

On the Road Together

Helping Your Teen Become a Safe Driver



Learning something new takes time, especially something as complicated and dangerous as driving. As a responsible adult, there are things you can do to help your teen become a safe driver.

1. Practice often and with purpose

When your teen starts driving, their main goal is to learn the basics and avoid making big mistakes. Once they feel comfortable moving the car, they learn the more challenging parts of driving – like smooth braking and being aware of what others around them might do. Practicing often and with a clear purpose builds safe driving habits for life.

- Work together to decide when and where to practice, and what skills to focus on.
- Mix it up with a variety of situations, skills, and routes.
- Make it a habit for them to drive when you're in the car together.
- Choose to practice in unique situations like bad weather or construction zones when they're ready.
- Start with easier situations like empty parking lots and work up to harder situations like heavy traffic or night driving.

2. Take the time your teen needs

There's no magic number of hours or months teens should practice before they're ready to drive alone. Some may be ready on their 16th birthday, but most will need extra time. Make sure they drive with you or another supervising adult until you feel comfortable with their ability to drive safely in all situations.

Scan the QR code for a tool to monitor their progress with different situations and skills.



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3. Share your driving wisdom

Driving might feel scary and overwhelming for you and your teen. As an experienced driver, you have lots of wisdom to share.

To effectively share your driving wisdom:

- Use “I” statements like “I look for brake lights a few cars ahead to get ready to slow down.”
- Stay calm and avoid raising your voice.
- Let them know when they do something well.
- Tell them when something is coming up, like turns or changing lanes, so they can be ready.
- If setbacks occur, take a short break and try again with easier situations and skills.



When it comes to driving, you are your teen's biggest role model. Set a good example by practicing safe driving habits like keeping your phone away, wearing your seat belt and following speed limits.

4. Choose a safe car

Choosing the safest car you have access to is the most important thing you can do to protect your teen during their first few years of driving. Whether you're buying used or new, sharing a car, or giving them a hand-me-down – safety is key.

Look for cars with good crash test ratings and electronic stability control (ESC). For a list of recommended cars for teen drivers, visit www.iihs.org/ratings/safe-vehicles-for-teens.

New safety features are being developed regularly – to learn more, visit www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/driver-assistance-technologies.