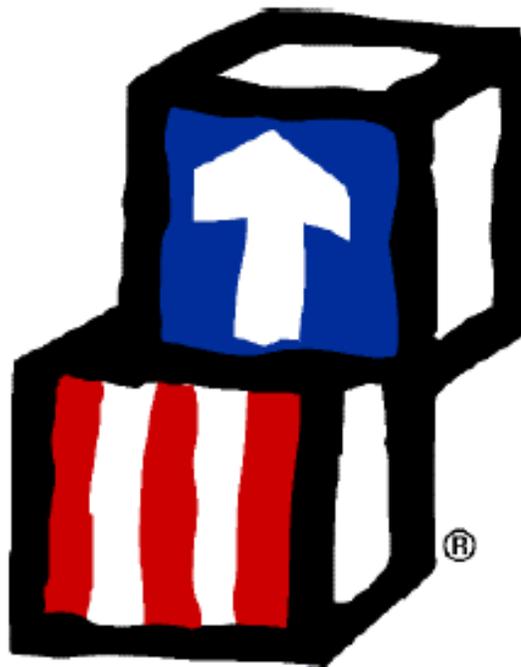


Getting Started with the Transportation PathFinder

Introduction: What is the Transportation PathFinder?

The Transportation PathFinder is an online guide to the current legislation, regulations, and policies that apply to the transportation of Head Start children. Additionally, the Transportation PathFinder contains an extensive set of links to state level resources, a database of frequently asked questions, and plain language guidance offering cost effective methods of complying with the regulations. Much of this content, which was developed by subject matter experts, reviewed by the Office of Head Start and approved by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), provides authoritative explanations of key transportation requirements.

This *Getting Started Guide* is broken down into four parts. Part I provides an overview of the different documents contained within the Transportation PathFinder. Part II presents the tools provided by the Transportation PathFinder to help the user locate important information. Part III provides an in-depth walk-through of the Transportation PathFinder's advanced search engine. Part IV lists information regarding the Transportation PathFinder development.



Part I: Information Contained within the Transportation PathFinder

The Transportation PathFinder contains four main types of documents:

- **Laws and Regulations** applicable to Head Start grantees that provide transportation to enrolled children.
- **Policies** developed by the Administration for Children and Families.
- **Supplemental Resources** including narratives on selected transportation topics, questions and answers, sample training scenarios, tip sheets, NHTSA Resources, and a series of state level resources for all fifty states applying to Head Start and pupil transportation.

Head Start Laws and Regulations

45 CFR Part 1310 (Head Start Transportation Regulations)

Federal regulations for safety features and the safe operation of vehicles used to transport children participating in Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

Policies

The following policy issuances are contained within the Transportation PathFinder:

Information Memorandums (IMs)

Information Memorandums from 1995 to the present that pertain to Head Start transportation.

Program Instructions (PIs)

Program Instructions that relate to Head Start transportation.

Other Resources

The following tools are provided in the Transportation PathFinder as additional guidance on Head Start Transportation issues: Narrative Discussions, Tip Sheets, Sample Forms, Checklists and Templates, Scenarios, and Questions and Answers. These resources are meant to act as supplemental guidance and to assist grantees in complying with the federal Head Start regulations.

Part II: Transportation PathFinder Tools

The Transportation PathFinder allows users to access six modules to navigate through the system. The modules are represented by six buttons: State Information, Library, Guidance, Scenarios, Questions & Answers, and Search.

These tools can be accessed from anywhere in the system by using the menu on the left side of the screen.

The following is a detailed explanation of each tool in the Transportation PathFinder.



The **State Information** module provides state specific information that will assist grantees in providing safe transportation services. The site allows the user to select a state either on a map provided or in a list form at the bottom of the page. The states on the map are color coded according to their corresponding ACF region with a legend available on the left side of the screen to interpret the color coded map. To view the list of states, either scroll down to the bottom of the page or click the "View as list" link in the upper right corner of the page.

After clicking on a state, the user will then see a list of links with relevant pupil transportation information. When clicking on a link in the state information section, the Transportation PathFinder will open a new window to display the requested page. To return to the PathFinder, close the second browser window.

Please keep in mind that these links are not maintained or monitored by the Office of Head Start. Any questions related to these links should be addressed to that state's Director of Pupil Transportation.



The **Library** tool gives the user access to all of the documents contained within the Transportation PathFinder. The topics included in the library include Laws, Regulations, and Policies; State Resources; Compliance Resources; NHTSA Resources; and Other Resources. Listed below is a brief description of each subtopic contained in the library.

Head Start Laws, Regulations, and Policies

The Head Start Transportation Regulation (45 CFR Part 1310) was published in January 2001 and outlines the minimum transportation safety standards for Head Start Programs.

Policy issuances come from ACF in the form of *Program Instructions (PIs)* and *Information Memorandums (IMs)*. For both PIs and IMs, the documents are listed by date, with the most recent at the top. For each document, the Transportation PathFinder provides the release number, date, subject, and a brief description of content. Clicking on the title will bring up the entire IM or PI for viewing, printing, or emailing. Many of the IMs and PIs contain links to other documents or important attachments. Clicking on these links will open the appropriate document in a separate window.

State Resources

This tool directs the user to the State Information page where they can find their specific state's transportation corresponding statutes, regulations, policies or guidance by using the map or alphabetical list provided.

Compliance Resources

The following is a list of topics and tools that can be accessed through the Compliance Resources section in the Library.

- *Narrative Discussions*
The Narratives section provides plain-language policy guidance on specific requirements for Head Start grantees that provide transportation. Within the narratives are links referencing back to federal regulations, clicking on these links will open a new window.
- *Tip Sheets*
The Tip Sheets are comprehensive guides to various transportation issues that Head Start agencies may encounter. Included in the topics are general hiring and training suggestions, assessment guidance, and specific child development information.
- *Sample Forms, Checklists, and Templates*
The Sample Forms, Checklists, and Templates section provides a collection of fillable templates that might assist a Head Start agency in providing effective transportation.
- *Scenarios*
The Scenario module is a useful training tool which encourages new approaches to different potential situations that a Head Start agency may find itself in when providing transportation.
- *Questions & Answers*
Listed by category, these questions and answers provide plain-language explanations to Head Start transportation regulations and issues.

NHTSA Resources

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration provides education, training, enforcement, and outreach to the public in order to prevent child occupant deaths. The list of NHTSA links includes extensive guidelines and information on the transportation of pre-school aged children in school buses with specific guidelines for Child Safety Restraint Systems and choosing the best bus for transportation. Included in the NHTSA Resources is also a school bus driver in-service safety series with lesson modules that can serve as effective training tools.

Additional Resources

Additional Resources include a variety of useful information that does not fall into any of the previous categories.

- The Glossary is a compendium of words and phrases defined by the 2000 National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures.
- The PRISM Transportation Checklist, part of the Federal review program for Head Start agencies around the country. This checklist allows agencies to prepare for a Federal review of their transportation program.
- The Head Start Fiscal Assistant is a powerful tool that can be used as guidance for complex fiscal issues and offers plain-language guidance for administrative management. Within the Fiscal Assistant, there is extensive guidance on federal regulations that pertain to Head Start agency grants.
- Pupil Transportation Resources is a list of external websites that contain information relevant to Head Start and pupil transportation.



The **Guidance** tool allows the user to navigate through and look for assistance with specific citations within 45 CFR Part 1310. On the primary Guidance screen, each section of the regulation and its corresponding subsections are listed with a brief title or description to allow the user to access the information most pertinent to their specific needs.

When a section of regulation has been selected, the screen will display the text of the section and all relevant subsections in the left column with the actual subsection chosen displayed at the top of the screen. In the right column, four different types of Guidance are listed in bold with the specific guidance pieces that apply to the chosen regulation listed below each. The four types of Guidance pieces are Narratives, Tip Sheets,

Scenarios

The **Scenario** tool gives the user access to a series of potential scenarios and a description for each one. This is followed by a series of questions to be answered by the user as training tool. The series of questions is designed to help Head Start agencies begin developing internal measures and protocols that can be used to address similar situations in the future.

This training tool was designed so that the transportation team, with the help of a moderator, could discuss the many aspects of common issues that arise in the provision of Head Start transportation. It is recommended that this be used as part of a Head Start transportation training curriculum to encourage transportation personnel to adopt a problem-solving approach when faced with a similar situation.

In using the scenario training tool, the user will first be presented with a selection of different scenarios that a Head Start agency may face. After choosing a scenario, the user will be presented with a brief synopsis of a situation. By clicking on the “Exercises” button, a new window will appear which will present the user with a set of 2-3 questions on each page in the problem solving exercise.



Administration for Children and Families
Head Start Bureau
9/16/05 3:51 PM

Exercises for "A Child's First Day"

Define the problem

- What is the immediate problem from Larry's perspective?
- Does this represent a problem for this Head Start agency?
- Is it likely that Larry's mother perceives a problem here?

Empty text input area with a vertical scrollbar on the right side.

Next

Larry, a new student, awaits the arrival of the Head Start bus. As the vehicle pulls up, the voice of an adult inside the bus is heard saying, "Come on, let's go." Larry turns away from the bus. His mother says to him, "Larry, I thought you wanted to go to school!" The boy clings to her skirt. She picks him up and places him inside the bus. Ignoring his crying, she quickly leaves. An exasperated bus monitor leads Larry to a seat and buckles him into his Child Safety Restraint System. Larry is aware that other children are staring at him and sniffles quietly.

By clicking next after answering all the questions on the page, the Transportation PathFinder will present the next set of questions to be answered. Each time the user

clicks “Next”, their previous answers will be displayed lower on the page. At the end click “Finish” and the user will be presented with all of their answers on the same page and give three options located at the top of the page: Print Friendly Version, Email, or Close.



A listing of **Questions and Answers** has been provided to supplement the information provided in the federal regulatory language and to address some of the common pitfalls and issues faced by Head Start transportation providers. Unlike the Narratives, which cover a broad array of issues relating to their topic, each question and answer addresses a specific transportation issue. The Q&A tool gives the user direct access to these useful resources, which are organized by category.

Clicking on a category loads all the applicable Questions and Answers within that category, and clicking on the “View all Questions and Answers by Category” brings up a screen displaying all the Questions and Answers within the system organized alphabetically by category.

Once loaded, the Questions and Answers can be printed for later viewing or emailed to a colleague. To print a question, check the button to the left of the question and then click on **View selected items for printing** at the top of the screen to verify the questions and answers you want printed. To send a question electronically, again check the box to the left of the Q&A and then click on **Email selected items** at the top of the screen. Checking two or more boxes allows the user to view, print or email multiple Questions and Answers at the same time.



The **Search** feature quickly looks through the library for matching word(s) or phrase(s). There are two ways to search:

1. **Quick Search.** This feature is located on the bottom left of every screen in the Transportation PathFinder. This is a good place to start if you are unfamiliar with website. Simply type in your desired keyword or phrase, and click **Go**.
2. **Advanced Search.** This feature is a useful tool if you need to perform a specific type of search. Advanced Search gives you options for specific types of word combinations, and allows you to eliminate documents that contain certain words or phrases from your search results.

Part III: Using the Advanced Search Function

The Advanced Search function is one of the most powerful tools contained within the Head Start Transportation PathFinder. You can use this tool to quickly and easily find any or all of the requirements and information that apply to a particular area of the transportation of Head Start children. This section will guide you through the Advanced Search process in two sections: Defining Search Criteria and Interpreting Search Results.

Defining Search Criteria

When you open the Advanced Search tool, you will be presented with the following screen:

Advanced Search

Find Results

with **exact phrase** **all of the words** **any of the words**

without the word(s)

Find Results

This section is where the Transportation PathFinder determines what to look for. Type your search terms into the top text field, then select one of the following choices:

With exact phrase. Any words or numbers you enter in the text box are treated as if they are a single search string, equivalent to putting quotation marks around them in a web search. For example, “child safety restraint” returns 27 results whereas “safety child restraint” returns no results.

With all of the words. This will return documents that have all of the words you enter in this box. For example, “child safety” returns 46 results, and “child safety restraint” returns 32 results. However, “child safety restraint and pizza” (a word not contained in Transportation PathFinder) returns no results. All of the words must appear in the document, in any combination. It is important to note that common articles such as and, the, or, etc. will be ignored by the system since they would appear in virtually all of the documents in the Transportation PathFinder.

With any of the words. This will return locations within documents that contain any of the words you enter. For example, “child safety” returns 111 results. These results include individual references to safety education, child development, Child Safety Restraint Systems, and so on. As with the above example, common articles will be

ignored with this type of search. Common articles are searched only with an Exact Phrase search.

The **without the words** text field is used to limit the search results by having the Transportation PathFinder remove any results that contain the terms typed in this box. This feature must be used in conjunction with one of the searches described above. For example, “child safety restraint” in the top text field with the exact phrase button selected and “seat” in the without the words text field box returns 21 result. Compared to our earlier search, 6 documents are being excluded because they contain the word “seat.”

Interpreting Search Results

Once you have defined your search criteria, you will be presented with the following Screen:

Document/Category	Number of Results
• 45 CFR Part 1310	0
• Head Start Policy Issuances	0
• Narrative Discussions	0
• Tip Sheets	0
• Sample Forms, Checklists, and Templates	0
• Scenarios	0
• Questions & Answers	0
• Glossary	0

All of the document types contained in the Transportation PathFinder are listed down the left column. If a document type contains at least one instance of the search term, it will appear as a link. The right column indicates the number of times the selected search term appears in the document type.

Search Results By Within Document Type

Search results appear differently depending on the type of record accessed. For 45 CFR Part 1310, the full text document will be accessed with each instance of the search term highlighted.

For policy issuances, narratives, tip sheets, sample forms, scenarios, Questions and Answers, and the Glossary the specific document(s) in which the search term was found will appear. For some search results, a significant amount of text will be displayed. In order to make searching these documents easier, the Transportation PathFinder automatically displays the document where the first instance of the search term is displayed at the top of the screen. If the search term appears more than once within the document, each instance will be surrounded by skip to arrows: [< and/or >](#). Click on these arrows to move through the document quickly, skipping to the sections or paragraphs that contain the search term.

Part IV: About Transportation PathFinder

Release Date: TBD

The Head Start Transportation PathFinder was developed by Cleverex Systems, Inc., under a contract to the Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services. The site is available free of charge through ACF, and a CD version is planned for release in the coming months.

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