

Transportation for Disabled People

Lupe Martinez

In my family, there is a disabled person. He is my son. His name is Pedro and he is 43 years old.

He attends a program for disabled adults in Berkeley, Monday to Friday. The bus must pick him up at 8:30 am and return him at home at 3:30 pm. But the bus is not usually on time, and I think many families have the same problem as me.

Some days, the bus arrives on time, but other days, it doesn't. I call the office to find out what time they will pick him up, and I only get the voicemail. Sometimes, they forget to pick him up in the morning or in the afternoon. Somebody in my family has to drive to the program to pick him up. They never call me to explain.

These changes in the schedule do not help him, and they are not good for me or my family. He gets very anxious. Routine works well for him. When my son is anxious, the whole family suffers with him. I take English class every day, but because of these changes I can't always attend my class. I can't look for a job because I'm not sure what will happen tomorrow with the transportation.

Who speaks for disabled people? Our special children need safe and sure transportation.



Guadalupe Martinez is an ESL student at the Literacy for Every Adult Program (LEAP) in Richmond, CA. She came from Mexico almost 40 years ago with her husband and children.

What Advice Do You Have for this Parent?

What has Lupe done so far to support her son? What else could she do? Brainstorm with others in your class. Read a few other articles in this issue to get more ideas. Write her a letter offering her support and giving her advice.

Advocate for Your Loved Ones

Velma Betz

When my son was in High School, I had to advocate for him, because the High School did not supply him with the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

My son was born with a disability. His development was slow. He had a learning disability and a speech impediment. They put him in Early Childhood Development Classes.

I had to go to the Special Education office and the Principal's office. Finally, I had to file a complaint with the Los Angeles School District, Division of Special Education.

It was hard. I had to fill out papers and send them to different people. I had to get help from my daughter. It took us three weeks to fill out all the paperwork! I got a lot of resistance from his teachers and the principal.

Then, at last, I got a positive reply. I got my son all the things he was supposed to get. I felt good. I think my son felt good about what I did for him. My son is now 31.

This experience taught me how to advocate for myself and my family. Now, I am pursuing a career in advocacy.



Velma is a student at East Village Access in New York City. She was raised by her aunt and uncle in Texas. A former special education student, she graduated from high school in 1984. Her goal is to become a Peer Specialist and to get off SSI. She says, "I am a very determined person, and I will not let anything get in my way."

Two Moms Advocate for their Sons

What is the same and what is different about the challenges these two moms have faced? What is the same and what is different about how they have responded? Create a Venn diagram to organize your analysis.