TRAVEL TRAINING: Your Child’s Key to Independence
include NYC is...

A family-founded, independent nonprofit

A Parent Center serving NYC families with young people through age 26 - any disability, all boroughs

Here to help you make informed decisions

Practical information and 1-to-1 help
Presenters

• Peggy Groce, MS Special Education
  Director, Office of Travel Training, District 75, New York City Department of Education
Agenda

- What is travel training?
- Eligibility/Referral Process
- Supporting Independence
- Managing Risk
- Strategies, Skills & Individual responsibility
- Parent and Student Voices
- Look-For in Travel Training Programs
Post-School Goals

• Independence
• Inclusion in community
• Employment/productive daily activities
• Freedom
• Self-determination
Supporting Independence

- Experiences
- Opportunities
- Education/instruction
- Self-direction/decision
- Dignity of risk
Importance of Travel and Mobility

Essential that we recognize

• travel and mobility as critical to physical, social, economic, and psychological well-being

• mobility and travel/transportation plans as essential tools in transition planning

• need for knowledge and awareness of mobility and travel-related skills and behaviors
What is Travel training?

- Specially designed instruction
- An open door to the least restrictive environment
- ...leads to the ability to travel independently on public transportation when successfully completed
District 75
NYC Department of Education Model

- Short-term, comprehensive, intensive instruction
- Specially trained personnel
- One-to-one instruction
- Skills and behaviors necessary to use public transportation safely and independently
- Specific destination/point of origin
- Pre-assessment and post-assessment
- Specific parental consent
- Professional development and parent workshops
Eligibility & Referral

• Students with disabilities other than blindness 14-21 years of age who demonstrate necessary skills, behaviors and ability in the following domains:
  • Awareness of surroundings
  • Cognitive
  • Communication
  • Mobility
  • Personal Responsibility

*Note*: Students with full-time 1-to-1 paraprofessionals are not eligible for travel training

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Independent Travel and Mobility

• Requires an individual to
  – be aware of oneself in space – know where one is
  – know where one wants to go – have a destination
  – carry and use personal identification appropriately
  – get there safely and efficiently
  – know and follow the “rules of the road”
  – create a memory of being an independent traveler; normalize travel skills and routines
Self Determination

• Has been defined as:
  – Individuals having the **degree of control** they desire over those aspects of life that are important to them
  – an ecological model that considers both the capacities of persons with disabilities to exercise control in life decisions (skills, knowledge, and attitudes and beliefs) and of the environments where they spend time (family, community, residential and employment programs, etc.) to support and encourage them in exercising control in their lives

• The Research and Training Center on Community Living, University of Minnesota
Self-determination

• Combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs
• Exercise of control in one’s life, including mobility and travel
• Human need as well as a capacity
Self Determination and Risk

• Self-determination allows for individual freedom
• Idea of freedom implies possibility of risk
• Free human beings take risks
• Risks include
  – Failure at work/task
  – Rejection in a relationship
  – Non-successful pursuit of a career/employment opportunity
  – Failure to take a chance/risk
The real world is not always safe, secure, and predictable. It does not always say “please,” “excuse me,” or “I’m sorry.” Every day we face the possibility of being thrown into situations where we will have to risk everything.

Robert Perske
Dignity of Risk

“….Many of our best achievements came the hard way: We took risks, fell flat, suffered, picked ourselves up, and tried again. Sometimes we made in and sometimes we did not. Even so, we were given the chance to try. Persons with special needs need these chances too.

Of course we are talking about prudent risks. People should not be expected to unknowingly face challenges, that, without a doubt, will explode in their faces. Knowing which chances are prudent and which are not – this is a new skill that needs to be acquired

...In the past, we found clever ways to build avoidance of risk into the lives for persons living with disabilities. Now we must work equally hard to help find the proper amount of risk these people have the right to take. We have learned that there can be healthy development in risk taking...and there can be crippling indignity in safety!”

From: “Hope for the Families” by Robert Perske
Managing Risk, Self-Determination, and Travel

• Require:
  – Maintaining awareness of environment
  – Identifying self/personal information
  – Initiating actions
  – Navigating environment(s) independently
  – Recognizing and avoiding danger
  – Making decisions
  – Solving problems
  – Maintaining appropriate social skills
  – Exercising self-regulation
  – Recognizing limitations and requesting assistance
Why the Emphasis on Travel and Public Transportation

• Lack of available transportation or inability to use public transit is a major factor in unemployment of adults with disabilities
• Ability to travel/use public transportation increases post-school opportunities
• Quality of life
• Cost-effectiveness
Strategies-
Social awareness & Social Cognition
Pedestrian Skills
the most common form of transportation

- Walking is a form of transportation
- All trips begin and end with pedestrian skills
- Skills and behaviors are same/similar to those necessary for public transportation travel
- Exercising control over one’s movement/mobility is essential to self-determination
- Effective street crossing skills enhances risk management
- Enhances independence, individual freedom, and dignity
## Route

### Essential for Planning
- Maps/internet
- Mode of transportation
- Cost
- Time
- Alternate route
- Path of travel

### Essential Skills
- Awareness of surroundings
- Decision making
- Initiating actions
- Problem solving
- Self-regulation
- Recognition and avoidance of danger

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Personal Responsibility

- Appropriate social/public behavior
- Money – entrance fee, fare card, food, etc.
- Keys – appropriate for adults
- Cell Phone – pre-programmed numbers, appropriate usage
- Weather and dress – suitable for activity
- Identification

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Individual Identification

- Easily accessible
- Knowledge of when, where, why, and how to show ID
- Information on ID
- Customized ID
- Don’t go out without it
Parent & Students Voices

• Student: “I wish someone would’ve informed me about travel training earlier since I have felt useless and trapped for so long”.

• “It will change the way you see the world. It will change the way they see the world.”

• “It’s the only time I’m treated just like everyone else”.

• Parent: “He has now completed travel training and the joy I see on his face for this new found independence when he leaves in the morning cannot be described”!

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Taking the Lead

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Secrets of the NYC Transit System!

- Conductor’s Board
- Globes outside of subway stations
What to Look-For in Travel Training Programs

- Type of training offered – orientation, familiarization, one-to-one, comprehensive
- Assessment Practices – pre and
- Environmental Analysis
- Specially trained personnel
- Customized instruction
- Documentation
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Sources of Information

Include NYC Resource Line

Free 1-on-1 help

- Special education
- Early childhood
- Kindergarten placement
- Busing
- Life after high school
- Medicaid waiver services, SSI, mental health
- Camps, afterschool, recreation, social groups

212-677-4660
Mon – Thurs 9 AM – 3 PM