

Travel Training

Who are we?

The Travel Training Project was set up in April 2004, and since then has provided a valuable service to many young people with learning and physical disabilities, and their families, all over the borough of Ealing. The main focus of the project is to teach young people, living in Ealing and attending Special Schools to travel their journey to and from school independently using public transport. This service is funded by the London Borough of Ealing, who we work in partnership with, and is therefore free to those who are eligible!

We also provide a range of travel training services for young people who attend mainstream schools or colleges, and for adults too. We do have some funding to support students in transition however other placements may require additional funding, at a cost of £18 an hour. This can often be paid for through a personal budget, SEN statement or by other means; please contact us for more information.

The Travel Training Project is part of Ealing Mencap, a local charity, and the majority of our funding comes from the borough council. We work closely with the SEN department there, and the SEN schools in Ealing, to assess student's travel requirements, and meet them in the most appropriate way. Travel trainers are based at Ealing Mencap's offices in Hanwell, and our contact details are:

173a Uxbridge Road
Hanwell
London
W7 3TH

Tel: 0208 5679185
Email: travel.training@ealingmencap.org.uk
Online: www.ealingmencap.org.uk

How do we work?

We normally train with students every week, and a timetable will be arranged with you and with school transport if necessary. If your child does not have an under-16 oyster card or freedom pass we can help you apply for one, and provide evidence to support your application.

On the agreed days the travel trainer will meet your child at home in the morning and train with them on the safest route to school, and back again in the afternoon. Your child may also be offered a day placement during school time to do additional work tailored to their individual needs. Our training covers several key areas:

- Learning the route
- Asking for help
- Road safety
- Problem solving
- Stranger awareness

There is usually no time limit on travel training placements; your travel trainer will discuss with you how long the placement may take, generally they can last anything between three weeks and eighteen months. As training progresses your child will begin to do more and

more of the journey independently, while assessments are carried out to check their learning. You will be kept fully-informed about your child's training programme, and if at any point you have questions or concerns please contact your travel trainer.

What happens next?

Once we all agree that your child is safe to travel independently, and all our assessments are complete, a final risk assessment will be carried out and they will be taken off school transport. At this point your child will be shadowed, which means that another member of the Travel Training team they do not know will follow them on their journey, to check for any problems. They will also be shadowed three months and six months after they have begun to travel independently, to ensure that they are continuing to travel safely. If we, you, or your child have any problems or concerns once independent travel is underway, we will offer further training and support.

Even after the six month shadow we offer follow-up training if your child moves to a new school or college, you move house within the borough of Ealing, or any other problems arise, so please get in touch with us if you need to.

What can you and your child expect from Travel Training?

Travel Training offers your child the opportunity to learn to travel independently on public transport within a well-structured, comprehensive training programme run by experienced professionals.

Your child will learn to travel to and from school or college safely on their own, and in the process they will build confidence and communication skills, increase their ability to solve problems, and learn to take responsibility for their own safety. Most importantly, independent travel will open up opportunities for your child socially, and enable them to access services or work placements further down the line, when transport is no longer an option. Travel training increases self-esteem and gives the young people we work with a great sense of achievement. Taking the step to independence can be a cause of anxiety for a lot of parents, but we will support you and your child throughout the process. In our experience, Travel Training has hugely positive results for everyone involved.

"Travel training is fantastic, I can learn to go home on my own which is good for when I'm grown-up, and it's fun seeing my friends on the bus."

- Alex, student

"Steve is much more confident - he has no problem travelling to school alone, and has already undertaken other journeys unaccompanied. Travel training has given him a whole new outlook."

- Janet, parent

