

## Health Notes

### School Bus Safety

by Dr. Mark Craft,  
Craft Chiropractic Associates, PC

September brings mixed emotions to my house. Summer vacation ends for my kids, which is sad for us all. No more sleeping late in the mornings for them, and a more appropriate bedtime is reinstated. The promise of homework and studying looms over my kids' heads.

The worst thing I experience is not finding my son and daughter at home throughout the day when I get a break from the office. My wife and I are sad to see our children go back to school. Not only do we enjoy our two wonderful children, but knowing where they are, and that they are safe is a reassuring feeling. Even if you are looking forward to your children returning to school, you want them to be safe as they are being transported to school.

Recently I received written material regarding school bus transportation from a happy, former employee of *Ellenville Central School*, Leonard Bernstein.

Mr. Bernstein tells me he enjoyed his time spent in Ellenville and appreciates the opportunities the district provided him. He now is the coordinator for transportation and emergency services at the North Rockland School. Mr. Bernstein also serves as the President-elect of the National Association for Pupil Transportation as well as the President of the Tri-Valley School Board. He resides in Grahamsville with his wife and two sons. Thanks to Leonard Bernstein for the following information.

Did you know that the safest mode of transportation for school children is the school bus? That's right! New York State has a terrific safety record. Every school day in New York State over 55,000 school bus drivers transport 2.2 million school children safely to and from school.

Our New York State Education Law requires that bus drivers and monitors/attendants receive mandated training each year. In fact, before the first child is picked up for school this September, all school bus drivers in New York State will have received at least two hours of refresher training. Your school's "transportation team" is ready to go. Here is how you and your family can prepare.

Parents, the first day of school have your children ready for the bus at least 10 minutes early. This is not the day to be rushing around, start the year off right. School districts notify families as to where your children's pick up point

is. (See the route lists on pages 23-24) Remind your children that the bus driver is in charge and are to have their directions followed.

Students, listen to your parents and follow directions meant to keep you safe. When waiting for the bus, stand a safe distance back from the road and traffic. Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop. Watch for the driver to signal you as to when it is safe to approach and get on the bus. If you must cross the street to board the bus, be aware of approaching traffic and look for the bus driver's signal as to when it is safe to cross. Slowly climb the steps as you board. Do not rush or push. Remember that the bus driver is trained to keep you as safe as possible. Listen to and respect the driver's requests.

Motorists, traffic laws are very clear. When a school bus is stopped with its red lights flashing and stop arms out, you must stop. There is a penalty resulting in large fines and points on your license if you fail to do so. Even if there are no police officers in sight, the driver could and should report any violators. Drive carefully, these laws are meant to keep our children safe.

For more information visit the following web pages; [www.nyapt.org](http://www.nyapt.org) and [www.napt.org](http://www.napt.org) for links to national information on school bus safety. ☼

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