



Frequently Asked Questions

United Way of Steele County, ECI and SMART Transportation (SMART) are pleased to offer transportation to or from local preschools for 3 and 4 year olds in Owatonna. Below is a list of **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)** about how the program will work. If you have any additional questions please feel free to contact United Way at (507) 455-1180 or via email at uwadmin@unitedwaysteelecounty.org

1. How will the route be designed?

The bus route will be designed around the children's identified pick up and drop off locations. Placement on the bus is based on those locations, location of preschool and class times. **PLACEMENT ON THE PRESCHOOL ROUTE IS NOT GUARANTEED.** We do our best to accommodate every application.

2. Will someone be riding the bus with my child?

Yes, an adult aide will be on the bus at the beginnings of the year and as needed thereafter. The aide(s) would be required to have background checks.

3. How long will my child ride the bus?

Children will be on the bus no longer than 1 hour.

4. Can other community members ride this bus?

MNDOT prohibits SMART from denying community members from riding the bus, but the route is designed specifically around the children's pick up and drop off locations and, therefore, it would be extremely rare that an individual would want to ride the bus. Similar transportation programs have been operating for numerous years and a community member has never ridden the bus.

5. What about safety seats?

Safety seats are not required for children riding the SMART bus. Seat belts are provided and required.

6. How much will this service cost?

Each ride will cost \$1 per ride.



Information on New Transportation Opportunity for Owatonna Preschools

The Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation worked with the Owatonna Community to start up an Owatonna Early Childhood Initiative. Members of the community came together and chose 4 projects to focus their time and resources on. One of the project areas chosen was to come up with a way to provide transportation to our community preschools.

The outcome of this committee's work is that SMART Transit wrote a grant to the Minnesota Department of Transportation to cover:

- 80% of the cost of one bus for a preschool route
- 85% of the cost to operate the bus 6 hours each day Monday – Friday.

The bus will be ordered this spring as soon as the community match is met and MNDOT releases the contracts. We are hopeful that the bus will be delivered the end of August. The transportation route will not be able to start until the bus arrives.

One bus will allow SMART transit to transport between 80 and 100 preschoolers a day. This will not cover all the transportation needs of the community but it is a great start. Transportation will only be offered one way. You may indicate on the application when you have the greatest need. The cost for transportation is \$1.00 per ride.

If you are interested in transportation, you are encouraged to fill out an application. Applications need to be turned into your preschool director no later than August 5th.

The SMART Transit Public Transportation route for our preschools will be based on the number of applications submitted, preschool class beginning and ending times, and which addresses fit into the bus route to make it the most efficient. Families will be notified the week of August 22nd as to whether or not their child has been placed on the SMART route.

We have also included a list of "Frequently Asked Questions" on the back of this sheet that may be helpful for you to read.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact United Way (507-455-1180) or your preschool director.