

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
CHILD CARE ADMINISTRATION
311 W. SARATOGA STREET
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21202**

DATE: Revised and reissued on May 9, 1997

CIRCULAR LETTER #: 97-03

TO: Regional Managers, Licensing Supervisors, Licensing Specialists,
Maryland Child Care Association, Maryland Federation of Christian
Schools, Maryland Family Day Care Association

FROM: Linda Heisner, Executive Director
Child Care Administration

RE: Supervision of Children Enroute To and From School

PROGRAM AFFECTED: Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes

ORIGINATING OFFICE: Office of Licensing

PURPOSE: Establish a policy to promote the safety of children while they are
enroute to and from school

AUTHORITY: Family Law Article § 5-506

ACTION REQUIRED OF: Regional Licensing Staff

REQUIRED ACTION: Inform child care providers of the policy and verify compliance

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2, 1997

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: Child Care Administration
Office of Licensing
(410) 767-7805.

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BACKGROUND: Supervising children enroute to and from school may be problematic because of the number and age span of children in care.

PROCEDURES:

- I. A child under six years of age must be supervised by an adult while walking to and from the bus stop, while waiting for the bus, or while walking to and from school. Child care providers who permit children under the age of six to travel back and forth to school unaccompanied by an adult are not providing adequate supervision.
- II. The readiness of children, six years of age and older, to travel back and forth to school without supervision should be assessed by parents and child care providers.

The following questions may be considered in making this assessment:

- A. Does the child demonstrate the ability to follow directions?
 - B. Is the child physically able to get on and off the bus or walk to school without assistance?
 - C. Has the child successfully traveled without adult supervision in the past?
 - D. Is the child familiar with the neighborhood and the route to and from the bus stop or school?
 - E. Is the child comfortable with the idea of traveling back and forth to school without adult supervision?
 - F. Does the child know what to do if approached by a stranger?
 - G. What safety hazards will confront the child?
- III. If, based on their assessment, there is agreement that the child can travel safely to and from school without adult supervision, the provider and parent(s) shall prepare written statements clearly indicating the bases of their decisions. Statements shall include the time of departure from the child care facility, the anticipated time of arrival at school and return to the child care facility, the child's route for walking to and from school or bus stops, and the location of bus stops. The parent(s) statement shall include permission for the child to travel without adult supervision. Statements must be signed and kept on file in the child care facility.
 - IV. If after school, the child does not arrive at the child care facility when expected, the child care provider is responsible for learning the whereabouts of the child and notifying the parents that the child has not arrived.

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 21, 1997

TO: Regional Managers
Licensing Supervisors
Licensing Specialists
Maryland State Family Day Care Association
Maryland Child Care Association
Maryland Federation of Church Schools

FROM: Linda Heisner

RE: Circular Letter #97-03 (Revised and Reissued on May 9, 1997)
Supervision of Children Enroute To and From School

Parents with children who are entering first grade and are not yet six years of age have asked the Child Care Administration to reconsider the age requirement for children to travel to and from school without adult supervision. The fact that public school systems throughout the State permit children in the first grade to leave school unescorted weighed heavily in the development of the policy on this subject. Members of the Policy Committee did not consider that many children enter first grade before their sixth birthday.

This memorandum will serve as notification to CCA staff and child care providers that a child under the age of six may be permitted to travel to and from school without adult supervision if:

- the child is in the first or higher grade; and
- the child will turn six by the end of December of the same calendar year; and
- following their assessment of the child's readiness, parents and child care provider agree that the child care travel safely without adult supervision.

Questions regarding this policy may be directed to the Director for Licensing, Child Care Administration, (410) 767-7805.