends or babysitters. School leaders and staff will never assume that if a parent dropped off a child in the morning, he or she will pick the child up again in the afternoon. Any changes to the normal routine must be communicated clearly, in writing, to the school offices.

When everyone works together, the first days of school can be painless and move quickly into the standard routine of the school year.

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