



A CARING COMMITMENT TO SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS IN MILWAUKEE, WI

The population of students served under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has grown at a rate significantly higher than the general education population.

Students under IDEA account for approximately 13 percent of the total education population, which is why the demand for special needs transportation service is increasing.

This can present a challenge for many school districts. Drivers and monitors must be able to clearly communicate expectations and manage behavior while transporting students with special needs — which requires comprehensive training and positive, long-term relationships.

In order to develop solidly skilled driving teams, First Student requires successful completion of a well-developed special needs training program. First Student's extensive training is multi-faceted to include classroom, hands-on and on the bus instruction. Classroom training covers a comprehensive set of topics, including legal requirements, confidentiality, emergency evacuation, and specialized equipment for children with physical disabilities. Additional one-on-one training sessions allow drivers to practice real-life situations with specialized equipment.

First Student also requires cross-disability training to prepare driving teams for all potential special accommodations that current or future students may require. Training covers various characteristics and traits as well as safety strategies for transporting children with each type of special need. This comprehensive training covers all types of special needs and how to recognize the uniqueness of each child. Drivers and monitors learn how to adapt and provide for individual needs relating to verbal/nonverbal communication styles, loading/unloading, positive strategies for addressing behavior challenges and managing crisis situations.

First Student has held a long-term partnership for more than 30 years with Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). Each day, 159 of the more than 500 routes that are operated by First Student are to transport between 1,200 – 1,500 students with physical disabilities and special needs. And while each and every child transported is important, some children require more attention and time than others to ensure their ride is safe, comfortable and stress-free.

