

Support for commuting by students with intellectual disabilities: Overseas case studies

The initiative of Curitiba City, Brazil

The SITES courtesy bus system serving facilities for persons with intellectual disabilities



In the city of Curitiba in Brazil, a unique system has been introduced, where students transfer to buses heading for each school at a central transfer terminal. This has enabled commuting times to be reduced as each school bus no longer has to drive around the entire city.



The transfer terminal in Curitiba



The inside of a bus



Bus drivers and assistants work on the same route every day. Students with disabilities are comfortable with the familiar faces of the driver and assistant and can receive support from them.



The transfer terminal has become a place for exchange and interaction in addition to the school and home and students with disabilities actually enjoy the opportunity to change buses.

Curitiba



The capital of Parana State, Brazil with a population of around 1.7 million, Curitiba is a city known worldwide for its unique urban and environmental policies. It introduced a Bus Rapid Transit system (BRT) as a means of transport in order to eliminate the traffic jams caused by rapid population growth. It has added a number of extra features such as increasing the distance between bus stops and making bus stop platforms level with the floor of buses.



Below we introduce overseas best practices in which new initiatives have been launched to solve various problems relating to the commute to and from school by students with disabilities. Such problems include long commuting times and the difficulty in providing training on how to commute independently.

The initiative of Nordhorn City, Germany

MogLi – teaching students how to commute by bus in partnership with bus companies



In the city of Nordhorn in Germany, the central government, local government and universities worked together to create a transport education support program that would train school students with disabilities on how to commute on their own. The program has been implemented using city buses with the cooperation of bus operators.



City buses in Nordhorn City



Learning how to read signs and understand traffic rules, using blackboards and miniature models.



Preparing a setting to simulate a real transport environment and learning how to ride a bicycle, etc.



Persons from the bus company association, including retired bus drivers, act as instructors, explaining to students how to show their photo bus passes when they get on the bus and also showing and explaining about the emergency exits.



A sheet is spread out on the ground to show the blind spot from the driver's seat and enable students to confirm its position. The students also have the opportunity to sit in the driver's seat of a city bus to see it for themselves.

Nordhorn



Nordhorn is a major center of Bentheim County in Lower Saxony, northwest Germany, with a population of approximately 53,000. The west side of the city borders the Netherlands and it is located on a major transport route linking Germany and Amsterdam. In terms of education, the city has 15 elementary schools and 14 secondary schools, as well as three schools that provide support for those with special needs.

