

RTD Orientation

- Denver's RTD system includes buses and the light rail.
- Instructions on how to use RTD: <http://www.rtd-denver.com/HowToRide.shtml>
- Finding bus times/routes: [Google Maps](#) or use the "Schedule Finder" on www.rtd-denver.com
- Instructions for a RTD orientation lesson:

Time: Around 2 hours

Goals:

- Teach the family how to read an RTD map and bus schedule
- Help the family become more comfortable with riding the bus
- Make it to your destination on time

What to bring:

- RTD map/schedules (can be picked up on most buses)
- Exact change for bus/bus pass (\$2.25 per person, one-way)
- Home address and address of where you want to go
- Oxford Picture Dictionary

Before you go:

- Decide where you want to go with the family. Some useful spots might be: Lutheran Family Services (Downing office), Denver Health, Emily Griffith Technical College, or a grocery store
- Plan out the trip by using the internet or a bus schedule. Learn how to use the RTD map and bus schedule even if you use the internet (and teach them too!). Try to plan a trip that requires a transfer so the family becomes comfortable with that process.

What to do:

1. Arrive at least a half hour before you will have to leave to catch the bus.
2. Sit with the family and explain how to read the bus schedule. Show them the route you will be taking both on the map and on the schedule (note there is a little map of the route on each schedule). If you are making a transfer or transfers, explain the entire route.
3. Test them on their understanding. Pick a cross street, and try to have them show you how they would find the correct bus from their home to that street. Show them again how you would do it if they are not sure.
4. Before you go to the bus stop, make sure everybody has enough money for the bus fair or a bus pass. Typically, it is \$2.25 a person and exact change is required.
5. Walk to the bus stop and make sure you arrive at least ten minutes before the bus comes. Note that some minor stops along a route are not listed on the schedule, so perhaps the closest stop is not on the schedule.

6. When the bus arrives, go first and show the family where to put their change. If you are making a transfer, tell the bus driver and get a transfer slip for everyone.
7. Model the appropriate bus safety behaviors. If possible, find a seat. Make sure that everybody standing is holding on to the pole or straps. Follow the rules, such as no food or drinks on the bus.
8. While you are riding, pay close attention to where you are. Point out street signs to the refugee family, and follow the route map with them.
9. When you near your stop, pull the cord or press the button to signal the driver that you are ready to get off. The driver will stop at the closest stop. Make sure you do this, as the bus driver will not always stop at the bus stops on the route!
10. Have the family follow you to exit via the rear exit of the bus (if applicable, some buses only have one exit).
11. Walk to your destination. Even if you have nothing to do there, it is important to show the family that the bus will not always stop directly where they want to go, and they will need to know how to find their destination from the stop.
12. Return home via the bus, reinforcing what you had gone over during the first trip.

Tips:

- If the family will be using the bus frequently, you may want to suggest they buy a bus pass, or help them to do this. Depending on the financial assistance program they are in, some employers will help pay as well.
- If they need help finding route information, they could also call the number (303) 299-6000 or you can show them how to use www.rtd-denver.com. They will need their address, destination stop, and date and time of arrival and departure to use this.
- Before you go, look through a few newspapers or other sources and cut coupons with the family for additional savings.
- If the family is still nervous about going on their own, try again another day. Help them plan the route, and then allow them to go on their own. Give them your cell phone number and some change for a pay phone. Be available in case they get lost!