

Paper Number: T-94-26	<i>TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PAPER</i>	CONTACT: Eileen Amy Program Administration and Quality Assurance 850-245-0476 Eileen.Amy@FLDOE.org Room 614, 325 W. Gaines St. Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400
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Securement of Wheelchair Lap Trays and Other Support Equipment		

April 10, 1994

TO: ESE Administrators
Transportation Directors
Service Managers
ESE Liaisons

FROM: Alexandra H. Robinson
ESE Transportation Coordinator
DOE/Seminole County Schools

SUBJECT: Securement of Wheelchair Lap Trays and Other Support Equipment

Occupational and physical therapists at the Riley Children's Hospital Center for Automotive Safety in Indianapolis and other pediatric transportation experts have stated that students in wheelchairs are safer on school buses when their lap trays are removed while being transported. In the event of an accident, lap trays, when attached to the wheelchair, can cause severe internal injury and have not been designed to spread crash forces. Parents may need to be assured that with proper trunk support and a size appropriate shoulder/lap belt, the student should have a stable securement.

Several concerns have arisen regarding the securement during transportation of wheelchair lap trays after removing them. There have also been concerns about securement of other support equipment (crutches, walkers, etc.) on buses transporting students with disabilities.

When the lap trays are removed or other items are carried on the bus, it is recommended that they be stowed in an area of the bus where they cannot move and/or become a projectile. Any method is acceptable which secures the device to sustain at least five times its weight, is not in the head impact area, and does not result in hazardous projections within the passenger area. This standard for securement of support equipment and accessories is from the 1990 National Standards for School Buses and Operations published by the National Safety Council.

One way that trays can be secured is against the sidewall of the bus below window level using "EPDM" (heavy rubber) straps that will sustain five (5) times the weight of the tray. Such securement may be attached by garage personnel, and should be checked periodically for stability.

Parents/guardians should be made aware of the safety issues involved if the lap trays were not removed. Such information or correspondence to the parent should be made with the support of the student's Occupational or Physical Therapist.

AR/ef

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