

According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, a child is 8 times safer in a school bus than when riding in a parent's vehicle.

(National Highway Safety Administration. "School Bus Safety: Crashworthiness Research." April 2002.)

Why don't school buses have seat belts?

School buses are the safest way to transport your children to and from school. The color and size of school buses make them easily visible and identifiable, their height provides good driver visibility and raises the bus passenger compartment above car impact height; and emergency vehicles are the only other vehicle on the road that can stop traffic like a school bus can.

School buses are carefully designed on a different transportation and protection model than the average passenger car. The children are protected like eggs in an egg carton – compartmentalized, and surrounded with padding and structural integrity to secure the entire container. The seat backs are raised and the shell is reinforced for protection against impact. There are other differences to consider between your car and your child's school bus. In your car, you can supervise your child and ensure that your child's belt remains properly secured. School buses use what is called "passive restraint," meaning all a child must do to be protected is simply sit down in a seat. School buses also must be designed to be multi-purpose, fitting everything from a six year-old to an 18 year-old senior on the high school football team in full uniform. Sometimes it's two to a seat, other times three. Because of this, emphasis is placed on protecting the entire valuable cargo.

How are school bus drivers trained? Can they be trusted with my child?

School bus drivers are the most highly trained, tested and scrutinized drivers on the road. All school bus drivers must obtain a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and must pass written and skills tests to obtain a School Bus Endorsement. Once they have their licenses, drivers receive specialized classroom and behind-the-wheel training in driving a school bus, student loading/unloading procedures, student evacuation, student behavior and security management, and emergency medical procedures. School bus drivers are carefully monitored by the districts administration to ensure that they continue to meet strict safety standards.

Drivers must attend annual in-service training sessions and are encouraged to attend annual Advanced Driver Training programs and compete in the annual School Bus Driver's Road-E-O.

Every six years a driver must re-certify their Ohio School Bus Certificate by attending the training classes and passing an on bus driving test.

Is the bus driver a safe person?

In addition to their rigorous training, all school bus drivers are required to participate in pre-employment, random and post-accident drug and alcohol testing. They undergo frequent driving record checks, and pass annual medical exams to ensure they are physically qualified. All of our drivers also must pass FBI and BCI background checks prior to employment and every six years thereafter.

How can I be sure that my child is safe from bullying on the bus?

The Transportation Department is concerned about bullying on school buses, just as our educators are concerned with bullying in the classroom. School bus drivers are being trained with new techniques to manage student behavior and are partnering with school administrators to address the issue. All of our school buses now have cameras installed inside, to monitor students and help with identification and resolution of problems. Another benefit of this technology and training is to enhance the security of our students while they are on the school bus.

What can parents do to help keep kids safe on and off the school bus?

The Transportation Department is working hard to keep children safe, but there are things you and your child can do to take an active role in staying safe.

- Walk your child to and from the bus stop. If possible, wait with him or her until the bus arrives.
- Be alert to traffic. Check both ways for cars before stepping off the bus.
- Wait for the bus driver's signal before crossing the street.
- Walk in front of the bus; never walk behind the bus to cross the street.
- While waiting for the bus, stay in a safe place away from the street.
- Before leaving the sidewalk, look for the flashing lights.
- Never go under the bus to retrieve something you've dropped.
- Teach your child the importance of staying seated on the bus.
- Get to know your bus driver. He or she is a trained professional who sees your child every day; he or she would be happy to tell you about the safety features on the bus and the responsibility drivers have for keeping their young passengers safe.