Training for Drivers of Students with Special Needs
8VAC20–70–20. Transportation of children.

The greatest care shall be exercised at all times in the transportation of school children.
§ 22.1–181. Training program for school bus operators.
The Board of Education shall develop a training program for persons applying for employment, and employed, to operate school buses and shall promote its implementation.

DOE trains “trainers” who then train bus drivers. School divisions make the decision on who should be trainers.
8VAC20–70–290. First aid course.

Any school board may require successful completion of the American Red Cross first aid course or its equivalent as a condition to employment to operate a school bus transporting pupils as required by § 22.1–178 of the Code of Virginia.
8VAC20–70–350. Training.

No person shall operate a school or activity bus transporting pupils unless the person has:

1. Received classroom, demonstration, and behind-the-wheel instruction in accordance with a program developed by the Department of Education pursuant to § 22.1–181 of the Code of Virginia.
2. Completed a minimum of 24 classroom hours and 24 hours of behind-the-wheel training. A minimum of 10 of the 24 hours of behind-the-wheel time shall involve the operation of a bus with pupils on board while under the direct supervision of a designated bus driver trainer. All drivers shall receive training in the operation of a Type D bus and transportation of students with special needs.
8VAC20-70-420. Instructor course certificate.

Local school bus driver training instructors shall hold a certificate for completion of an instructor course conducted or approved by the Department of Education and shall attend a recertification course every five years.
Regulations Governing Pupil Transportation

8VAC20–70–360. In–service training.

In–service training (at least two hours before opening of schools and at least two hours during the second half of the school year) devoted to improving the skills, attitudes, and knowledge including orientation to maximize benefits of using safety programs and safety components shall be provided to all school or activity bus drivers.
“Train the Trainer”

Training class is 3 days

- Usually no more than 20 in a class
- Hold approximately 8 classes a year

Training includes:
- Lecture
- Powerpoint presentations
- Videos
- Hands-on
- Students teaching a section of curriculum
Training on Special Needs

- Separate special needs curriculum
- Each trainer receives a copy of the curriculum and a CD with training curriculum and other materials
- Trainer should adjust the curriculum to include any local policies
Topics covered in curriculum

1. Challenges of transporting special needs children
   - Growing number of special needs children
   - New technology
   - Inclusion

2. Characteristics of special needs children
   - Attention deficit disorder (ADD)
   - Autism
   - Deafness/Hearing Impaired
   - Emotionally disturbed
Special Needs Curriculum

3. Legal Aspects

Key Laws
Section 504
IDEA
ADA

Key Concepts
FAPE
IEPs
LRE
Inclusion
Special Needs Curriculum

4. Communication
   Important between drivers, children, school staff, parents

5. Behavior Management
   Remind drivers that children are children and behavior management can be challenging
   - Be consistent
   - Fair
   - Positive
6. Safe loading of Children
   - Safety procedures for lift use
   - Wheelchair securement

7. Preparation for Emergencies
   - How to handle various situations, such as collisions, fire, severe weather
   - Driver responsibility after a crash
   - Evacuations
   - Know the bus
8. Responsibilities of drivers

- Characteristics of drivers
- Physical demands
- Appropriate dress
Conference held in June each year

Program includes sessions on special needs

Includes Professional Development classes developed by NAPT geared to special needs

School Bus Road-e-o
  ◦ Special Needs Section
Conclusion

- Transporting special needs children is challenging
- There is always more to learn
- Open to suggestions on improving our training, etc.

June.Eanes@doe.virginia.gov