

# Child Care Business Owner's Guide to Buying a Bus

*Child care businesses that are able to offer safe, reliable transportation for the families they serve have a much greater growth potential. This will be a huge selling point for your prospective customers, but there is a lot to think about when buying or leasing a bus. These are some of the most important issues and questions you should keep in mind.*



## RESEARCH

### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

The American school bus is the safest form of land travel in the world. [www.americanschoolbuscouncil.org](http://www.americanschoolbuscouncil.org)

Passenger vans are not buses, and legally can't even be sold as buses. Originally designed to haul freight, they are top-heavy and prone to accidents and tipping over. [www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/olii/nonpublic/transportation.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/olii/nonpublic/transportation.html)

**Since safety and reliability are the top concerns for your customers, it's important to understand the added benefits of things like:**

- Double rear-wheel (DRW) designs vs. single rear-wheel (SRW) designs.
- How many roll cage bars are built into the frame and whether they extend below the floorline where your children's feet are located for added protection.
- Whether the bus has panic-free, open-out doors.



### WHAT YOU SHOULD ASK

- ? What are the minimum safety and construction standards?
- ? How do the specs for this vehicle compare with minimum standards?
- ? What are the standard safety features and what upgrades are available?



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## BUYING

### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Bigger engines, additional safety features, and larger seats are all more expensive, so many bus providers cut corners and shave production costs by making smaller, lighter vehicles designed only to meet the minimum construction standards.

These are some of the main safety, quality, and price differentiators for buses on the market. Only an experienced sales team that has **manufacturing experience** can help you really understand the value and benefits of these features.



### WHAT YOU SHOULD ASK

- ? Are the drivetrain and body warranties one-year or three-year guarantees?
- ? Who will I talk to after the sale if I need follow-up assistance?
- ? What financing options are available for me?

## SERVICE & CUSTOMIZATION

### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Most bus dealers rely on other companies to service your bus for issues or routine maintenance. They might promise that you can get it serviced “anywhere,” but they won’t stand by what they’ve sold you or help you find a service provider. These kinds of dealerships almost always sell buses manufactured elsewhere and then shipped to you.

**Custom paint jobs and branding for your bus will be a big benefit to your business.** You’re basically creating your own mobile billboard with this investment. Finding a dealer that can also handle this and your other service needs is a huge plus.



### WHAT YOU SHOULD ASK

- ? If I have a problem with my vehicle, where will I need to go to get it worked on? Can I just call you directly?
- ? Do you offer end-to-end service for repairs, service, parts, or paint work?
- ? What kind of service guarantee do you carry?
- ? Who manufactured this bus, and where was it built?

## SELLING / TRADE-IN

### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

**Buses in a child care business fleet typically don’t accumulate high mileage annually.** In many cases, a well-maintained bus with low mileage has a relatively high resale value even after three to five years of use. In some cases a dealership may even offer a qualified buy-back guarantee for your vehicle.



### WHAT YOU SHOULD ASK

- ? Is there a buy-back program? What are the qualifications?
- ? What is the typical devaluation scale for this bus?
- ? What kind of trade-in value could this bus have in three years? In five years?

At Carolina Thomas we do things differently than every other dealer.



We only sell and service buses—this isn’t a side business for us. Every member of our sales team used to build our buses, which are manufactured just 14 miles from our dealership. We offer end-to-end service before, during, and after the sale, with parts and delivery to your door. **Browse our bus inventory, explore custom options, shop for parts, or schedule service today: [carolinathomas.com](http://carolinathomas.com).**