

Young Rider Orientation Day reinforces school bus safety for new students and their families

A free Young Rider Orientation Day Aug. 27 will help new students feel more comfortable taking the school bus.

This year, approximately 62,000 Peel District School Board and Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board students will ride the school bus each day. Both boards have provided joint busing service since 1994.

Now in its 24th year, this orientation will give children confidence when riding the bus to and from school and will reinforce the importance of bus safety, observed Tom Howe, manager of Student Transportation of Peel Region (STOPR). Parents and children will watch a bus safety video, discuss their bus safety concerns and ride on a school bus.

The program, designed for kindergarten children and their elementary-aged siblings, as well as eligible French Immersion students, will run every hour between 9 a.m. and noon.

The Caledon location will be at Humberview Secondary School in Bolton. To confirm attendance and preferred time slot, calls 905-584-0400.

There are a number of things parents can do to help children feel more at ease with their first school bus experience. They include talking about bus rides as fun adventures. Parents should try not to be anxious in front of their children.

They can establish a routine by taking a few walks to the bus stop before the first day of school.

Parents can also keep children organized. A backpack is easier for students to carry than many small items.

Make sure children recognize their bus stop location and carry identification in case they get lost.

Teach bus safety rules ? listen to the bus driver's instructions, stay seated on the bus and respect other students.

Teach traffic safety. If children must cross the street to get to the bus stop, remind them to wait until the bus stops, activates its flashing lights and the stop arm before they look in both directions and cross.