



OTTAWA CARLETON HEADSTART ASSOCIATION FOR PRESCHOOLS

TRANSPORTATION OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN: Review of Current Systems and Recommendations for Headstart Programs in Ottawa

Prepared for
Ottawa Carleton Headstart Association for Preschools

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I. Executive Summary

The Ottawa-Carleton Headstart Association for Preschools (OCHAP) is an organization representing children, staff, parents and Board members of Headstart Preschools. It is committed to education, coordination, networking, and advocacy. The membership is driven by a core group of eleven Headstart programs, which have a vested interest in preschool children from economically and socially disadvantaged environments and their families. As a concrete expression of its mission, OCHAP undertook this review of the transportation services which are offered to families through the various Headstart programs. The review is part of an overall effort to examine and establish standards of quality care to meet the needs of young children and families in the City of Ottawa.

This report identifies the complex set of issues facing Headstart programs related to transportation of preschool children. A literature review was conducted, which pinpointed concerns related to transportation safety – e.g. the incidence of accidents, importance of qualified drivers, the use or non-use of safety harnesses, the construction of vehicles, policies related to loading and unloading of children, planning of the school bus route, etc.

In addition, an analysis was conducted on the transportation component offered by the Headstart programs in Ottawa. Seven of the eleven Headstart programs offer transportation services to families. This report includes a critique of the various components of each system: e.g. the type of vehicles; leasing or contract arrangements; driver qualifications, training and responsibilities; safety issues; costs; policies and procedures; geographical boundaries; the relative importance of transportation to Headstart parents and families, etc. Furthermore, a survey was sent to the Directors of the four Headstart programs, which do not provide any transportation, to ascertain their opinions, ideas and need for a transportation component.

Based on gathered information, suggestions are being made with regard to the following transportation system components (*see Recommendations section*):

- < driver qualifications;
- < use of monitors;
- < vehicle type – buses versus vans;
- < use of seatbelts, carseats, and boosters’
- < vehicle features and equipment;
- < parental role and training;
- < expectations of Headstart children;
- < policies and procedures for transporting preschool children;
- < funding and support

Other recommendations for consideration by the Headstart programs in Ottawa and the Child Care Services branch of the City of Ottawa include:

- < Review and discuss the recommended Standards for the Transportation of Headstart Preschool Children (as proscribed in the Recommendation section of this report);
- < Firmly establish a set of Minimum Standards and Optional Practices for the Transportation of Headstart Preschool Children.
- < Work towards providing the necessary resources to implement the identified Minimum Standards for the Transportation of Headstart Preschool Children;
- < If feasible, work towards implementing optional standards which promote the maximum level of safety in transporting preschool children; and
- < Determine whether any of the four Headstart programs, which do not have a transportation component, warrant additional funding to provide transportation services to their respective families.

In conclusion, the recommendations from this report complement OCHAP's vision to promote an ideal Headstart model. Transportation of children is critically important for many Headstart programs, as it addresses just one of the many needs of economically-disadvantaged families. Thus, OCHAP, the Headstart programs, and the Child Care Services branch of the City of Ottawa must continually examine, reflect on, and address the complex issues related to transportation of preschool children.

II. Background Information

A. Headstart and Ottawa Carleton Headstart Association for Preschools

Incorporated in November 1990, the Ottawa-Carleton Headstart Association for Preschools (OCHAP) is an organization representing children, staff, parents and Board members of Headstart Preschools. Headstart programs in Ottawa are licensed under the Ministry of Community and Social Services, through the Day Nurseries Act of Ontario. OCHAP was established in response to the urgent need for advocacy and networking among Headstart programs dealing with issues of poverty, family stress, public housing, multiculturalism and other factors affecting child development.

On behalf of children and families, OCHAP provides a structure and forum for the development and delivery of high quality comprehensive early intervention services for preschool children in Ottawa. In carrying out its mandate, OCHAP acts as a collective voice to promote collaboration and provide advice to funding bodies and service planning.

OCHAP's stated goals are:

1. To inform the community about Headstart programs and other early enrichment programs for young children;
2. To provide a central body to support and coordinate services among Headstart Preschool programs and community agencies;
3. To support parent education programs;
4. To offer opportunities to educate and upgrade skills of staff;
5. To advocate on behalf of families participating in member schools; and
6. To advocate on behalf of member schools.

Agencies benefit from participating as members in OCHAP through the:

- < Development and support of citywide early enrichment and intervention services and strategies, such as OCHAP's Speech and Language Program, Book Bag (early literacy effort), and Right Start (a numeracy initiative).
- < Monthly meetings which promote education, service coordination, professional associations, effective partnerships, networking opportunities and advocacy among agencies working with families dealing with issues of poverty, family stress, public housing, multi-culturalism, and other factors affecting child development.
- < Annual in-service training workshops for professional staff development.
- < Periodic newsletters, forums and focus groups for the benefit of member schools and parents.

Through efforts of grassroots organizations, the initial Headstart programs were developed more than thirty years ago; the YM-YWCA Headstart Nursery School, Children's Aid Society Headstart Nursery School and Queensway Preschool being among the first. The last preschool, designated as a Headstart program by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, was Nanny Goat Hill Nursery School in 1990. While each school

is unique and responds to the specific needs of its respective communities, all of the member agencies strive toward an ideal Headstart program. At present, there are eleven Headstart programs in the City of Ottawa, in the following four electoral districts:

Ottawa Centre:

- < Nanny Goat Hill Nursery School, under the auspices of Somerset West Community Health Centre
- < The National Capital YMCA-YWCA Headstart Nursery School
- < Queensway Preschools, under the auspices of the Queensway Social Action Group

Ottawa-West Nepean:

- < Pinecrest-Queensway Nursery School, under the auspices of Pinecrest-Queensway Health and Community Service
- < Foster Farm, under the auspices of the Child Care Division, City of Ottawa
- < Esther By Child Care Centre, under the auspices of the Child Care Division, City of Ottawa
- < West End Nursery School

Ottawa-South:

- < Cornerstone Children’s Centre
- < Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School
- < Heatherington Nursery School

Ottawa-Vanier:

- < Children’s Aid Society Headstart Nursery School/Pré-Maternelle Bon-Départ [Note: This voluntary Headstart program is located in Gloucester, but serves at-risk children and families throughout Ottawa.]

B. Purpose of Transportation Study

As a concrete expression of its mission, OCHAP undertook a review of the transportation services offered to families through seven of the eleven Headstart programs. The review is part of an overall effort to examine and establish standards of quality care to meet the needs of young children and families in the City of Ottawa.

The transportation study is intended:

1. To identify the complex set of issues facing Headstart programs related to transportation of preschool children;
2. To articulate a range of possible standards for transporting preschool children;
3. To make recommendations for consideration by OCHAP, Headstart programs, and the Child Care Services branch of the City of Ottawa.

III. Research Methodology

A. Literature Review

A literature review was conducted to identify the complex set of issues related to the transportation of preschool children. Some data on the importance of transportation to Headstart families was gleaned from *OCHAP: Gaps in Services to Families with Young Children* report (December, 2001).

In addition, a search of relevant documents was done on the internet, which yielded useful information from Canadian institutions, including Transport Canada and Canada Safety Council, as well as American organizations, such as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services, the Transportation Research Board, and Head Start under the Administration for Children and Families. These websites provided statistics on accidents involving school buses and other types of vehicles, research on the efficacy of different child restraint systems, and position papers on improving other transportation safety measures.

B. Survey of Headstart Directors with a Transportation Component

Each Headstart program, that offers transportation services to families, completed a “Transportation Review” survey. The survey asked for a physical description of the vehicle, information on the leasing or contract arrangement, an explanation of the vehicle’s use (e.g. number of children, pick-ups, drop-offs, etc.), a description of the driver, a list of written safety policies and procedures, and a line-item budget accounting for all transportation-related costs. In addition, open-ended questions elicited the opinions of and concerns from the Headstart Directors on the transportation of Headstart and preschool children.

C. Survey of Headstart Directors without a Transportation Component

Four of the eleven Headstart programs currently do not offer any transportation services to their respective families. A survey was developed to obtain their viewpoints on the need to incorporate a transportation component into their respective program, and their opinions on establishing standards for transporting preschool children.

D. Limitations of the Report

A few limitations in the conduct of this transportation review were identified. Time limited a full literature review. A more complete literature review would have undoubtedly provided more insight, and possibly the identification of other issues related to transporting preschool children.

The only comments from Headstart parents on the transportation issue were extracted from existing OCHAP reports. If it were feasible, the process could have included any opportunity for new input or validation of findings from Headstart families.

IV. Findings and Implications

A. Literature Review

Through the literature review, important information was obtained on issues related to the transportation of pre-school age children. The literature review focussed on:

- < Statistical data on accidents involving pre-school age children while on school buses and/or in passenger vehicles
- < Current legislation, regulations and policies associated with school buses and passenger vans, use of seatbelts, driver qualifications, etc.
- < Importance of Transportation to Families

This information is intended to provide some contextual understanding of the issues related to the transportation of pre-school age children. The ensuing recommendations are based on the literature review, as well as on ideas from the Ottawa Headstart Directors.

1. Statistical Data on Accidents

According to Transport Canada, the number of reported motor vehicle crashes, which resulted in fatalities or injuries, have been decreasing nationwide over the past 10 years – as shown in Table 1: Motor Vehicle Collisions and Casualties in Canada.

Table 1: Motor Vehicle Collisions and Casualties in Canada

Year	Casualty Collisions	Persons Injured	Persons Killed
1990	181,960	262,680	3,963
1991	173,921	249,217	3,690
1992	172,713	249,821	3,501
1993	171,227	247,588	3,615
1994	169,649	245,110	3,263
1995	167,044	241,935	3,351
1996	158,990	230,890	3,091
1997	152,765	221,349	3,064
1998	150,919	217,614	2,927

*All reportable motor vehicle crashes which result in fatalities or injuries. Source: Transport Canada, Canadian Motor Vehicle Traffic Collisions Statistics (TP 3322) – Table updated July 2000.

Accidents Involving School Buses

There are an estimated 36,800 yellow school buses, which provide transportation daily to 2.5 million students, about 55% of Canada's K-12 student population. Of the total number of school buses produced annually, approximately 15% are small buses, 20% are transit-style buses, and the remaining 65% are conventional-style buses.¹ Transport Canada is the federal agency responsible for school bus safety in Canada. It issues regulations and guidelines, reviews bus safety issues, studies occupant protection and more. Transport Canada ensures that school buses adhere to federal regulations, and meet construction standards. The operation of school buses is a provincial responsibility.

With regard to school buses, Transport Canada provided the following statistics for the ten year period of 1988 to 1997²:

- < A total of 29,488 school buses were involved in 29,193 collisions over the ten-year period of 1988 to 1997: 177 fatal, 5,659 personal-injury and 23,357 property-damage collisions.
- < These collisions resulted in 204 fatalities and 10,480 injuries – an average of 20 fatalities and 1,048 injuries per year.
- < Of the 204 fatalities, 8 were school bus occupants (less than 19 years olds) – an average of 1 death per year. Five of these 8 fatalities occurred between 1989 to 1991; the remaining 3 occurred in 1994.
- < The 5,836 casualty-producing collisions (i.e. fatal and injury-producing), involving at least one school bus, represent approximately 0.3 percent of the 1,734,244 casualty-producing collisions involving all vehicle types.

Table 2: School-Age Casualties by Time of Day, 1988-1997 presents the number of school-age (less than 19 years old) occupant and pedestrian fatalities and injuries by time of day. An average of five school-age children died in school bus collisions each year and 357 were injured. Of the fatalities, an average of one per year was a school bus occupant and four were pedestrians. Of the injuries, an average of 312 were school bus occupants and 45 were pedestrians.

More school-age pedestrian fatalities and injuries occurred in the afternoon than in the morning, with approximately one-third of the casualties occurring in collisions between 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Seventy-five percent of school-age occupant fatalities occurred between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. on the journey to school. Almost 42% of school-age occupant injuries occurred between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. followed by 34% of occupant injuries occurring between 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.³

¹ *School Transportation in Canada*. School Transportation News, 2002.
<http://www.stnonline.com>

² *School Bus Collisions 1988-1997*. Road Safety and Motor Vehicle Regulation Directorate, TP2436 Leaflet #CL 9906(E), Traffic Accident Information Database, 1999.

³ *Ibid.*

Table 2. School-Age Casualties (Less Than 19 Years Old) by Time of Day, 1988-1997

Time of Day	School Bus Occupants		Pedestrians		Totals	
	Fatalities	Injuries	Fatalities	Injuries	Fatalities	Injuries
12:00 - 6:59 a.m.	0	20	0	3	0	23
7:00 - 7:59 a.m.	4	237	2	21	6	258
8:00 - 8:59 a.m.	2	1,061	7	81	9	1,142
9:00 - 9:59 a.m.	0	179	1	5	1	184
10:00 - 10:59 a.m.	0	11	0	3	0	14
11:00 - 11:59 a.m.	0	123	3	35	3	158
12:00 - 12:59 p.m.	0	168	3	28	3	196
1:00 - 1:59 p.m.	0	42	0	8	0	50
2:00 - 2:59 p.m.	0	114	1	19	1	133
3:00 - 3:59 p.m.	1	712	12	147	13	859
4:00 - 4:59 p.m.	0	351	8	79	8	430
5:00 - 11:59 p.m.	1	88	0	16	1	104
Unknown	0	11	0	5	0	16
Totals	8	3,117	37	450	45	3,567

Source: Transport Canada

Accidents Involving Passenger Vans

The Evaluation and Data Systems unit of Transport Canada responded to OCHAP’s request for information concerning young children injured in van collisions. To determine whether or not a vehicle was a van, Transport Canada must use the vehicle identification number (VIN). However, many provinces do not report VIN information, and even those provinces that do, are unable to record a VIN for every vehicle involved in a collision. Naturally, this leads to gaps and uncertainty in the data.

Nonetheless, Transport Canada provided tables showing the number of occupant children, aged 0-6 years, who were killed or injured in van collisions, in Ontario from 1997-1999, as well as the total number of van collisions during those years. The numbers shown (in Table 3 and 4 below) represent only cases where there was definitely a van involved. It is quite possible there were additional van collisions that weren’t specifically identified as such, because the VIN was not reported. In general, there was an average of 2 fatalities a year to children under 6 years in Ontario, involving a van collision.

Table 3: Number of Young Children Killed and Injured in Van Collisions, in Ontario

1997				
Age	Level of Injury			Fatal
	Minimal	Minor	Major	
0	11	4	0	0
1	12	12	0	2
2	29	14	1	0
3	33	17	2	0
4	37	36	5	0
5	54	17	9	0
6	62	22	8	1
Total	238	122	25	3
1998				
Age	Level of Injury			Fatal
	Minimal	Minor	Major	
0	3	2	2	0
1	14	6	0	0
2	27	14	2	0
3	20	20	2	0
4	27	20	4	0
5	47	24	4	1
6	41	19	5	0
Total	179	105	19	1
1999				
Age	Level of Injury			Fatal
	Minimal	Minor	Major	
0	6	1	0	0
1	16	7	0	0
2	23	8	4	0
3	32	5	0	0
4	37	25	3	1
5	33	18	3	1
6	43	8	5	0
Total	190	72	15	2

Definition of Levels of Injury:

Minimal: No treatment required. Minor abrasions and bruises. Complaint of pain but no medical attention received at time of collision.

Minor: Treated at a medical facility and released. Injuries or complaint of pain that required medical attention but not admitted to hospital.

Major: Hospitalized. Victim went to the hospital and was admitted for treatment or observation.

Fatal: Death from injuries sustained in the traffic incident occurred within specified time period (30 days for Ontario).

Table 4: Number of Fatal or Injury Collisions Involving Vans, in Ontario

	Fatal	Injury
1997	105	9961
1998	94	10017
1999	96	10192

Source: Transport Canada, National Collision Database, April 2002

School Buses vs. Passenger Vans

Comparatively, the rate of injuries and fatalities to preschool children involving school buses is less than the number of injuries and fatalities by vans. The Canada Safety Council supports this claim, “Statistically, the school bus is the safest way for children to get to school. School buses transport almost three million Canadian children every day, travelling millions of kilometres in both rural and urban areas. Over the past 10 years, an average of one child per year has died inside a school bus. Experts say children are 16 times safer riding in a school bus than a passenger vehicle.”

In addition, National High Traffic Safety Administration (Washington, DC) reported that, in comparison to school buses, passenger vans (generally carrying 8 to 15 passengers) are not manufactured to the same stringent federal motor vehicle safety standards as traditional yellow school buses, and thus, do not provide the same degree of occupant protection to passengers that school buses do.

Get the Facts ...

- < More fatal collisions happened on Saturday than any other day of the week (an average of 19.3% of fatal crashes over the ten year period). Friday was the peak day for injury collisions (average 17.5% of injury-producing collisions).
- < August was the most common month for fatal collisions in six out of the ten years, while July was the most common month for fatal collisions in the other four years.
- < An average of 17.5% of fatal collisions and 24.2% of injury crashes occurred between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., the most common time period for both types of collisions.
- < An average of 44.7% of fatal collisions and 60.9% of injury-producing collisions occurred in daylight.
- < An average of 77.2% of fatal crashes and 76.2% of injury-producing crashes took place during clear weather conditions.
- < On average, 52.6% of fatal collisions and 65.7% of injury collisions occurred on straight and level roads.
- < The majority of fatal crashes (on average, 53.0%) took place at non-intersection locations.

Source: Trends in Motor Vehicle Traffic Collision Statistics, 1988-1997. Transport Canada, Road Safety and Motor Vehicle Regulation Directorate, TP 13743E, February 2001

2. Existing policies and recommendations for transporting preschool children

a. School Bus Design

Standards for the transportation of school-age children vary between countries, and for type of vehicle, age of children and urban or rural environment. In Canada, there are almost 40 federal standards that apply to the design and construction of school buses. The existing federal Motor Vehicle Safety Regulations contain comprehensive school bus passenger protection standards, including tight specifications for seat design and installation. Standards (CMVSS 131, July 1996) have been set which requires stop arms on school buses, which complements the long-standing flashing red lights and provincial traffic regulations that require other vehicles to stop when a school bus is embarking or disembarking passengers. An amendment to CMVSS 111, in October 1997, required the installation of a six-mirror system – with defined fields of view to help drivers see pedestrians close to the vehicle front and sides. Additional standards have been set for “roof strength,” “joint strength” and for “passenger protection.” The standards are constantly reviewed in light of knowledge gained from school bus collisions, almost all of which Transport Canada investigates.

In the U.S. the use of passenger vans (carrying 8 to 15 passengers) for school service – whether for regular route service, or more commonly for activity or athletic trips - is illegal, as they do not conform to federal law which requires that children be transported in school vehicles which meet several federal safety standards. Automobile manufacturers and dealers are prohibited from selling these vans into school service.⁴

List of Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for School Buses

CMVSS101	Control Location and Identification
CMVSS102	Transmission Shift Control Sequence
CMVSS103	Windshield Defrosting and Defogging
CMVSS104	Windshield Wiping and Washing Systems
CMVSS105	Hydraulic Brake Systems
CMVSS106	Hydraulic Brake Hoses
CMVSS107	Reflecting Surfaces
CMVSS108	Lighting Equipment
CMVSS108.1	Headlamps
CMVSS111	Rearview Mirrors
CMVSS112	Headlamp Concealment Devices
CMVSS113	Hood Latch System
CMVSS116	Hydraulic Brake Fluid
CMVSS120	Tire Selection and Rims for Vehicles Other Than Passenger Cars
CMVSS121	Air Brake Systems
CMVSS124	Accelerator Control Systems
CMVSS205	Glazing Materials
CMVSS207	Anchorage of Seats
CMVSS208	Seat Belt Installations
CMVSS209	Seat Belt Assemblies
CMVSS210	Seat Belt Assembly Anchorages
CMVSS212	Windshield Mounting
CMVSS217	Bus Window Retention, Release and Emergency Exits
CMVSS219	Windshield Zone Intrusion
CMVSS220	Rollover Protection
CMVSS221	School Bus Body Joint Strength
CMVSS222	School Bus Passenger Seating and Crash Protection
CMVSS301	Fuel System Integrity
CMVSS302	Flammability
CMVSS1101	Emission Device
CMVSS1102	Crankcase Emissions
CMVSS1103	Exhaust Emissions
MVSS1104	Capacity

⁴ *Use of Non-Conforming Vans.* Transportation Research Board, Washington, DC.

b. Drivers

According to the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services, the role of the school bus driver in ensuring the safe transportation of children to and from school and school-related activities is as important as any other link in the school transportation safety chain.⁵ School bus drivers must pass knowledge and skills tests – which assess an individual’s knowledge of laws and regulations and driving ability. As with other individuals who have contact with children, school bus drivers must also pass a criminal background check. Drivers need to be in sound physical and mental health, as the driver is oftentimes perceived as a “friend” to the child and as a “guardian,” to be entrusted by the parent.

In terms of their responsibilities, school bus drivers are not only responsible for driving the vehicle, but are responsible for conducting a physical check of various vehicle systems to ensure their proper working condition. In addition, drivers are responsible for the discipline of children on the bus, and must handle any medical or other emergencies which may arise during the transportation of children.

Ongoing training of school bus drivers is important. Training topics include: driver attitude; student management; planning your route; loading and unloading children; and transporting infants and toddlers. Providing drivers with current knowledge on new regulations and with skills to handle difficult situations would only enhance their ability to perform their tasks.

c. Seat Capacity, Use of Seatbelts and Child Safety Restraints

An integral part of providing “safe” transportation in a school bus, or any other type motor vehicle, is that the passengers be properly seated. From a safety perspective, a person who is either standing or improperly seated in a school bus, or any other type of motor vehicle, is not afforded the benefits of safety protection designed into the vehicle, and is in increased jeopardy of injury in the event of a crash or extreme sudden driving manoeuvre. The typical school bus seat is 39" wide, and can safely accommodate three preschoolers and/or primary school-aged children.

Current legislation in the Motor Vehicle Safety Act (Canada) recommends that children, between 9 and 18 kilograms, or a toddler, be restrained in an approved car seat when transported in a vehicle. When toddlers are transported by someone other than their parents, they could merely be secured using the pelvic strap of the normal seat belt. It is recommended that children over 18 kilograms, but less than 23 kilograms, be secured by a pelvic strap of the normal seat belt.

For vehicles, such as passenger vans or van-type school buses (under 10,000 pounds gross weight), the use of safety belts for all occupants as standard equipment is recommended. Safety belts and child restraints are effective in providing occupant protection in these types of vehicles, because of their similarity to cars. The correct use of a child restraint can prevent 75% of crash-related deaths and serious injuries to child passengers.

⁵ *Position Paper: School Bus Drivers – Their Importance and Training*. National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services, March 2000.

The Canada Safety Council offers the following guidelines to ensure a child is properly protected in a passenger vehicle:

- < Rear-facing Infant Seat for Birth to 10 kgs (22 lbs.)
- < Forward-facing Child Seat for 10-18 kgs. (22-40 lbs.)
- < Booster Seat for 18 kgs. (40 lbs) or over
- < Seat-Belt for 27 kgs. (60 lbs.) or over

The use of seatbelts on school buses continues to be a controversial issue, and an issue for public debate. Currently, neither federal guidelines or provincial requirements have been set – imposing a strict use of seatbelts on school buses. According to Transport Canada, the U.S. has installed seatbelts in small school buses (less than 4536 kg GVWR) since the mid-1970's. At one point, Etobicoke in Canada also had them in all buses, but after amalgamation, the local board voted to stop this practice. The states of New York and New Jersey have specific requirements for seat belt use as well as their installation; however, regular use by the children is suspect.

Transport Canada has not found seatbelt requirements to be warranted for school buses. This conclusion included small school buses. Transport Canada based their conclusion on several factors: the low fatalities and injuries involving school buses, the efficacy of the currently designed passenger protection system, the possibility that seatbelts would not be properly worn by students, and the cost of requiring seatbelt installations on school buses. Lap belts are not a good means of providing crash protection to small children because small children's bone structure, particularly their hips, which is still developing through grade school.⁶

However, NHTSA based their recommendation -- for schools to use Child Safety Restraint Systems (CSRS) for preschool children – on results of crash testing of pre-school age size dummies in school bus seats. In “Guidelines for the Safe Transportation of Pre-school Age Children in School Buses” by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (February 1999), test results showed that pre-school age children in school buses are safest when transported in manufacturer-certified, properly secured and anchored Child Safety Restraint System (suitable for the child's weight and age).⁷ A Child Safety Restraint System is any device (except a passenger system lap seat belt or lap/shoulder seat belt), designed for use in a motor vehicle to restrain, seat, or position a child who weighs less than 50 pounds.

In Canada, similar research has been done to explore the relative safety of different methods of transporting small children in school buses; the research tested occupant restraints on current school bus seats utilizing an acceleration sled. The study concluded that, “6-year old anthropometric test devices (ATDs) would appear adequately protected while unrestrained, while the 3-year and 18-month old ATDs would appear to require restraint to be adequately protected on a school bus.” While Transport Canada has not yet issued an official

⁶ *Position Paper: Passenger crash protection in school buses - an update.* National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services, January 1999.

⁷ *Guideline for the Safe Transportation of Pre-school Age Children in School Buses.* National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, February 1999.

provision related to the use of appropriate Child Safety Restraint Systems on school buses, a Transport Canada representative recommends their use for children under 40 pounds or 18 kilograms.⁸

Furthermore, NHTSA also recommended that:

1. Personnel responsible for securing CSRSs onto school bus seats and children into CSRSs are properly trained and all personnel involved are provided up-to-date information and training.
2. School-bus seats designed for CSRSs are located starting at the front of the vehicle to provide drivers with quick access to and a clear view of the CSRS occupants. CSRSs should not be placed in school bus seats adjacent to emergency exits.
3. If other students share seats with the CSRSs, the CSRSs are placed in window seating positions.
4. When ordering new buses, the maximum spacing specified (within 24 inches from the seating reference point) is recommended for seats designated for CSRSs to provide adequate space, and the combined width of the CSRS and/or other passengers on a single seat does not exceed the width of the seat.
5. When retrofitting school buses, proper instructions to install a CSRS should be followed.
6. When transported in school buses, pre-school age children are supervised according to their developmental and functioning level.
7. Specified procedures should be established for loading and unloading children in CSRSs. Procedures should be established for the periodic maintenance, cleaning and inspection for damage of CSRSs. Procedures should train personnel involved in direct service delivery of infants, toddlers and preschool children on the physical day-to-day handling of these young children.
8. When procedures are established, it should be noted that some children in CSRSs may have special needs, including medical fragility that must be address on a child-by-child basis.
9. Written plans on evacuating preschool age children and other passengers in CSRSs in the event of an emergency should be established. The plan should be provided to the drivers, monitors and emergency response personnel. Evacuation drills should be practised on a scheduled basis – by personnel and children, themselves
10. All school buses carrying children in CSRSs should carry safety belt cutters that are accessible only to the driver and any monitors.

d. Distance and Speed Limits

Route planning is a critical component in transporting children to and from school. The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board require that children in junior and senior kindergarten must live more than 1.0 km from the school, in order to be eligible for school bus services.

Safety experts agree that higher travel speeds result in more severe crashes. While school buses travel mainly on residential streets, very few are subject to potential crash severity. The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation argues that, “slower travel speeds reduce the potential crash severity level in vehicle-to-vehicle crashes involving a school bus, while also reduce fuel consumption. Driving at higher speeds

⁸ Gardner, William P., Eng., Dobрева-Martinova, Tzveta, Ph.D., Legault, France, P. Eng.
Restraint of Small Children on School Buses in Canada.

in school buses so as to shorten the travel time by a few minutes may not be worth the inherent increase in risk.⁹ Large 15 passenger vans are known to have poor stability, and are likely to flip over in response to quick turns at high speeds. In addition, the greater number of miles travelled by schools buses poses greater exposure to potential crashes.

e. Cost

Cost plays a factor in government’s decision to offer transportation services to children and their families. As shown in Table 5, the provincial annual cost to transport 920,000 students in Ontario was \$570 million – an average of \$542 per student. On February 7, 2002, The Ottawa Citizen reported that the Ottawa-Carleton School Board was facing severe budget challenges and was planning to cut school buses to 13,000 children, between kindergarten and Grade 6. Parents expressed their concern if bus services were taken away. Their concerns were centred primarily around safety.

Supporting this argument, the Canada Safety Council has written that, “reductions in school bus service mean more children are exposed to risk by walking to school or using alternate forms of transportation. Pedestrians account for almost 40% of road fatalities to children, aged 5 to 9, an issue worthy of attention by those concerned about children getting and from school safely”.¹⁰ While the cost of providing transportation to pre-school age children is an issue, policymakers must consider the unforeseen impact and costs of eliminating such services.

Table 5: School Transportation Costs by Provinces

	# of Students	# of Students Transported	Percentage	Total Cost	Cost per Student
Alberta	538,400	305,800	57%	\$160.5M	\$526
British Columbia	614,167	118,396	19%	\$86.5M	\$733
Manitoba	195,100	62,100	32%	\$40.5M	\$653
New Brunswick	131,000	100,000	76%	\$42.M	\$420
Nova Scotia	162,360	902,000	55.4%	NA	\$619
Ontario	1,952,000	920,000	47%	\$570M	\$542
Quebec	1,059,686	701,286	66%	\$380M	\$355
Saskatchewan	NA	193,881	50,786	\$68.7M	\$619

Source: School Transportation News research <http://www.stnonline.com/stn/government>

⁹ Position Paper: Speed Limits for School Buses. National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Service, April 2000.

¹⁰ Seat-belts in School Buses? Safety Council of Canada. [Http://www.safety-council.org/info/traffic/schbusbelt.htm](http://www.safety-council.org/info/traffic/schbusbelt.htm)

f. Transportation of Preschool Age Children

The Day Nurseries Act of Canada does not impose any requirements related to the transportation of preschool age children in school buses. In turn, provincial and/or municipal requirements for Ottawa are not clearly articulated, which would apply across all child care programs. Nonetheless, the Child Care Services branch of the City of Ottawa is adhering to recommendations made in 2000 by the Acting Commissioner of the then Social Services Department of the Region of Ottawa-Carleton. The department made the following recommendations:

- < That the Child Care Directorate resume the practice of transporting preschool children (2½ to 5 years of age) on field trips using regular school buses and OC Transpo
- < That the Child Care Directorate refrain from transporting toddlers (18 months to 30 months of age) on field trips involving school buses and OC Transpo.
- < That the Child Care Directorate review current safety routines on field trips and establish standards of practice for all regional child care centres including guidelines for adult volunteers.
- < That child/adult ratios be increased to 4:1 during field trips by using students, volunteers, parents or supply teachers to be available in cases of emergency.
- < That when research in progress at Transport Canada is complete, the Child Care Directorate review policies and routines to conform with the recommendations at this time.
- < That Purchase of Service child care centres be encouraged to review their policies and procedures regarding safety practices on field trips to ensure the safety of the children enrolled.

In the United States, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration published “Guidelines for the Safe Transportation of Pre-school Age Children in School Buses” in February 1999. The document includes: specifications for a Child Safety Restraint System (CSRS), procedures for the proper securement of the CSRS, proper designation of school bus seats for CSRSs, instructions on retrofitting school buses to accommodate CSRSs, and policies for evacuation, loading and unloading of children.¹¹

A study by the U.S. Transportation Research Board of the National Academy of Sciences is underway to determine the relative safety of children in school buses versus transit vehicles, passenger motor vehicles, bicycles and walking. It will provide a basis for identifying safety problems associated with various models of travel to and from school and school-related activities. Their findings will be used in evaluating and suggesting standards and guidelines to ensure safe transportation of school children.¹²

g. Head Start Transportation Regulations in the U.S.

The U.S. Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has written regulations and policies regarding transportation for its Head Start programs. Generally, each Head Start program “must assist as many families

¹¹ “*Transporting Preschool Children on School Buses.*” Report from Acting Commissioner, Social Services Department, 27 September 2000.

¹² *Position Paper on “Transporting the Nation’s School Children [school buses-transit buses].”* National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services, August 2000.

as possible who need transportation in order for their children to attend the program in obtaining that transportation.” In the U.S., Head Start programs must ensure that each vehicle is equipped with:

- (1) a communication system to call for assistance in case of an emergency;
- (2) safety equipment for use in an emergency, including a charged fire extinguisher that is properly mounted near the driver’s seat and a sign indicating its location;
- (3) a first aid kit and a sign indicating the location of such equipment; and
- (4) a seat belt cutter for use in an emergency evacuation and a sign indicating its location;
- (5) auxiliary seating, such as temporary or folding jump seats.

Effective January 20, 2004, ACF is requiring the use of height- and weight-appropriate child safety restraint systems. And effective January 18, 2006, ACF is requiring vehicles with reverse beepers.

In addition, there are written U.S. Head Start regulations regarding: accidents; the release of a child to a parent or legal guardian; maintenance of vehicles; inspection of new vehicles at the time of delivery; operation of vehicles; driver qualifications; trip routing; safety education; children with disabilities; and coordinated transportation with other human services agencies in the community in order to control costs and to improve the quality and the availability of transportation services.

h. Importance of Transportation within Headstart programs

In the September 2000 report of the Social Services Department of the then Region of Ottawa-Carleton, the Acting Commissioner wrote, “Headstart programs provide transportation to and from their centre on a daily basis, some of which use vans or lease small school buses for this purpose. This transportation component is vital to the families and children enrolled because with it, children would not attend these programs.” The Acting Commissioner added, “The heightened interest of children during field trips provides an opportunity to expand language skills, practice listening skills and develop an awareness of the community in which they live. In many cases, these children would not otherwise have an opportunity to enjoy and learn from the many resources available.”

In a study conducted by Pauline Turner and Richard Smith, the day care needs, attitudes, and practices of 252 single parents with dependent children were assessed. The sample was diverse in terms of age, income, educational level, and number and ages of dependent children. The study suggests that single parents need: adequate day care services that are affordable and convenient to either their home or work; more information and education about child care, especially the criteria important in the selection of quality care; a greater variety of day care options, e.g., part time care, drop-in care and transportation assistance; and insight into the relationship between staff and training in quality child care.

B. Surveys and Interviews with Headstart Directors with a Transportation Component

In addition to the literature review, interviews were conducted with the seven Directors of Headstart programs in Ottawa, which provide transportation to pre-school children. In Ottawa, the Headstart programs implemented their own transportation system, based on the needs of their community, experiences in providing

this service for many years, organizational factors, and financial support from the Child Care Services branch of the City of Ottawa.

Since there are no written municipal or provincial policies governing how to operate an efficient, effective and safe transportation system for preschool-age children, the Headstart programs, OCHAP and the Child Care Services branch decided to undertake this study. The following section presents some of the concerns the Headstart Directors have regarding the transportation of preschool age children. Their list of concerns are intended to shape formal standards of quality service, and include:

- < importance of transportation services to Headstart families;
- < use of personnel – as drivers and/or monitors;
- < use of school buses versus passenger vans;
- < use of seatbelts and child restraint systems;
- < other safety concerns; and
- < need for policies and regulations

During the interview, the Headstart Directors also described their current transportation system. Comparisons were made between different methods of providing service – highlighting the benefits of each modality.

1. Importance of Transportation to Headstart Families

Consistent with the findings of the literature review, the Headstart Directors asserted that providing transportation to low-income families is as an essential service, particularly in communities where families would ordinarily have to take public transportation or drive a car to the nursery or preschool. Firstly, most of the Headstart families do not own a family car. Secondly, many Headstart families have multiple children, which makes it complicated and difficult for parents to take their preschool-age child to the Headstart program, especially during winter months. Thirdly, some families may lack confidence, inclination and/or motivation to bring their child to school every day. Affirming this perspective, is the fact that on days with inclement weather, on which the transportation service was cancelled, very few families and children show up.

In addition, the Headstart Directors attributed other benefits to having a school vehicle – primarily, the capacity of Headstart programs to offer and go on field trips. Field trips are seen as an essential component to provide children with new experiences and external learning opportunities. An organized field trip expands on themes planned by the Headstart program.

The Directors asserted that, if transportation services were eliminated, it would be to the detriment of families, Headstart programs and the community. The lack of transportation services would mean that Headstart programs would only draw families from within walking distance, thus creating a barrier to families living in the farther reaches of a Headstart program’s catchment area. In addition, the Headstart Directors believe that the cost of a child missing school is less than the cost of providing transportation.

2. Concerns related to Transportation Component

a. Safety Issues

The Headstart Directors cited several issues regarding safety on school vehicles.

- < Children's Inappropriate Behaviour – Headstart children range in age, from 18 months up to 6 years. Several are new Canadians; some of whom are not proficient in English and/or French, and are unaware of appropriate rules while travelling in a vehicle. In addition, while most Headstart children behave appropriately, some have demonstrated inappropriate or aggressive behaviours, such as unbuckling their seatbelts, throwing temper tantrums, remaining unseated, running on the bus, biting and/or pinching other children, eating on the vehicle causing a potential choking situation, getting motion sickness/throwing up, etc. These situations are a concern to the drivers and Headstart staff, as the children can cause harm to themselves and others, and can potentially distract the driver.
- < Weather Conditions – Aside from children's behaviour, poor and changing weather conditions -- such as ice, snow, rainstorms, summer heat – pose potential dangers and risk for an accident. Some Headstart programs leave cancellations of the transportation service up to the discretion of driver, others follow the announcements of the public school system.
- < Risky Situations – Headstart Directors indicated that the transportation of preschool age children includes daily risks, associated with the loading and unloading of children, releasing children to adults, street routing, and field trips. Written protocol to conduct these tasks are warranted – to reduce the risk of accidents and injuries. In addition, one Headstart program has experienced incidences of vandalism of the school's vehicle, while parked overnight in the school's parking lot.
- < Accidents and Emergency Evacuation – Many Headstart Directors have set policies and procedures for dealing with accidents and emergency evacuation situations. Nonetheless, they are concerned about the ability of a single staff person to help multiple children, especially in situations which require immediate evacuation, especially children who are very young, may be belted, developmentally challenged, or with limited mobility.

b. Use of Personnel

With regard to drivers, Headstart Directors view the qualifications, training and responsibilities of the driver as essential components of an effective and safe transportation component.

- < Driver Qualifications – Some Headstart programs use dedicated drivers, while others use teachers who have the special license to drive a school vehicle. Professional drivers are seen as having additional qualifications, which make them more suitable for the responsibilities of transporting young children. Teachers are not perceived as specialized drivers, and are less able to spot problems. In addition, schools which require teachers to have a special driver license limit their options for hiring/employment. Furthermore, the time teachers have to focus on programming is reduced if they also have to drive.
- < Monitors – Some Headstart programs require an additional staff person, primarily a teacher, to escort the bus driver during pick-ups and drop-offs. The advantages to using monitors include: reducing driver distraction, improving safety, giving teachers an opportunity to meet parents outside the school, etc.

c. Cost

For some Headstart programs, the transportation line-item budget approved by the City of Ottawa does not offset the real costs of providing a transportation service. Some Headstart are taking a deficit on this line item, and readjusting other line-items to accommodate the overrun as none of the Headstart programs want to lose this service. In addition, the tight budgets do not allow the Headstart programs to offer competitive salaries for qualified drivers or to improve their transportation component.

d. Other Issues

The Headstart Directors are also concerned about other issues regarding the transportation of preschool age children, such as:

- < Length of time on bus. Many of the Headstart Directors feel that the children should not be on a school vehicle for more than 30 minutes. Longer periods could cause children to be more unruly on the vehicle and/or too tired upon arrival at the school.
- < Catchment area. The Headstart Directors have established geographical boundaries for their respective transportation component, based on length of time a child would have to be on the vehicle, distance from the school, demand and costs. Directors are concerned for families who live outside the designated areas, are out of the program's reach, but need child care options.

e. Standardizing Policies and Procedures

Headstart Directors all agreed that the establishment of policies, related to the transportation of preschool age children, would help them feel more secure, reassured, and legally protected. Standards would promote consistency and equality among Headstart programs, and improve services and safety. Optional standards could be recommended – allowing for flexibility between programs – taking into consideration the uniqueness and capacity of individual programs..

3. *Transportation Models*

The seven Headstart programs which have a transportation component vary, in terms of the types of vehicles they use (school buses vs. passenger vans), vehicle ownership (leasing vs. contracted services), driver qualifications, use of monitors, safety policies and procedures, costs for operating their system, etc. This section of the report will provide a brief description of each component, and the advantages and disadvantages of each.

a. School Buses and Vans

A yellow school bus is used by 3 Headstart programs: Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School, Heatherington Nursery School, and Pinecrest-Queensway Nursery School. The buses are equipped with emergency exits, bench seats, backup beepers and stop arms. The main advantage of the yellow school bus are: (1) it is easily identifiable, (2) other drivers on the road generally adhere to proper stopping protocol, and (3) the seating capacity is greater than a van.

Passenger vans (ranging in seating capacity from 8 to 15 passengers) are used by 4 Headstart programs: Children's Aid Society, Queensway Prsechool, YMCA-YWCA National Capital Area Nursery School, and West End Nursery School. Some are equipped with emergency exits and sensor beepers, but not all. The main advantages are: (1) passenger vans are required to have appropriate child restraint systems (seatbelts, car seats, and booster seats), and (2) passenger vans are more manoeuvrable than a bus.

b. Contracted Services and Lease Agreements

Three Headstart programs (Children's Aid Society, YMCA-YWCA Nursery School, and West End Nursery School) have a contract with a company (Dan-O-Mite) or an individual to provide the transportation service. The main advantages of having a contract are: (1) the company is responsible for making all of the arrangements – from the maintenance of the vehicles, planning the timing and routes for pick-up and drop-offs, driving, and contacting the parents regarding cancellations, etc., and (2) the Headstart program is not the primary liable entity should an accident or injury occur during the transportation of a child.

Four Headstart programs (Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School, Heatherington Nursery School, and Pinecrest-Queensway Nursery School and Queensway Preschool) have a leasing arrangement with Laidlaw or Cambel Ford. It is the school's responsibility for finding a driver, planning routes, and contacting parents. While Laidlaw Transit will replace parts or the bus itself, if broken, the schools is responsible for making daily maintenance checks. The main advantages to a leasing arrangement are: (1) the vehicle is more readily available for field trips and for other transport needs (e.g. getting supplies, taking staff to meetings, etc.), and (2) the cost per child to operate the transportation program by a leasing arrangement is less than a contract.

c. Insurance Coverage

Generally, the contracted company (Dan-O-Mite) has a higher insurance coverage at \$25,000,000 than the leasing company (Laidlaw Transit), which has between \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000.

d. Geographical Boundaries and Eligibility

All of the Headstart programs, which offer transportation services, have defined (and somewhat flexible) geographical boundaries. The Directors base their program's transportation boundaries on the length of time a child would have to be on the vehicle, distance from the school, demand and costs. Most of the schools do not offer transportation services to families residing within walking distance from the Headstart programs. Eligibility for the transportation component was solely based on whether the family resided within the geographical boundaries of their respective Headstart program. [Note: Using 5 vans, the Children's Aid Society is the only Headstart program which transports children from throughout the City of Ottawa.]

In some situations, families opt to go to Headstart programs which have a transportation component rather than to the closest Headstart program. For instance, Headstart families, who live closer to Nanny Goat Hill Nursery School (which doesn't have a transportation component), would prefer to go the YMCA-YWCA Nursery School or Queensway Preschool because of their transportation service.

e. Number and timings of runs

The Headstart programs with a transportation component make between 2 to 5 pick-up and drop-off runs each day. Generally, the children are on the vehicle for less than 30 minutes. Because of CAS's unique population from throughout the City, it may take up to 40 minutes for their children to arrive. Queensway Preschool and the YMCA-YWCA Nursery School operate a morning Headstart program only. Due to limited seating capacity, West End Nursery School makes more runs than a school with a larger vehicle.

f. Description of Drivers and Monitors

As mentioned previously, some Headstart programs use dedicated drivers, while others use teachers who have the special license to drive a school vehicle. Professional drivers are seen as having additional qualifications, which make them more suitable for the responsibilities of transportation young children. At times, some designated drivers also serves as a chaperone, particularly for field trips.

Teachers are not perceived as specialized drivers, and are seen as less able to spot mechanical problems. In addition, schools which require teachers to have a special driver license limit their options for hiring/employment. Furthermore, the time teachers have to focus on programming is reduced if they also have to drive.

Three Headstart programs require an additional staff person, primarily a teacher, to escort the bus driver during pick-ups and drop-offs. The advantages to using monitors include: reducing driver distraction, improving safety, giving teachers an opportunity to meet parents outside the school, etc. While some Headstart Directors suggested the use of trained and qualified volunteers as monitors, none of the Headstart programs do so on a daily basis.

g. Staff Training Opportunities

In order to obtain the appropriate license, drivers take Defensive Driving Courses. In addition, some schools provide drivers with an on-the-job orientation to their policies and procedures. Drivers learn the protocol for loading and unloading, bus safety, use of seatbelts, etc. The YMCA-YWCA requires its drivers to have current CPR and First Aid certification. Some have new drivers accompany seasoned drivers before they drive on their own – in order to acquaint them with the procedures, routes, children and parents.

h. Staff to Child Ratio

The adult to child ratio during the transportation of Headstart children currently ranges from 1:6 to 1:17. Of the four Headstart programs which use a van, only one uses a monitor and a driver. Of the three Headstart programs which use a school bus, two use a monitor and a driver.

i. Safety Policies and Procedures

Two of the three Headstart programs, which use a school bus, do not require the use of seatbelts. In addition, none of the school buses have infant or toddler car seats or boosters. In contrast, all of the passenger vans employ seatbelts or child safety restraint systems.

All but one of the Headstart programs have designated seating positions for children. Regardless, each Headstart program have similar expectations of children's behaviour on the school vehicle. Children are to use quiet voices, sit back and remain on their seat. Aggressive behaviour is curtailed and appropriately addressed with the child, and if needed, with the parent/guardian. If necessary, the driver and/or monitor may switch children around, moving children with more difficult behaviours toward the front of the vehicle.

School policies differ regarding buckling and unbuckling children, and loading and unloading children. Some see this task as the responsibility of the driver or monitor, while others insist it is the role of the parent and/or legal guardian.

Each school has a written and/or verbal protocol for handling emergency situations or accidents. The protocol includes the following steps: (1) assessing the situation, (2) contacting the lease or contract company for a replacement vehicle, if needed, (3) informing the parents, (4) contacting the Headstart Director or staff, and (5) writing up an incident report. In addition, all of the Headstart programs keep phone numbers of parents on the bus; and make sure a cell phone or radio is available to the driver.

j. Role of the Parent

All of the Headstart programs insist that the parents be physically present at pick-up and drop-off times at least 5 to 10 minutes before hand. If the parent is late, the driver attempts a call to the parent to determine their location and situation. If the driver is not able to contact the parent and/or legal guardian, the child is returned to the Headstart program.

If a different or unfamiliar individual is picking up a child, the driver checks their identification and the list to see if they are authorized to do so. If they are not, they contact the Headstart Director to see if instructions were left by the parent and/or legal guardian. If the individual is not cleared, the child is returned to the Headstart program.

Aside from picking up and dropping off their child, parents are encouraged to reinforce and teach their children appropriate behaviours on a school vehicle. Some parents are asked to buckle and unbuckle their child upon arrival of the vehicle.

k. Cost

The annualized cost to operate the transportation component ranges from \$17,388 to \$101,304. The Children’s Aid Society has the largest transportation budget, as it transports children from throughout the City of Ottawa to and from Gloucester.

In order to compare the other six Headstart programs, the transportation cost per child is figured by dividing the annualized cost of each by the total number of children transported each day. The cost per child ranges from \$757 per child to \$3,064.

Headstart Program	Annualized Cost	Number of Children	Cost per Child
Yellow School Bus			
Hawthorne Meadows	\$31,769	42	\$756
Heatherington	\$35,775	32	\$1,117
Pinecrest-Queensway	\$43,389	48	\$903
Passenger Vans			
Queensway	\$31,556	24	\$1,314
West End*	\$31,917	18	\$1,773
YMCA-YWCA*	\$32,618	22	\$1,482
CAS*	\$128,700	42	\$3,064

Note: The asterisk (*) connotes Headstart programs with a contract agreement vs. lease arrangement.

An examination of each Headstart transportation budget explains the variation in cost per child. Transportation costs are higher in the following situations:

- < Designated Driver vs. Teacher/Driver. Essentially, Headstart programs would define this position as a separate job function, or an integrated part of the teacher’s responsibility (e.g. Pinecrest-Queensway). If it was a separate position or if the Headstart program compensated staff for this additional responsibility, personnel costs would be higher.
- < Contract vs. Leasing Arrangement. Headstart programs which contract out its transportation component to a company, tend to have higher transportation costs than those Headstart programs with a leasing arrangement. While all transportation costs are assumed under contract agreements, Headstart programs with a lease arrangement are responsible for managing its transportation budget – for the driver, insurance, lease, fuel, etc.

C. Survey of Headstart Directors Without a Transportation Component

Among the eleven Headstart programs in Ottawa, four do not provide transportation services to their families. The schools include: Foster Farm Child Care Centre (west Ottawa), Esther By Child Care Centre (southwest Ottawa), Cornerstone Child Care Centre (southeast Ottawa) and Nanny Goat Hill Nursery School (central Ottawa). Of these four, only one expressed an interest and need for a transportation component: Nanny Goat Hill Nursery School. The other three felt that their parents lived close enough and had the wherewithal to bring their child to school without the need of a school vehicle.

Located in Ottawa's Chinatown community, Nanny Goat Hill Nursery School has 16 child care slots. It operates a morning only program from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.. On occasion, Headstart families, who live closer to Nanny Goat Hill Nursery School, opted to go the YMCA-YWCA Nursery School or Queensway Preschool because of their transportation service. Nanny Goat Hill feels that if it offered transportation services, or at least if catchment areas were defined for each Headstart program for central Ottawa, enrollment would be higher and steadier at Nanny Goat Hill.

Regardless of whether a Headstart program has a transportation component or not, all of the Headstart Directors felt that minimal acceptable Standards for Transporting Headstart Children should be established.

D. Summary of Findings and Implications

According to statistics, the risk of fatalities and injuries to children on school buses are small in Canada. The employment of safe practices and child safety restraint systems on passenger vans improve the chances for injury prevention.

The U.S. Head Start program has established regulations and procedures for the transportation of Head Start children. In Ottawa, Headstart programs have given considerable thought and have also established individual practices to promote effective and safe transportation of preschool-age children.

Headstart programs in Ottawa vary in design – from the use of yellow school buses vs. passenger vans, to the use of contracted services vs. a lease arrangements, to the use of drivers alone vs. drivers and monitors, etc.. As illustrated, with each variance in design, the transportation system of each Headstart program is fraught with advantages and disadvantages. While there are some common elements and policies among each, the need to engage in a thoughtful discussion on an ideal “Transportation Program for Headstart Children in Ottawa” is truly needed.

V. Recommendations

Moving forward, Headstart programs in Ottawa, with support from the Ottawa-Carleton Headstart Association for Preschools and the Child Care Services Branch of the City of Ottawa, must examine all practices and, in the end, establish written standards for transporting its Headstart children. Below are generalized suggestions on various transportation components [Note: A more detailed list of recommended practices for each transportation component is included in the appendices]:

- < **Driver Qualifications** – OCHAP must ensure the driver possesses the necessary qualifications, skills and attitude to handle the job. OCHAP must ensure the driver has the appropriate driver's license. More importantly, Headstart programs must develop written job descriptions for this position. The job description should detail the driver's responsibilities with regard to maintenance of the vehicle, safe driving practices, expectations with regard to loading and unloading children, handling emergency situations and evacuation procedures, interacting with parents/guardians, attending staff orientation and/or training, etc.
- < **Use of Monitors** – OCHAP and the Child Care Services Branch of the City of Ottawa should encourage the use of monitors - at a minimum child to staff ratio of 1:8. Monitors tend to improve the concentration of the drivers; the management of children's behaviour on the vehicle is left to the monitor rather than the driver. Monitors also are a resource in case of vehicle breakdowns, emergency situations and evacuations. Programmatically, monitors can extend the early enrichment learning environment – engaging children in activities while being transported, meeting parents/guardians at pick-up and drop-off points, etc.
- < **Vehicle Type: School Buses vs. Vans** – As noted in this report, there are advantages and disadvantages to both school buses and vans. Thus, no particular type of vehicle is being recommended. School buses are immediately identifiable by other drivers, are deemed the safest mode of transportation of children to school, and are constructed better than vans as they must adhere to stricter federal regulations. Vans are more manoeuvrable, and can accommodate appropriate Child Safety Restraint Systems, which reduces injuries and fatalities during accidents.
- < **Use of Carseats and Boosters** – At this time, Transport Canada has not made an official recommendation and the Ontario province has not required the use of carseats and boosters on school buses. However, current research suggests benefits in the use of CSRS on school buses. The U.S. Administration for Children and Families will be requiring the use of height- and weight-appropriate child safety restraint systems – as of January 20, 2004 – on all Headstart buses. OCHAP and the City of Ottawa should consider the feasibility and desirability of setting a similar benchmark – requiring child safety restraint systems on all Headstart vehicles by a given year.
- < **Vehicle Features and Equipment** – Regardless of the type of vehicle used, Headstart vehicles should be visually apparent – brightly coloured (yellow, red, etc.) – with signage indicating that small children are on board and Headstart contact information. Each Headstart program, which provide transportation services, should ensure that each vehicle is equipped with: (1) a communication system to call for assistance or in emergency cases; and (2) safety equipment for use in an emergency, including a fire extinguisher, first aid kit, flares, etc. Headstart programs should use vehicles with other safety features, such as: stop arms,

sensor beepers, emergency exits, etc. Some of these features are required on school buses by federal regulations, and are optional for vans.

- < **Parental Role and Responsibilities** – OCHAP should provide parents of Headstart children with a written list of their responsibilities, as a parent and/or guardian of a child being transported in a Headstart vehicle. The parents/guardians should understand the rules and regulations, as well as the purpose (*primarily promoting safety*) behind such rules and regulations. Parents should encourage and reinforce responsible and positive behaviours from their child. The list would refer to expectations regarding the pick-up and drop-off of the child.

- < **Expectations of Headstart Children** – Like the parents and guardians, the children themselves can play a key role in improving their safety while being transported to and from school. While they are preschool children, early teaching of appropriate behaviours on a school vehicle could help establish good habits in the future as the child ages to elementary public school system. The children should be taught appropriate behaviours, understand the reasons for such behaviours, and consequences of their good and bad actions. Some Headstart programs already do this, on a one-to-one basis. Others include it in their curriculum on Safety, and invite Emergency Medical, police, etc. to talk about safety.

- < **Policies and Procedures for Transporting Preschool Children** – Each Headstart program which offers transportation services should have written policies and procedures for review by staff and parents. These written guidelines will help prepare staff to effectively manage routine, as well as difficult and emergency situations.

- < **Funding and Support** – The City of Ottawa should continue to place an emphasis on establishing standards, guidelines and programs that will continue to safeguard our children. Setting a high priority on the safe transportation of children, especially vulnerable preschool age children, is appropriate. While it is difficult to balance issues of need, safety, risks and costs, the City of Ottawa must work with OCHAP and the individual Headstart programs in setting written policies and a minimum set of standards. In the end, the City of Ottawa will need to provide Headstart programs with enough money to ensure compliance with established standards and to implement the minimum requirements and an acceptable level of transportation safety. In addition, the City of Ottawa must determine if Nanny Goat Hill Nursery School warrants additional funding for a Headstart vehicle.

LIST OF APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A: Recommended Features for Headstart Vehicles

Headstart programs in Ottawa must comply with federal, provincial and city legislation, regulations and policies. Vehicles must adhere to correct specifications. In addition, the following optional features for Headstart vehicles – whether a school bus or passenger van -- should be considered:

Features

1. Sensor beepers when too close to object.
2. Reverse beepers
3. Stop arm
4. Emergency exits

Signage

5. Notice indicating “Caution: Children on Board”
6. Headstart name and contact information on side, back and front of vehicle
7. Parent’s name on a list – kept in vehicle with emergency contact information
8. Signs indicating location of emergency equipment, e .g. fire extinguisher, first aid kit, etc.

Equipment

9. Communication system, e.g. cellular phone, CB radio in vehicle
10. Emergency roadside kit with flares, etc.
11. Fire extinguishers
12. First aid kit
13. Emergency activity kit if bus is broken – to occupy children while bus is in roadside repair
14. Rubberized seats
15. Child Restraint Systems – geared to appropriate height and weight of child
16. Auxiliary Seating, such as temporary or folding jump seats

Source Documents:

- < Part 1310 – Head Start Transportation Legislation, Regulations and Policies, The Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, March 26, 2002.
[Http://www2.acf.chhs.gov/programs/hsb/regs/regs/1310.htm](http://www2.acf.chhs.gov/programs/hsb/regs/regs/1310.htm)
- < Heatherington Nursery School

APPENDIX B: Recommended Responsibilities of the Parent/Guardian of a Child in a Headstart Program

Headstart programs should orient parents to its transportation system, and provide “safety education” training. The training should include a discussion on appropriate behaviours for children while on school vehicles, as well as in pedestrian safety (e.g. the need for an adult to accompany a preschool child while crossing the street, waiting for the green light and appropriate crossing signal, etc.) Headstart programs must ensure that parents, especially newcomers to Canada, understand the importance of the following behaviours and reinforce such behaviours with their child:

1. Parents/Guardians are responsible for the safety, escort and supervision of their children prior to pick-up and immediately after leaving the vehicle on their return trip home. Parents must make sure the children wait well away from the roadway, and stay well back until the bus has come to a full stop and the door opens.
2. Parents/Guardians must ensure the children are at the proper pick-up location at least five minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time.
3. If it is dark on the way to or from the bus, parents/guardians should make their children are visible. Parents could use retro-reflective tape on their clothing and avoid dark colours for clothing.
4. Parents/Guardians must ensure they are on time at the designated bus stop for pick-up. Parents are required to notify school when an alternate person is picking up their child from the program. At registration, a list of alternates is completed and noted on Child Release Form. Should no authorized individual be at the designated bus stop, the child will be returned to school and the parents/guardians must then make alternate arrangements to have the child picked up.
5. Parents/Guardians must impress upon their children the need for safe and appropriate behaviour while boarding, riding and leaving the bus. Parents should explain to the child the reasons why they should walk at least three metres (10 feet) away when crossing in front of the bus so that the driver can see them. Parents should forbid children from running, pushing and horseplay near, around or on the vehicle. Parents/Guardians should ensure that their children have their belongings placed securely in their backpack.
6. At no time will a driver take instructions from parents/guardians if they are contrary to those issued by the school administrator.
7. Parents should attend educational sessions or workshops on transportation safety, e.g. use of seatbelts, appropriate behaviour, etc.

Transportation to a Headstart program should be viewed as a privilege, not a right. Parents must understand that improper conduct may result in the withdrawal of this privilege. Reinstatement will be at the discretion of the school after consultation with the child and his/her parent or guardians.

Source Documents:

< *Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, Transportation Policies and Regulations.*

[<http://www.ocdsb.edu.on.ca/busing/transknow.htm>]

< *Taking the School Bus: How to prepare your child for the school bus.* Canada Safety Council

[<http://www.safety-council.org/info/child/schlbus.html>]

APPENDIX C: Recommended Responsibilities of a Child in a Headstart Program

Headstart program should provide “safety education” training to children, as well as parents. The training should be developmentally appropriate and integrated into the child’s experiences. Children should be taught appropriate behaviours on vehicles, but also in pedestrian safety (e.g. the need for an adult to accompany a preschool child while crossing the street, waiting for the green light and appropriate crossing signal, etc.) Headstart programs must ensure that children are taught and understand the importance of the following behaviours:

1. Headstart children should be properly dressed at the bus stop, and be on time and wait in a safe place.
2. Headstart children must stand well away from the street until the vehicle is stopped.
3. Headstart children are to follow the loading and unloading procedures, as designated by the school.
4. Headstart children must not abuse, damage or throw litter or items on the vehicle.
5. Headstart children must place personal items and backpacks on their lap or under their seat – not in the aisle where they may cause someone to trip.
6. Headstart children must tell the driver, if they drop something under or near the bus.
7. Headstart children must remain seated at all times to and from school. Standing while the vehicle is in motion should not be permitted.
8. Headstart children must refrain from poking head, arms, feet, etc. out the window.
9. Headstart children must not open or close windows, unless authorized by the driver and/or monitor.
10. Headstart children must refrain from tampering with the emergency door, windows or other equipment on the bus.
11. Headstart children should not eat or drink while on the vehicle.
12. Headstart children must not take any dangerous or annoying objects and/or animals or pets on the vehicle.
13. Headstart children must follow all rules of safety that apply at school while riding on the vehicle.
14. Headstart children must not distract the driver’s attention by creating a disturbance or by interfering with other children. Headstart children must use their quiet voices while on the vehicle
15. They must make sure to use the handrail when getting on or off the vehicle. Headstart children must not push or shove other children when disembarking. Headstart children should walk straight onto the sidewalk, and away from and never on to the street.
16. Headstart children should learn emergency evacuation procedures, and participate in drills with the vehicle they will be riding.
17. Headstart children are to show courtesy, respect and obedience to the driver, and must follow the driver’s instructions at all times.

Source Documents:

< Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, Transportation Policies and Regulations
[<http://www.ocdsb.edu.on.ca/busing/transinfo.htm>]

APPENDIX D: Recommended Job Description for Driver for a Headstart Program

The driver plays a critical role in the safe transportation of preschool children to and from home and school. Thus, a written job description with a clear list of expectations should be reviewed with the driver periodically. Below is a comprehensive list of possible requirements for drivers – based on existing Headstart job descriptions for drivers.

Driving and Maintenance Requirements

1. Hold a valid driver's license with appropriate Class designation.
2. Have a valid first aid certificate with CPR.
3. Have full motor capabilities.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of Transportation Act and be able to meet the specifications of this Act and any other regulations that apply to this work.
5. Able to work in conditions involving exposure to chemical substances contained in cleaning and maintenance supplies, exposure to bodily fluids, infectious diseases, frequent high noise levels and inclement weather.
6. Have basic knowledge of mechanical workings of the vehicle, e.g. checking fan belts, oil levels, etc.
7. Able to work with chemical substances contained in cleaning and maintenance supplies.

Reasoning, Interpersonal and Communication Skills Requirements

1. Able to interpret and follow written and oral instructions and to write.
2. Able to work in and judge potential hostile situations.
3. Able to operate a cellular phone or CB radio.
4. Able to perform basic arithmetic.
5. Able to maintain cooperative and effective working relationship with supervisor, children and parents.
6. Able to work in tight schedules while adapting to daily minor changes of schedules.

Duties and Responsibilities

Regular Maintenance of Vehicle

1. Conduct daily check on vehicle, e.g. open hood and check hoses, battery, radiator, etc.; start engine; check gas levels; check and adjust mirrors, lights, tires, doors, seats, wipers, bus body, exhaust, horn, brakes, undercarriage, gas caps, stop arm, etc.; check for presence of fire extinguisher, emergency axe, flares, first aid kit, registration and insurance papers, etc.
2. Perform systematic preventive maintenance on vehicle, e.g. ensure vehicle has adequate gas, anti-freeze, oil, windshield fluid, etc.
3. Monitor and arrange for vehicle safety inspections, as required. Take vehicle in for regular maintenance to ensure it will pass safety inspections.
4. Ensure CMV certificate is maintained on vehicle, as well as all legal documents.
5. Clean vehicle periodically.

Pick-Ups and Drop-Offs

1. Plan appropriate and safe routes, and make plans for alternate routes, if needed.
2. Perform daily pick-up and drop-off runs according to the school's policies.
3. Check to ensure the person picking up child is authorized and confirm by checking personal identification (e.g. driver's license)
4. If person is not listed as an authorized pick up person, call the parent with de-facto custody. If parent/guardian is not available, contact the emergency persons listed. If unable to contact parent/guardian or emergency contact, explain to individual attempting to pick up the child that you have no authorization to release the child and have to return the child to the school until authorization can be confirmed. (You may suggest to the individual that they accompany or meet you at the school.) If after one hour, you are unable to contact the parent/guard/emergency contact person, you may call the police.
5. Be responsible for ensuring no children are left on the vehicle.
6. Maintain daily log and inform Director of any occurrences which require action.
7. Maintain mileage records re: field trips, regular route, etc.
8. Drive vehicle for field trips, as required.
9. Ensure loaner vehicle is obtained, as needed.

Interpersonal Relationship

1. Maintain positive attitude regarding parents and children. Drivers must not engage in any verbal or physical conflict with staff, parents and/or children.
2. Ensure presence of an adult monitor on vehicle, if required.
3. Assist adult monitor, if needed.

Other Responsibilities

1. Administer basic first aid in case of injury, handle emergency situation, including evacuation procedures, etc.
2. Read and be regularly aware of school's policies and procedures re: child boarding and exiting procedures, use of child restraint systems, any required paperwork, responses to emergencies, emergency evacuation procedures, child pick up and release procedures, and pre- and post field trip vehicle check.
3. Driver should have a combination of classroom instruction and behind-the-wheel instruction to enable them to operate the vehicle in a safe and efficient manner, and to safely plan and run a fixed route, including loading and unloading children, stopping at railroad crossings and driving manoeuvres.
4. Attend appropriate staff meetings and training sessions.
5. Practice emergency evacuations, periodically.
6. Obtain and submit all receipts related to the vehicle to appropriate persons.
7. Be responsible for informing Director as far in advance as possible of any requests for time off work to ensure that alternate arrangements can be made for driving the bus.
8. Participate in an annual evaluation to include on-board observation and road performance.
9. Perform additional duties as assigned.

Source Documents:

- < Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School, Inc., Bus Driver Job Description
- < Heatherington Nursery School, Bus Circle Check
- < Queensway Preschool, Job Description for Driver/Teachers Aid

APPENDIX E: Recommended Policies re: Use of Headstart Vehicle During Field Trips

Policies and procedures involving the use of a Headstart vehicle for field trips should be set.

Prior to the Field Trip

1. Each year, Headstart children should be taught about bus safety (e.g. how to sit properly, use of quiet voices so the driver can concentrate, practice loading and unloading evacuation of bus in emergency situations, etc.)
2. The vehicle should have an “Emergency Activity Kit” available in the event that the trip is temporarily suspended. The “Kit” should have simple activities such as books, crayons, paper or puppet.

Preparation for Field Trip

1. Children should be prepared for the trip, bathroom routine, reminder of the rules, etc.
2. Children should be taught and reminded of the name of the daycare program or nursery school they attend.
3. Staff should make a “trip list” of the children who will be attending on the trip. And keep list in backpack.
4. Children should be reminded about appropriate behaviour while on field trip.
5. Children should be taught about where to go if they are separated from their group.
6. Children on field trips should wear easily identifiable school name tags, pinafores. Note: The tag should not have any personal identifying information in order to protect the children from strangers luring them away from the group. It should, however, have the name, address and phone number of the centre in the event a child is lost or injured).
7. All staff should wear their name tags while on an off-site field trip.
8. Head counts should be done and recorded before leaving the building, on the bus before departing, as the children get off the bus at the destination, spot checks every 10 minutes, when they regroup at designated meeting place at end of trip, on the bus, and upon arrival at the Centre.
9. Chaperons should assist children on loading and unloading. Extra adults unload from the vehicle before the children in order to supervise the children getting off the bus. One teacher is left on the vehicle to call the children’s names for leaving the bus. The other staff receive the children as they unload.
10. Last staff person on the vehicle is responsible for checking the seats of the vehicle, and checking under the seats for children.
11. Driver should conduct a vehicle circle check. Driver should double check the inside and outside of bus when they place the “empty sign” in the back window.
12. Upon arrival, staff should call the school’s office on the cell phone and confirm the group’s arrival and verify the number of participants. Up
13. Upon departure, staff should call the school’s office and report the number of children and adults.

Source Document:

- < Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School, Inc. Introducing Field Trips in September
- < Heatherington Nursery School, Field Trip Protocol

APPENDIX F: Recommendations for Route Planning

Each Headstart program providing transportation service must ensure that in planning fixed routes, the safety of the children being transported is the primary consideration.

1. The time a child is transported to and from the program should not exceed one hour, unless there is no shorter route available or any alternative shorter route is either unsafe or impractical.
2. Vehicles must not be loaded beyond the maximum passenger capacity at any time.
3. Vehicles must not be required to back up or make “U” turns, except when necessary for reasons of safety or because of physical barriers.
4. Stops must be located to minimize traffic disruptions and to afford the driver a good field of view in front of and behind the vehicle.
5. When possible, stops must be located to eliminate the need for children to cross the street or highway to board or leave the vehicle.
6. If children must cross the street before boarding or after leaving the vehicle, because curbside drop off or pick up is impossible, they must be escorted across the street by the bus monitor or another adult.
7. Specific procedures must be established for use of alternate routes in case of hazardous conditions, that could affect the safety of the children who are being transported, such as ice or water build up, natural gas line breaks, or emergency road closing. In selecting among alternatives, transportation providers must choose routes that comply as much as possible with the requirements outlined above.

Source Documents:

< *Part 1310 – Head Start Transportation Legislation, Regulations and Policies*, The Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, March 26, 2002.

[Http://www2.acf.chhs.gov/programs/hsb/regs/regs/1310.htm](http://www2.acf.chhs.gov/programs/hsb/regs/regs/1310.htm)

APPENDIX G: Recommendations for Staff Orientation to Headstart Vehicle

Upon employment, Headstart staff should participate in an “Vehicle Orientation” with the regular driver. The driver will review policies and procedures that are completed daily, as well as how the vehicle operates.

1. Staff will be shown where the emergency exits are and how they operate, as well as how to operate the doors, emergency flashers, stop arm, etc.
2. Staff will be required to review the Emergency Evacuation procedures for the vehicle and participate in regular practice drills.
3. Staff will be shown the features of and learn how to operate the cell phone or CB radio.
4. Staff will update their skills when features or equipment is added or changed.

Source Documents:

- < Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School, Inc., Staff Orientation of the Bus
- < Heatherington Nursery School School, Staff Orientation of the Bus

APPENDIX H: Recommendations for Vehicle Evacuation Procedures

Drivers and monitors must be familiar and should practice vehicle evacuation procedures – in cases of a vehicle breakdown, stall or accident. If possible, children should also practice these procedures, and learn the importance of appropriate behaviour under these trying situations.

In the Event of a Vehicle Breakdown or Stall:

1. Bring vehicle to a full stop as far off the roadway as possible. The passengers may remain on the vehicle if stopped in a safe location, and if it is safe to do so.
2. Driver should remain with the vehicle, and use cell phone or radio to contact someone for assistance (e.g. contract or lease provider, 911 or Headstart Director).
3. Flares, lamps, lanterns or portable reflectors must be set out at a distance of approximately 100 feet in advance and rear of the vehicle.
4. If the situation warrants, assist children off the vehicle through the emergency door when necessary, and direct children to safe area away from road.
5. Collect and record information in log book and files, when necessary.
6. Keep children calm and seated in their seats until driver investigates.
7. Unlock and open emergency door, if available, when necessary and when it is safe to do so, in an orderly and calm manner. Help children to exit through the emergency door only when the driver or other adult is there to assist you.
8. Assist the driver in keeping the children in a safe area.
9. Seek aid when necessary.

In the Event of a Collision (in addition to above)

1. Stop immediately and investigate.
2. Turn off ignition and check for fire.
3. Call 911 or Police if there has been any personal injury or property damage.
4. Check on safety of passengers.
5. Administer first aid if necessary.
6. Assist children in getting off vehicle in calm and orderly manner.
7. Do not leave site until all children are found, and departure is authorized by police or Director.

Source Documents:

- < Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School, Inc., Bus Evacuation Procedures
- < Heatherington Nursery School, Bus Evacuation Procedures

APPENDIX I: Recommendations during Loading and Unloading of Children

Injuries and fatalities often occur during the loading and unloading of children. It is critical that drivers be extra-attentive at this time.

Loading and Unloading of Children

1. Stop vehicle, put in park and/or shut off engine.
2. Wait at vehicle door for loading and unloading of children.
3. Help children on/off at stops, as appropriate. Make sure an adult is present to receive child.
4. Greet parents or caregivers.
5. Assist parents, as needed, in putting the child in the van.
6. Keep an eye on children in the van.
7. Wait for child to be seated.
8. Conduct visual check to ensure it is safe to depart.
9. Put pylon at the rear and front of vehicle while loading or unloading children, and retrieve when done.
10. Do head count.

Picking Up of Children

11. Check to see if person is authorized for picking up of child, and confirm with checking personal identification.
12. If person is not listed as an authorized pick up person, call the parent with de-facto custody. If parent/guardian is not available, contact the emergency persons listed. If unable to contact parent/guardian or emergency contact, explain to individual attempting to pick up the child that you have no authorization to release the child and have to return the child to the school until authorization can be confirmed. (You may suggest to the individual that they accompany or meet you at the school.) If after one hour, you are unable to contact the parent/guard/emergency contact person, you may call the police.

Source Document:

- < Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School, Inc. Pick-Up of Children and Unauthorized Pick Up Procedure
- < YMCA-YWCA Headstart Nursery School, Loading and Unloading of Children

APPENDIX J: Recommendations in Event of Illness

Drivers may encounter situations in which a child becomes ill or queasy while on the vehicle – or the driver him- or herself may experience an unexpected illness. Headstart programs must establish a clear strategy on how to handle such situations.

In Event of Illness of Child

1. When safe, pull over to a safe location.
2. Turn off bus.
3. Tend to ill child.
4. Assess severity of illness, and decide whether to return child to Centre or home.
5. Contact Headstart program and inform Director of decision and/or action.

In Event of Illness of Driver

6. When safe, pull over to a safe location.
7. Assess severity of illness, and decide whether to return to Centre.
8. Contact Director of lease/contractor.
9. Arrange for an alternative driver, if needed.

Source Document:

< Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School, Inc., Bus Evacuation Procedures

APPENDIX K: Recommended Use of Child Safety Restraint Systems

Should the City of Ottawa, OCHAP and the individual Headstart programs impose a mandatory use of Child Safety Restraint Systems, the following recommendations are being made:

1. Personnel responsible for securing CSRSs onto school bus seats and children into CSRSs should be properly trained and all personnel involved should be provided up-to-date information and training.
2. School-bus seats designed for CSRSs are to be located starting at the front of the vehicle to provide drivers with quick access to and a clear view of the CSRS occupants. CSRSs should not be placed in school bus seats adjacent to emergency exits.
3. If other students share seats with the CSRSs, the CSRSs should be placed in window seating position.
4. When ordering new buses, the maximum spacing specified (within 24 inches from the seating reference point) is recommended for seats designated for CSRSs to provide adequate space, and the combined width of the CSRS and/or other passengers on a single seat should not exceed the width of the seat.
5. When retrofitting school buses, proper instructions to install a CSRS should be followed.
6. When transported in school buses, preschool age children should be supervised according to their developmental and functioning level.
7. Specified procedures should be established for loading and unloading children in CSRSs. Procedures should be established for the periodic maintenance, cleaning and inspection for damage of CSRSs. Procedures should train personnel involved in direct service delivery of infants, toddlers and preschool children on the physical day-to-day handling of these young children.
8. When procedures are established, it should be noted that some children in CSRSs may have special needs, including medical fragility that must be address on a child-by-child basis.
9. Written plans on evacuating preschool age children and other passengers in CSRSs in the event of an emergency should be established. The plan should be provided to the drivers, monitors and emergency response personnel. Evacuation drills should be practised on a scheduled basis – by personnel and children, themselves
10. Schools should establish a policy on whether they or the child's guardian must supply a CSRS to be used on a school bus.

Source Documents:

- < *Guideline for the Safe Transportation of Pre-school Age Children in School Buses.* National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, February 1999.

OTTAWA CARLETON HEADSTART ASSOCIATION FOR PRESCHOOLS
TRANSPORTATION REVIEW: Comparison Chart on Headstart Transportation Systems

VEHICLE TYPE: Yellow School Bus

	Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School	Heatherington Nursery School	Pinecrest-Queensway Nursery School
DESCRIPTION OF VEHICLE			
Unique Physical Description	Seatbelts: No seat belts. Seats: High bench seats (to replace seatbelts) Doors: Double doors on lever at front Exits: Rear and ceiling emergency exits. Alarms: Contact: Other:	Seatbelts: No seatbelts Seats: Rubberized seats, reduces slippage. Doors: Exits: Alarms: Alarm at emergency exit Contact: Other: Roof vent.	Seatbelts: Seatbelts Seat: Doors: Exits: Emergency exits Alarms: Backup beeper Contact: Radio Other: Large size mirrors, stop signs
Seating Capacity	22	19	25
Total Number of Children Transported Each Day	42	32	37
Lease, Contract or Purchase Agreement	Lease Laidlaw Transit	Lease Laidlaw Transit	Lease Laidlaw
Cost of Agreement	\$1,196 per month (incl. PST/GST)	\$1,394 per month	\$1,449 per month
Insurance Coverage	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$10,000,000
Length of Agreement	From Nov. 1, 2001 to Jan. 31, 2006 5 years	From August, 2001 to August, 2002 Renewed annually	November 1, 2001 to October 31, 2004 Renewed every 2 years
Provisions of Agreement	Maintenance: Replacement of tires/brakes, as needed; Oil/filter service @ 3 mos or 10000km; Fuel filters – 1 @ year; Chassis lubrication - every 45 days; Fluid level check Loaner:	Maintenance: Regular Loaners: If bus is broken	Maintenance: Replacement of parts due to wear and tear Loaners: Replacement bus if repairs are needed
Restrictions of Use	Vehicle must be operated in accordance with federal, provincial, and municipal laws, ordinances, rules and regulations. Only properly licensed drivers with training can operate and drive vehicle. May not be subleased, let for hire or loan or driver by drivers unacceptable to insurance company.		Mileage restriction, at 15,000 km/per year with extra charges if over

	Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School	Heatherington Nursery School	Pinecrest-Queensway Nursery School
DESCRIPTION OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES			
Geographical Boundaries	North: Russell Road to Browning Avenue South: Walkley Road East: Southvale West: St. Laurent Boulevard	North: Walkey and Heatherington East: Ledbury and Bank Street Herongate and Baycrest Heron Road	North: Baseline and Pinecrest Souh: Britannia East: Lincoln Fields West: Bayshore
Pick Up and Drop Off Locations	Door to door Specified locations (@ apt. buildings)	Close to home Specified location	Door to door
# and Timing of Runs Per Day	2 Pick-Ups: 8:45 a.m. to 9:05 a.m. 21children 12:45 p.m. to 1:05 p.m. 21 children 2 Drop-offs: 11:20 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. 21 children 3:20 p.m. to 3:40 p.m. 21 children	2 Pick-Ups: 8:15 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. 16children 12:40 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. 16 children 2 Drop-offs: 11:20 a.m. to 11:40 a.m. 16 children 3:20 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. 16 children	2 Pick-Ups: 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. 17 children 12:00 p.m. to 12:30 p.m. 17 children 2 Drop-offs: 11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. 20 children 3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. 20 children
Eligibility Requirements	No restrictions living within catchment area. Families with children living outside catchment area provide own transportation.	No restrictions living within catchment area. Families with children living outside catchment area provide own transportation.	No restrictions living within catchment area, unless residing within walking distance (2 blocks). Families with children living outside catchment area provide own transportation.
Other Uses for Vehicle	Field trips – as frequently as once per week	Field trips - as frequently as twice per month	Field trips and Parent Outings– as frequently as twice per week. Other programs at PQCHC to transport clients
DESCRIPTION OF DRIVER			
Designation	Designated driver also serves as a teacher or a program support person.	Designated driver. On occasion, driver is used as supply teacher and/or for enhancement of field trips.	Designated driver, as well as drivers who also serves as a teacher or a program support person.
Accompanying Staff	Yes, a staff member monitors children on bus.	Yes, rotating teacher from program.	No
Job Descriptions	Available	Available	Available
Contingency Plans	Currently 4 staff members hold class E driver’s license.	Another staff person has appropriate driver’s license, if needed.	All full-time teachers are required to have appropriate driver’s license.

	Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School	Heatherington Nursery School	Pinecrest-Queensway Nursery School
SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES			
Use of Seatbelts	Does not use seatbelts, because higher seats in bus replace need. Seatbelts could be hazardous in an emergency situation where the bus must be vacated immediately. Many children are unable to unbuckle belts.	Does not use as seen as too restrict for young children, should the bus overturn and evacuation be required.	All children use seatbelts.
Use of Infant/Toddler Car Seats and Boosters	Does not use.	Does not use.	Does not use.
Seating Arrangements and Bus Behaviour	Children choose seat when entering bus. Monitor may assist children to choose an appropriate seat. Children are expected to remain seated throughout run. Children are encouraged to use a quiet voice on bus. Singing is allowed.	Sit back on their seat. Child use quiet voices. Aggressive children with staff monitor.	Children have designated seats based on behaviour. They are instructed to sit, remain buckled, use quiet voices, and no screaming.
Staff to Child Ratio in Vehicle	2:21	2:16	1:17 in the morning and 1:20 in the afternoon
Accident and Emergency Situations	See written procedure.	See written policies.	
Staff Training Opportunities	Annual review of Policies and Procedures Manual No formal workshops	Orientation on field trips, bus safety, and familiarity with bus.	Defensive driving class, mandatory before obtaining Class E license.
Parental Responsibilities	Be physically present at pick-up and drop-offs. Teach and reinforce children's appropriate behaviour on bus.	Be physically present at pick-up and drop-offs. Teach and reinforce children's appropriate behaviour on bus.	Child release policy – list of cards kept on bus. Conversations with parents re: what steps to take, Parents buck up and unbuckle child(ren) at PU and DO. – encourage cooperation between parents, one to do for all. Parents are required to be visible to driver at DO. and be present 5 minutes beforehand.
COST OF TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM			
Annualized Cost	\$31,769 / \$756 per child	\$35,775 / \$1,117 per child	\$43,389 / \$903 per child
Estimated Kilometres per Year	10,160 km per year	6,900 km per year	15,500 km per year

	Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School	Heatherington Nursery School	Pinecrest-Queensway Nursery School
ADVANTAGES OF TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM			
Benefits and Advantages	Ease of access for families; Improved children's attendance; Ability to provide children with external experiences; Continuity for children with staff on bus and in school; Parental contact; Less cost than renting vehicle for field trips	Ensuring children attend program. Access to field trips.	Identifiable yellow bus. Nice mix/interaction between teachers and parents at pu and do. Laidlaw replaces bus, and provides speciality services ensuring children's safety.
DISADVANTAGES OF TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM			
Negatives and Disadvantages	Responsibility of transporting children		Teachers have to drive bus, lack of monitor, need policy development, not having one person assigned to safety/maintenance of bus, things slipping through cracks.

OTTAWA CARLETON HEADSTART ASSOCIATION FOR PRESCHOOLS
TRANSPORTATION REVIEW: Comparison Chart on Headstart Transportation Systems

VEHICLE TYPE: Vans

	Children's Aid Society	Queensway Preschool	West End Nursery School	YMCA-YWCA
DESCRIPTION OF VEHICLE				
Unique Physical Description	5 vans are used (1 large and 4 smaller ones) Seatbelts: Seatbelts Seats: Bench seats Doors: Double doors on larger vehicle; sliding doors on smaller ones Exits: Rear exit Alarms: Backup and sensor beepers Contact: 2-way private radio system, Other:	Seatbelts: Seatbelts. Seats: Bench seats Doors: Double doors on lever at front Exits: Rear emergency exits. Alarms: Contact: Other: Bright red, van is marked with name and phone number of side of van.	Mini-van Seatbelts: Seat belts Seats: Bench seats Doors: Sliding door Exits: Alarms: Contact: Cell phone Other:	Larger vehicle Seatbelts Seatbelts: No seat belts. Seats: High bench seats (to replace seatbelts) Doors: Side sliding door with extra ½ door opening Exits: Rear and ceiling emergency exits. Alarms: Contact: Radio System Other: Running board which reduces slippage
Seating Capacity	13 on larger vehicle / 7 on smaller	15	8	11
Total Number of Children Transported Per Day	42	24	24	19
Lease, Contract or Purchase Agreement	Contracted Services Dan-O-Mite	Lease Cambel Ford	Contracted Services Individual	Contracted Services Dan-O-Mite
Cost of Agreement	\$8,442 per month	\$722 per month	\$1,832 per month	\$2,303 per month
Insurance Coverage	\$25,000,000			\$23,000,000
Length of Agreement	Renewed monthly	From Jan. 1, 2000 to Jan. 1, 2004 4 years	Renewed annually.	From Mar. 26, 2001 to Mar. 26, 2004 Renewed 3 years
Provisions of Agreement	Maintenance: Inclusive service – Loaner: Replacement vehicles and drivers Arrangements: Transportation arrangements made through contacts with parents, etc. Other: Transportation of a parent each day for Duty Day; and 6 parents to a parenting group twice a week.	Warranty work only	Maintenance: Inclusive Loaner: None Other: Insurance, qualified driver, Arrangements: arrangements with parents, music for children.	Maintenance: Inclusive service Loaner: Replacement vehicles and drivers Arrangements: Transportation arrangements made through contacts with parents, etc.

	Children's Aid Society	Queensway Preschool	West End Nursery School	YMCA-YWCA
Restrictions of Use			No food in van or personal toys.	Pre-booking of field trips at their availability. May not get same driver/van.
DESCRIPTION OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES				
Geographical Boundaries	North: Ottawa River South: Hunt Club East: 10 th Line Road West: Bayshore	North: Carling Avenue South: Ottawa River East: Bronson Avenue West: Island Park Drive	North: Carling South: Baseline East: Fisher West: Woodroffe * Note: Not set in stone.	Sandy Hill area to Lebreton Flats area/ Preston and Landsdowne
Pick Up and Drop Off Locations	Door to door	Door to door	Specified location	Door to door Specified locations
# and Timing of Runs Per Day	4 Pick-up in A.M.: 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. 21 5 Pick-ups in P.M.: 12:15 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. 21 4 Drop-offs in A.M.: 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. 21 5 Drop-offs in P.M.: 3:15 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. 21	2 Pick-Ups: 8:25 a.m. to 9:05 a.m. 12 9:15 a.m. to 9:35 a.m. 12 2 Drop-offs: 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon 12 12:00 noon to 12:35 p.m. 12	4 Pick-Ups: 7:45 a.m. to 8:25 a.m. 6 8:25 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. 6 12:25 p.m. to 12:45 p.m. 6 12:45 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. 6 4 Drop-offs: 11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. 6 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon 6 3:05 p.m. to 3:25 p.m. 6 3:25 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. 6	2 Pick-Ups: 8:00 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. 11 8:45 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. 8 2 Drop-offs: 11:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. 11 11:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 8
Eligibility Requirements	No restrictions living within catchment area. Families with children living outside catchment area provide own transportation.	No restrictions living within catchment area. Families with children living outside catchment area provide own transportation.	No restrictions living within catchment area, unless residing within walking distance (2 blocks). Families with children living outside catchment area provide own transportation.	No restrictions living within catchment area. Families with children living outside catchment area provide own transportation, or arrangements for bus passes made through CIS.
Other Uses for Vehicle	Parent Duty Day, Parent Outings, Field trips	Field trips – as frequently as three times per month in winter and more often in summer.	No	Limited field trips.
DESCRIPTION OF DRIVER				
Designation	Designated driver.	Designated driver, who also does maintenance work around the centre.	Designated driver. On occasion, driver is used as supply teacher and/or for enhancement of field trips.	Designated driver.

	Children's Aid Society	Queensway Preschool	West End Nursery School	YMCA-YWCA
Accompanying Staff	No	Yes, a staff member monitors children on bus.	No	Yes, teachers, once a week, go during either pick ups or drop offs depending on staff hours and busing, and as needed basis, if there is a problem child.
Job Descriptions	Available through Dan-O-Mite	Written job description for driver/teachers aid is available	No	Available through Dan-O-Mite
Contingency Plans	Dan-O-Mite provides familiar backup driver, notifies centre and parents	There is a backup driver, who is retired from Laidlaw.	None	Dan-O-Mite provides familiar backup driver, notifies centre and parents.
SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES				
Use of Seatbelts	Seatbelts are used for all children.	Seatbelts are used for all children.	Seatbelts are used for all children.	All children use seatbelts.
Use of Infant/Toddler Car Seats and Boosters	Use car seats for children between 20-40 pounds; booster seats for children between 40-60 pounds; regular seats at back for children over 60 pounds.	Use 4 car seats for children between 20-40 pounds; 6 booster seats for children between 40-60 pounds; regular seats at back for children over 60 pounds.	Use car seats for children between 20-40 pounds; booster seats for children between 40-60 pounds; regular seats at back for children over 60 pounds.	Use car seats for children between 20-40 pounds; booster seats for children between 40-60 pounds; regular seats at back for children over 60 pounds.
Seating Arrangements and Bus Behaviour	Children have designated seats based on behaviour.	Children have set seating arrangements. Children are separated for behavioural concerns. Children are taught how to undo seatbelts in case of emergency. Staff sits in the back with children.	Driver places children in van. She sets rules for children in van. Driver buckles and unbuckles children.	Children have designated seats based on behaviour. Driver buckles and unbuckles children.
Staff to Child Ratio in Vehicle	1:8 or 1:5	2:12	1:6	1:11 in the morning and 1:8 in the afternoon
Accident and Emergency Situations	Report to CAS, write case notes, report to Ministry, negotiate with Dan-O-Mite regarding contacting families.	Phone numbers of families on bus. Cell phone bus at all times. Depending on situation, call school, family, and backup numbers.	Driver carries a cell phone. If an emergency occurs, she pulls over, calls 911 and then the school..	Remain calm, assess situation, call Headstart, determine evacuation needs, inform parents, conduct investigation, and discuss with Y
Staff Training Opportunities	Defensive Driving Dourse Option workshop on information about seatbelts for CAS staff.	Drivers obtain special license. On-the-job orientation with someone to mentor new staff.	None	Loading and unloading upon employment. CPR and First Aid.

	Children's Aid Society	Queensway Preschool	West End Nursery School	YMCA-YWCA
Parental Responsibilities	Parents receive letter re: expectations, and buckling children in. Be on time, notify when children are away, reinforce behaviour, work with problem children.	Be physically present at pick-up and drop-offs.	Be physically present at pick-up and drop-offs 10 minutes before. Parents bring child to school if child is observed unbuckling him or herself on van.	Be at PU/DR 5 min ahead. Work with parents re: behavioural concerns, talk to child. Parents call if someone else is picking up child not on list. May lose privilege if they abuse system.
COST OF TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM				
Annualized Cost	\$128,700 / \$3,064 per child	\$31,556 / \$1,314 per child	\$31,917 / \$1,1773 per child	\$32,618 / \$1,482 per child
Estimated Kilometres Per Year	7,800 km per year	6,850 km per year	7,000 km per year	21,918 km per year
ADVANTAGES OF TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM				
Benefits and Advantages	No worrying regarding having a driver, maintenance, upkeep,. Staff don't have shared responsibility/duty and dedicate more time to programming.	Children are securely seated. Clipboard on board with numbers of children. Opportunity to do some program time. Experienced driver. See what's going on at home. Allows for spontaneous use of van for field trips.	Contracted service – driver takes care of all maintenance and insurance issues.	No worrying regarding having a driver, maintenance, upkeep,. Staff don't have shared responsibility/duty and dedicate more time to programming. Opens employment for teachers.
DISADVANTAGES OF TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM				
Negatives and Disadvantages	Less flexibility re: outings. Parents don't get same kind of support and meeting staff.	Time consuming, long runs, cuts into programming time.	Driver is on her own, and has to deal with angry parents and emergencies. No replacement driver if driver is unable to perform task.	Lack spontaneity of planning trips.