

“Parents’ Plan”

A Guide to Improving Your Teenager’s Driving Safety

Start Early!

Don’t wait until your child is of driving age to discuss road safety and safe driving. Start reviewing safe driving tips with them when they are 9-10 years old. Quiz them on road signs that you pass, ask them if they know why it is important to use turn signals, not talking on a cell phone, etc.

Be a role model.

Wear your seatbelt at all times. Don’t drink and drive. Don’t talk or text message on a mobile phone while driving. Don’t drive fatigued. Don’t demonstrate road rage or drive aggressively. Be mindful of your speed at all times. Your child is watching everything you do and learning from you at an early age.

Tests are not the final answer.

Understand that in many areas of the world, basic driver’s education is geared primarily toward preparing your child to pass the necessary exams and tests. There is not enough time or quality instruction to truly teach them how to be safe drivers. Enroll them in an advanced safe driving program and practice, practice, practice.

There is no such thing as too much practice.

50-100 hours of practice time on the road with your child is the target you should be aiming for. Safely expose them to various driving scenarios and increase the complexity of the driving scenarios as they demonstrate the ability to handle them. And don’t forget the most important thing: no yelling, shouting or making them nervous. Be a good coach and supportive of their learning.

Set clear requirements and expectations.

Ensure your child understands that driving is a privilege that must be earned, maintained and respected. Gain agreement on when they are allowed to drive, where they are allowed to drive and with whom they are allowed to drive. Monitor that agreement and strictly enforce it.

Know who your child is driving with.

Did their friend’s parents follow the same plan and take safe driving as seriously as you do? Do your homework here and ask questions. Make sure you know the level of knowledge and ability of the person that your child is getting into the car with.

Provide a safe vehicle.

It should be a car, specifically a sedan; not an SUV or sports car. Nothing flashy or fast. A car that has a good government safety review and has airbags, anti-lock brakes and other important safety equipment.

It takes commitment.

Becoming a safe driver and developing safe behaviors takes time and cannot be accomplished in just a few hours, or by taking a basic class. Make the same commitment toward developing your child as a safe driver the same way you developed them in the areas of education, sports and hobbies. Don’t rely on a driving instructor to develop your safe driver.