



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

December 9, 2016

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Safety for All: Autism Training for Transportation Providers

Bus drivers and transportation staff who work directly with students with autism and are responsible for the safety of all individuals during their routes. Drivers and assistants are critical liaisons between home and school and often have more interaction with parents than other school staff. Beyond simply driving, transportation providers are in charge of managing behavior, implementing accommodations, and collaborating with school-based staff. This course gives perspectives and strategies for working with students with autism and supporting their communication and behavioral needs in a transportation setting.

This course is designed for bus drivers, assistants, and other transportation staff and focuses on issues, perspectives, and settings specific to supporting students with autism on the bus. The course and modules are accessible through the [VCU Autism Center for Excellence](#) website and can be viewed individually or as a group. The modules can be utilized as a single, two-hour training or as a series of short knowledge boosters.

Upon completion of this course, the participant will be able to:

1. Identify the primary and secondary characteristics of autism
2. Describe strengths of individuals with autism
3. Discuss proactive and positive strategies for managing behavior
4. Identify alternatives to avoid restraint and seclusion
5. Discuss causes of and ways to prevent bullying
6. Describe why people with autism have difficulty with change
7. Identify effective strategies and supports for students with autism

Following the training, discussion facilitated by autism experts will allow participants to ask specific questions and gain more detailed perspective on individual contexts. Several customizable options are available for facilitated discussion and can be tailored to meet the needs of the division.

To learn more about the course and implementing it in your division, contact Daniel Irwin (804)371-7421 or daniel.irwin@doe.virginia.gov or Vicki Brooke at vbrooke@vcu.edu.

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