

Young Rider Orientation Day reinforces school bus safety for new students

A free Young Rider Orientation Day this Saturday (Aug. 24) will help new students feel more comfortable taking the school bus. This year, approximately 60,000 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 through Student Transportation of Peel Region (STOPR).

"This orientation will give children confidence when riding the bus to and from school and will reinforce the importance of bus safety," commented STOPR Transportation Manager Tom Howe. "Parents and children will watch a bus safety video, discuss their bus safety concerns and take a ride on a school bus."

The program is designed for kindergarten children and their elementary-aged siblings. In Caledon, it will be running at Humberview Secondary School in Bolton from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Call Parkview Transit at 905-846-1070 to book a time slot.

There are a number of steps parents can take to help children feel more at ease with their first school bus experience:

- ? Talk about bus rides as fun adventures. Parents should try not to be anxious in front of their children.
- ? Establish a routine by taking a few walks to the bus stop before the first day of school.
- ? 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, such as listening 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.

Additional bus safety information is available on the Peel board's website at www.peelschools.org/parents/transportation and on the "Student Transportation" section of the Dufferin-Peel board's website at www.dpcdsb.org