

SE Skills Training: *Travel Training 101!*

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What is travel training?

“Travel training can be defined as a short-term, intensive, individualized course of instruction designed to promote the independent travel of older adults and people with disabilities.” ([link](#))

“A comprehensive travel instruction program includes instruction in essential travel skills, making judgments about safety and danger, managing basic life skills, knowing how to handle travel disruptions, and using appropriate social and communication skills.” ([link](#))



Why Travel Train in SE?

- **Helps meet the goals of supported employment!**
 - Stability in employment
 - Secures transportation to and from work
 - Allows for shift/schedule flexibility
 - Simplifies career advancement and upward mobility
 - Independence in employment
 - Reduces reliance on others for employment maintenance
 - Develops transferable skills (hard and soft)
 - Builds a precedent for independence at work



Where To Start?

- **Overwhelmed by options? Here are a few:**
 - Public transportation: reduced fares available!
 - Access Link: ADA alternative to traditional public transportation
 - Access Link Riders' Choice Pilot: rideshare options in certain districts
 - Community Transportation: county-based, similarities to Access Link
 - Transportation Management Associations (TMAs): support/promotion for alternative commuter transportation



Where To Start?

1. Meeting with you, your trainer, and your support system together
 - a. Best transportation method, concerns, backup/emergency plans etc.
2. Research + plan how to take chosen transportation method
 - a. Ride process, schedule navigation, contact numbers etc.
 - i. Making this information accessible to you!
3. Help develop skills needed for independent travel
 - a. Hard and soft skills (all transferable to SE)
4. Begin real-world training!



Skills Needed - “Hard”

- Ability to follow and understand procedures
 - Learn routes, booking/scheduling processes, paying fares etc.
- Identifying and recalling important information
 - License plates, signs, stops, key people, phone numbers etc.
- Keeping yourself safe
 - Car/street/railway safety, awareness of surroundings, “if-then” etc.
- Communication with support system and “helpers”
 - Ability to provide accurate information and ask for help



Skills Needed - “Soft”

- Social boundaries
 - Appropriate behavior for yourself and others, etiquette etc.
- Emotional management
 - Coping with change, sensory aversions, negative emotions etc.
- Problem-solving
 - Rescheduling, vehicle accidents, getting lost, personal danger etc.
- Self-Confidence
 - Believing that you *can* successfully travel independently



Accommodations

- For “Hard” skills:
 - a. Written plans – documented travel steps, important information etc.
 - b. Videos or pictures of the route, vehicle etc.
 - c. Memory tools for landmarks, key people etc.
 - d. Communication aids (phrase cards, scripts, speaking technology etc.)
- For “Soft” skills:
 - a. Reminder sheets, what-if flowcharts, and clear back-up plans
 - b. Self-soothing or support items (fidgets, sensory aids etc.)
 - ✓ ***There’s no shame in support – if it helps, use it!***



Process Overview

- Travel route together
 - a. Identifying current challenges and skill limitations
 - i. Funding, reliability, experience etc.
 - ii. Hard and/or soft skills
 - iii. Causes for performance inconsistencies

- Create accommodations
 - a. Developing ways for you to get your needs met without the trainer there
 - i. What makes it harder or easier to travel?
 - ii. What makes travel as predictable as possible?



Process Overview

- Fading services
 - a. Giving you the chance to use your skills while supporting you if needed
 - i. The trainer sits two rows away from you on the bus.
 - ii. You and the trainer pretend to be strangers during the ride.
 - iii. The trainer follows the bus in the trainer's car.
 - iv. The trainer meets you at the stop.
 - v. The trainer tests your skills (hard and/or soft)

- Graduating services
 - a. You travel independently going forward!

Accessible Transportation Resources

- **General**

- DDD-listed resources:
<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/dds/hottopics/transportation/>
- Transportation go-bag:
<https://www.thearcfamilyinstitute.org/resources/gobag.html>

- **Specific**

- Access Link information:
<https://www.njtransit.com/accessibility/access-link-ada-paratransit>
- Updates about Access Link (July 2025):
<https://accesslink.njtransit.com/public/Paratransit/Images/files/ALGMLetterJuly2025.pdf>
 - Includes information on Riders' Choice Pilot
- Reduced-fare information:
<https://www.njtransit.com/first-run/savings-seniors-people-disabilities-military>
- County-based transportation information:
<http://njtransit.com/accessibility/community-transportation>
- Transportation management associations:
<https://www.nj.gov/transportation/commuter/rideshare/tma.shtm>

- **Additional Information**

- Rutgers' NJTIP: <https://vtc.rutgers.edu/njt看ip/>