



North Yorkshire
County Council

Independent Travel Training

Parental Guide



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How can Travel Training help your child or young person?

Independent Travel Training is an invaluable lifelong skill.

It will enable your child or young person to make very different choices through their own life journey.

There is never a right or wrong time to start preparing for independence.

The earlier the better

Independent Travel Training is not just for now or just to get to school or college.

It is about the future.

It builds confidence and self-esteem.

It widens a young person's social opportunities and opens up their social circle.

It can make a huge difference to a child or young person's life, future outlook and horizons.

Travel Training provides a reduction in care responsibility and greater opportunities for employment, education and leisure activities.



It provides independence to go about your life, knowing your child or young person is getting on with theirs.



Reassurance that your child has learnt skills for life including road safety and personal safety.



Seeing future opportunities for your child or young person to make choices, take control and feel included.



How do children and young people feel about Travel Training?

Travel Training can build confidence, self-esteem and feelings of true independence.

'I want to be like other people my age'

'I like travelling with my friends on the bus instead of on my own in a taxi'

It helps make the young person feel integrated and part of their local community.

'I can meet my friends after school now'

'I have a choice now and don't have to rely on my mum or dad to take me places'

Travel Training builds skills for life through feeling in control and widening opportunities such as greater access to education, training, employment, leisure and social networks.

Robert's Story...

Hello, my name is Robert. I am 20 years old and live with my mum, dad, sister and big brother.

I am working on a Supported Internship through the week but before this I studied animal care at college.

I have travelled on North Yorkshire County Council transport for lots of years and this was usually a shared taxi to and from college.

My mum and dad have always wanted me to become more independent and when they heard about North Yorkshire County Council Travel Training Scheme they wanted me to do this.

I went out with my Travel Trainer one day a week for many weeks and we practised using the bus as well as learning to stay safe. We also went into the library and she helped me learn how to count money, tell time and read the bus timetable. I found this hard at first, but after a few weeks I got better and could count out my bus fare myself.

I would always ask my mum and dad to take me to town to get a coffee, now I can do this myself. I can get on the bus and don't have to rely on them any more.

I am getting better at trying to go to new places by myself and even planning on going to a big town soon on the bus.

I am very proud of myself as I found this hard at first, but now I can go and get a coffee whenever I want and not have to wait for my mum and dad any more.



'Now I can go to town by myself and not have to wait for my mum and dad any more'

Arron's Story...

Hi, my name is Arron. I am 19 years old and live with my mum and brother.

I go to college three days a week, and get there all by myself on the college bus.

Before Travel Training I was in NYCC transport since starting secondary school, I wanted to be the same as my friends and get the bus.

My Travel Trainer helped me do this. Each week we went out together and she helped me learn lots of new skills. These included crossing roads safely and getting the college bus, we even got a train to try it out for when I go to see my dad.

I wanted to be independent so much, I used to have a carer who would take me out as I was scared to go by myself, but now I only go with my carer to new places I have not been to before.

Since Travel Training I have gone into town on my own lots of times, as well as going to college.



'Travel Training has changed my life'

How do parents and carers feel about Travel Training?



Travel Training can feel daunting at first if you are used to having transport arranged by your Local Authority to get your child or young person to school or college.

'My son was ready to become independent and has really enjoyed the freedom of travelling on his own'

'My daughter loves travelling on the bus with all her friends'

It is normal to admit to feeling a degree of anxiety when your child or young person is considering Travel Training. However the benefits of Travel Training will give your child/young person the life skills they need to develop into independent young adults.

'When we saw him walking home on his first unaccompanied journey, his face was beaming'

'She just wanted to be like people her own age and meet all her friends and walk to school together'

Robert's mum Linda said...

My husband and I have always wanted Robert to be independent. We understand how important this is for his future and when we heard about Travel Training we knew this was something that Robert would really benefit from.

Robert had never travelled anywhere by himself before, he would rely completely on me and my husband to drive him or local authority transport.

Robert's Travel Trainer worked with him every week and would keep me up to date regularly with how he was doing.

Robert was nervous at first but by the end of his programme he was really enjoying it. He would look forward to these sessions and gained a real feeling of achievement when he was able to go to town for a coffee on his own. He would walk to the bus stop himself, get the bus to town and get home, all without our help.

We are so proud of Robert, he has worked really hard to develop his travel skills and his confidence has really developed. He has lots of plans for future independent journeys and without Travel Training he would still be relying on us and North Yorkshire County Council to go anywhere.



'Travel Training has given my son his independence'

Travel Training – what to look for

<p>Preparation</p> 	<p>Often parents will lead this, however, if the young person can learn the skills themselves, it will add to their independence and self-esteem.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having what they need for the journey, such as their bus pass or money. Checking the weather and deciding on appropriate clothes and checking the time to leave. Also being aware of time, both knowing what it is at the moment but also awareness of the passage of time. 	<p>Bus/Train stop or train station</p> 	<p>Do they recognise which stop is theirs? (This may include the platform or road side).</p> <p>Do they know which way to look out for the transport and can they recognise the correct bus or train?</p> <p>Can they read timetables and information boards?</p> <p>Can they recognise money value? Can they count out the fare themselves? Do they know how much change they will get back?</p> <p>Can they ask for help?</p>
<p>Route Planning</p> 	<p>Do they know the route to the bus stop and from their bus stop at the other end? Do they know their bus number? Fare amount?</p> <p>Do they know a safe walking route to/from this stop?</p> <p>Have you practised this at 'real time'?</p>	<p>Boarding the transport</p> 	<p>Can they cope with a queue or a crowd?</p> <p>Do they understand to let others off first?</p> <p>Do they have their pass or fare ready?</p> <p>Can they interact with the driver by themselves?</p> <p>Do they stay downstairs on the bus and sit towards the front?</p>
<p>Road Safety</p> 	<p>The basic skills are: choosing a safe place to cross, listening and watching for traffic, and deciding when to cross. (The Green Cross Code)</p> <p>They also need awareness of different types of crossings and how they work.</p>	<p>During the journey</p> 	<p>How do they occupy themselves on the journey?</p> <p>Do they fall asleep?</p> <p>Are they easily distracted?</p> <p>Are they able to point out and recognise landmarks?</p>
		<p>Getting off</p> 	<p>Can they recognise their landmark for getting off?</p> <p>Do they know how to stop the transport if needed and do they give enough time to get off?</p> <p>Do they remember all of their belongings?</p>

What does Travel Training include?

Travel Training should include the following:

Skills/knowledge	✓ ? X or NA	Comments
Is aware of basic dangers outdoors		
Responds appropriately to basic dangers		
Good position on pavement		
Negotiates obstacles e.g. lampposts		
Recognises driveways		
Crosses quiet roads safely		
Uses designated/controlled crossings safely (e.g. School crossing, Zebra, Pelican, Puffin, Toucan and Pegasus)		
Recognises basic numbers		
Recognises basic colours		
Recognises basic road markings		
Recognises basic road signs		

Skills/knowledge	✓ ? X or NA	Comments
Responds correctly to verbal instructions		
Remembers short instructions		
Asks for information when unsure		
Safely steps up/down kerbs		
Adopts appropriate social behaviour		
Makes appropriate and safe decisions e.g. road crossings		
Can recognise different money values, Can pay for purchases/tickets independently.		
Keeps time independently		
Remains focused throughout		
Adapts to changes		
Solves everyday problems		
Travels unaccompanied		

Travel Training Tips

Do	Don't
Identify landmarks that won't change. This will help your child or young person learn the route.	Don't use landmarks that can change with the season – for example trees or Christmas lights.
Learn the route – repeat it many times together and this will reinforce your child or young person's learning and confidence.	
Always keep to the same route each time and carry out the practical support in real time if possible.	Always keep the same 'travel rules' even when out with family – this will reinforce the same travel routine for your child or young person. Repetition is key.
Make sure you have discussed personal safety and 'what if' questions with your child or young person. This will help them prepare for future independent travel and build up their coping skills.	Don't share negative stories about public transport.
Be positive – keep it to small steps to begin with and build the journey up over time if your child or young person needs this. They CAN do it!	If at first you don't succeed then keep on trying.
Support your child or young person as much as you can with lots of PRAISE throughout each step.	Keep calm, don't show worry or anxiety as you will pass this onto your child or young person.

Personal Safety

Make sure your child or young person is aware of personal safety, such as not giving out their name or address to strangers.



Encourage your child or young person to sit downstairs on the bus, in the seat next to the aisle, as near to the driver as they can, but not in the disabled seats.

Make your child or young person aware of 'stranger danger'.

If your child or young person has additional needs make sure they carry an information card with them.

Make sure your child or young person has a mobile phone with family and friends contact numbers in it.



Make sure they know how to use the phone.

You can work with your phone provider to have certain restrictions on your child or young person's phone, such as parental controls and dialling out only.

Make sure your child or young person carries some extra money with them just in case they need to get a different bus or lose their bag/wallet etc.

Medical Needs

If your child or young person has a medical condition, make sure they have their medication or medical equipment with them (such as an inhaler).

Make sure they have an emergency card/talisman bracelet etc. detailing what to do and who to contact if they are unwell.

What ifs

When you are practising the practical side of Travel Training, it is important that you prepare your child or young person for other situations that may occur.

It is not possible to cover everything, but this is a good guide to start with. You can amend these to suit your child or young person's individual needs.

You could also include any specific phobias your child or young person may have in these questions.

Use quieter opportunities when together to ask a couple of these questions and discuss the answers – for example, when walking together for the bus (not in front of others at the bus stop).

Don't ask all of these questions in one session but use these quiet opportunities to ask the odd one. The purpose of 'What ifs' is to prepare your child or young person for anything else that might occur. Getting them to think about these things will prepare them should they happen when you are not there.



What would you do if...

You forget something?

How important is it? Does it stop you from going to school/college? If yes, should you return home for it?

You become frightened by something?

Can you cope on your own? If not, ask for help. Talk about it. Use your phone.

You lose your way?

Ask for help from bus driver, person in shop, police officer, traffic/street warden, use your phone.

Your bus/train does not come in time?

This is NOT your fault. Phone and let someone know. Explain what happened when you get to school/college/work.

You have something stolen?

Report it immediately to the bus driver, a safe stranger, a police officer or at school/college/work.

You feel unwell?

How badly? Return home, make sure you tell someone.

You don't have enough money?

Do you have enough for a single fare? Could you borrow some? If not you may need to return home.

You get on the wrong bus?

Get off the bus at the next stop, if possible cross the road and return to the original bus stop. If in doubt ask the bus driver for help.

You are approached by a stranger?

If they ask you something, be polite but keep walking. Don't get involved in conversation and never go off with someone you don't know. Stick to well lit, busy walking routes.

You cannot find someone to ask for help?

Use your phone, keep walking towards busy, well lit areas until you find someone you can ask.

You have a minor accident?

Can you cope on your own? If not, ask for help, use your phone.

NYCC Safe Places Scheme



In North Yorkshire there is a scheme called Safe Places. This scheme aims to provide a valuable, free, support service for vulnerable people.

This is another safety resource you can use with your child or young person.

You need to fill in a membership form to join the scheme and send it back to the address on it.

A list of the Safe Places in your area is also available on this website.

You can find out more at www.northyorks.gov.uk/safe-places



Conclusion

After having read through the Travel Training process, you may feel like this is an overwhelming task.

It is WORTH it!

Developing a child or young person's self esteem and confidence is a powerful and life changing opportunity for them.

You can help by encouraging them every step of the way and practising skills with them when you are out and about.

It is all about giving children and young people skills to be more independent in their own right and allowing them to have the same life choices as their peers.

Go for it!

Travel Training FAQs

What route should we start with?

A young person will travel to school over 350 times a year!

This is a good route to start with. However, once this has been mastered the young person may want to choose another route that will benefit them socially.

Resources to help plan a route

www.traveline.info

www.northyorks.gov.uk/bus-timetables

What if my child can't remember things?

It could be useful for your child or young person to carry written prompt cards or information with them in their bag etc.

You can break the journey down into small manageable sections and once your child or young person has become confident with one part, introduce the next one.

Can other family members help?

Any responsible family member can help, just ensure that they are patient and supportive to the child or young person learning to Travel Train. They also need to keep to the same route and routine that the young person has already been learning.

Can we refuse to Travel Train our child?

Yes you can refuse but in order to promote independence in your child or young person you will need to develop these skills or they will not become independent in their own lives.

Can we get any help towards the cost of the travel?

There are different concessions in place to help with the cost of travel.

Disabled people are entitled to a bus pass giving free off-peak travel on local bus services anywhere in England.

www.northyorks.gov.uk/disabled-persons-bus-pass

Local bus operators often offer student travel deals – check the operators website for details.

Post 16-19 Bursary Fund

A bursary is money that your child or young person, or their education or training provider, can use to pay for things like:

- Clothing, books and other equipment for their course
- Transport and lunch on days they study or train.

www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund

Can we get help with resources to help support Travel Training?

Yes you can. All resources to help you with this can be located on the North Yorkshire County Council Local Offer.

www.northyorks.gov.uk/about-local-offer-north-yorkshire

How do I Travel Train my child or young person if they have specific needs such as visual impairments, hearing impairments or mobility needs?

This parent guide has been developed for Travel Training children and young people with various SEND needs.

For more specific Travel Training information or guidance relating to children and young people with visual impairments, hearing impairments or mobility needs please contact:

InclusiveEducation@northyorks.gov.uk

Contact us

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