



Facebook Live Video Script

Donna: Hello everyone. I'm Donna Smith, the director of Easterseals Project Action Consulting.

Carol: And I'm Carol Wright, the Assistant Vice President of Mobility and Transportation for Easterseals. Thank you for joining us today to talk about the importance of travel training and accessible transportation for people with disabilities and older adults. Easterseals has been helping individuals with disabilities and their families for nearly 100 years. We offer a variety of services to help people with disabilities address life's challenges and achieve personal goals.

Donna: Easterseals Project Action Consulting, a consulting arm of Easterseals, has been working to build accessible communities for all with a focus on accessible transportation for more than 25 years. We have a passion for increasing and improving accessible transportation for people with disabilities and travel training embodies the spirit of our mission. For those of you new to the topic, travel training is the teaching of independent travel skills on public transportation to persons with disabilities and older adults. According to the latest American Public Transportation Association Fact Book, accessible or wheelchair lift equipped bus availability has gone from about 40% in 1990 to 99.6% in 2015. This is fantastic progress, but accessibility is about far more than the availability of a wheelchair lift or ramp and there's much work left to do. This is why the service provided by travel trainers is essential for communities across the country to teach people with disabilities and older adults the skills they need to ride public transportation.

Carol: Transit riders need to have a minimum level of physical, cognitive and social skills to safely access and utilize public transportation. These skills may vary based on the mode of transportation, the accessibility of the transit agency and the accessibility of the community in general. Functional skills to ride public transit include, but are not limited to, being able to get to the transit pickup location, navigate various terrain, board and exit vehicles, pay fare, and navigate environmental conditions like snow and ice.

Donna: Easterseals Project Action Consulting has been working to advance the field of travel training from the field's inception. We've developed and presented training courses, provided technical assistance and advocated about the importance of travel

Working together to build accessible communities for all!

training. We believe in the field so much that we've developed a certification program for travel trainers to help improve their skills and therefore increase access to public transportation across the country. The certified travel training instruction program, or ctti, is available and open for registration now. Visit our website at www.ProjectAction.com for more information and to sign up.

Carol: Let's walk through some of the skills travel trainers teach people with disabilities and older adults. We're in the nation's capital standing on the corner of 14th and K Streets. The accessibility of the path of travel and that provided by the transit system here is pretty high, especially relative to many rural and suburban systems across the country. There are still accessibility concerns and areas where travel training can make the difference between whether a person can travel independently or not. This is a bus stop. Amenities here include a bus shelter, bus route information on the bus sign and... Not every bus stop has these amenities and many are very inaccessible with regard to path of travel and ease of access. Travel trainers may teach their trainees how to access the bus schedule, where to wait for the bus, how to recognize the correct bus and proper boarding procedures.

Donna: One of the most difficult skills to teach is how to cross the street safely. This may not be something you think too much of, but this skill alone can make it or break it for a person wanting to access transportation independently. Travel trainers have a difficult job in ensuring a trainee can independently cross the street safely. Skills that could be taught, depending on the trainees starting skill level include interpreting the complexity of a street for crossing, appropriate decision making skills, walking safely near traffic, when to cross, where to cross, how to cross, and crossing in the street vs crossing at an intersection.

Carol: As you see we're now outside of a rail station entrance. Here's the escalator down into the station. Obviously a person that uses a wheelchair or possibly persons with depth perception issues could be prevented from accessing the train station without an elevator present and this particular station does not have an elevator. Travel trainers teach skills for accessing train stations such as ensuring the trainee can identify the correct train station, purchase fare or use a transit pass/smart card if available, navigate the path to the correct train platform, identify the correct train, and follow transit system policy and procedure for accessible boarding if needed.

Donna: As you can see, there are many functional skills essential for accessing public transportation and travel trainers customize their training plan and strategies to fit the needs of the person they are working with and we haven't nearly discussed all the skills needed. To help us celebrate travel trainers and the travel training field, we have a couple of requests to make of you. First, we've been working hard to build accessible communities for all so as you post accessible transportation success stories or challenges to your social media pages, use the hashtag [all can ride](#). This way we can follow your stories, celebrate your victories and possibly provide technical assistance during your challenges. We will also be hosting a tweet chat on June 29th at 2pm

eastern using the same hashtag. Join us to continue the discussion on the importance of travel training.

Carol: Second, we want to hear from you. Everyone has a smartphone these days. So we're asking you to create a short 30 second to 1 minute video with your smartphone on what travel training and/or what accessible transportation means to you. Videos can include your thoughts on the importance of accessible transportation or travel training or one of your best travel training success stories. The options are wide open. Once your video is finished, post it right here to the comments.

Donna: Thank you for joining us today and for all that you do to increase and improve accessible transportation in your community. Keep in touch with us at www.ProjectAction.com, on this Facebook page and on twitter @ESPAConsulting. Have a great day.