

Independent Travel Training

Information for parents & carers

Learning skills for independent travel can be life-changing!

But before training can start, it is important your child (of whatever age) understands what training involves and what will happen after training ends. It is also important that you are involved during the training as there are things you can do which will help.

Before training

✓ **Why does your child want to learn to be an independent traveller?**

Independent travel can open a world of possibilities. Why would your child want to travel on their own? Where do they want to go? What activities would they like to do if they can travel safely and independently? Find out the reasons why your child wants to be an independent traveller.

✓ **Could your child commit to training?**

Travel training often takes place in the morning. Your child would need to be ready to leave the house when our travel trainers arrive. Our trainers work all-year round including during the poor weather, during the dark mornings and in the holidays. Describe this to your child and establish whether they would want to commit to doing this. Could they undertake training which may last several weeks?

✓ **It's busy a world out there!**

Travel training normally takes place at busy times of day, ie rush hour in the mornings and afternoon. Buses, trains and trams can be crowded and noisy, and pavements can be busy. Find out from your child how they would feel in this environment – could they cope, would they want to? Have they experienced these environments in the past – how have they managed?

✓ **Training for independence**

The goal for travel training is independence. If your child successfully completes the travel training programme, the expectation will be for them to make the journey they have learnt on their own every time. For example, if your child has been previously provided with a minibus or taxi to/from school or college, this will end and your child will be travelling to school on their own. How does your child feel about doing that every day?

✓ **Other support**

Making sure your child has everything they need before training starts is crucial, eg a reliable mobile phone, travel pass, all-weather coat and a watch. Consider these with your child before a referral is made for training please so they are ready.

During training

Naturally, everyone is different and our pace of learning and readiness to learn varies, but helping your child to develop independent living skills now can have a big impact on their level of independence in the future.

When training starts, the travel trainer will communicate with you frequently. They will tell you how your child is progressing. There are several stages to the training and we will need your consent to move to the next stage.

While training is taking place:

✓ **Engage with the travel trainer**

You know your child better than anyone so your advice and support is important. Your child may have a learning style which would be useful for us to know – if so, this could be a help to the travel trainer.

✓ **Support your child between training sessions**

Support your child to use skills as much as possible between sessions. For example, if you're using public transport with your child, support them to undertake tasks independently under your supervision.

✓ **Peer support**

Perhaps identify another person known to your child who travels independently, eg older sibling, who can offer peer support and encouragement during training.

For more information about travel training programmes, contact us on:

For more information

If your child is under 25 years old:

Jane Birchmore, Independent Travel Trainer: stream.leaderchildren@mertonmencap.org.uk

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If your child is over 25 years old:

Jenny Lockett, Independent Travel Trainer: travel.trainer3@mertonmencap.org.uk

Also see our web site: www.mertonmencap.org.uk