



What can a Parent do to HELP?

One of the best ways for a parent to influence his/her teen's driving habits is to sit in the vehicle with their teenager and help them to become a safe driver. Only quality instruction and hours of practice will put teenagers on the path to becoming safe drivers. The time you spend with your teenager behind the wheel will help give them this very important additional experience.

Remember: Formal driver training programs do a great service, but the hours needed to make your teen a safe driver can only come from hours of actual driving practice.

- Driver education is one of our most important tools in ensuring highway safety, but safe driving only comes from hours of driving experience.
- Parental involvement is an essential part of educating our teens in traffic safety.
- Crash rates for teenagers are four times greater than adults. Parental involvement can help reduce these statistics.
- Teenage drivers will benefit from the additional practical experience they will receive by driving with a parent in the vehicle.

Parent/Guardian Roles and Responsibilities

Learning to drive is a complex, ongoing process that requires PATIENCE and DEDICATION.

To get driving experience you need to drive with someone, that someone is your parent or guardian. Please read through this information carefully.

TIPS — Do's and Don'ts:

This should be read and covered with parent before driving.

Parent/Guardian — Teens learn from what they observe. As a parent, you need to be a good role model and follow the rules of the road.

Teen — If you make a mistake and your parent suggest you do it differently, don't say things like "YOU DO IT THAT WAY".

Remember, everyone commits driver errors at one time or another. When you begin to drive, don't expect to be perfect. Both you and your parents need to avoid being judgmental. The important thing is to avoid making habits of wrong driving decisions. If you are unsure go back and review that driving procedure together and practice it again.

Get in the Mood

Teen/Parent/Guardian — Only practice if you are both ready, which means you both should be in a good mood and have plenty of time.

Start Simple

Parent/Guardian — The first time your teen sit in the driver sit of a vehicle he/she may feel a little overwhelmed. Take your time and let your teen get prepared, Avoid comments which create more stress and when he/she is comfortable, begin with the basics.

Teens — Remember your parents/guardians are trying to help you, they are taking time from their day so you will have an opportunity to practice your driving skills. Understand things may not be as easy as it appeared from the passenger seat and before you can get your license, you will have spend many hours together. So try to make the experience pleasant for you both.

Parents: Understand your teen is a beginner. — Teens: Remember this is not an overnight process.

Start on a Sunny Day

Teen/Parent/Guardian —

- Practice the driving lesson during the day, and in good weather. As your teen improves, gradually start driving during different driving conditions, including a variety of times of day, weather and types of roads .
- **Don't rush into rush hour!** Start with safe, low-risk driving conditions, such as empty parking lots and quiet rural roads. Gradually progress to neighborhood streets with little traffic, then busier roads and highways.

Talk

Parent/Guardian — Keep the line of communication open this helps build trust and respect so your teen feels comfortable talking with you.

Teen — Keep the line of communication open, talk with your parents/guardians and tell them how you are feeling or what the problem is. Don't let the frustration build by keeping it inside, it may cause you to become distracted and that could pose a risk not only to yourself but other roadway users as well.

Take deep breaths.

Parent/Guardian — There may be times when the both you and your teen become frustrated. This is a normal human reaction to the pressure you each may be feeling. Try taking some deep breaths and remember, your teen is a new driver simply needs a lot of practice. He/she will make mistakes, it part of learning. It is important at this time that you remain calm and focused on helping your teen to get through whatever is making him/her anxious.

Teens — Try to remain calm and focused on the task at hand even when your parent or guardian is a little anxious. Try to listen, your parent is just trying to help.

Lots of Practice.

Teen/Parent/Guardian — **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE** — To become proficient at driving you need to practice.

Remember, you and your parent should be the only people in the vehicle.

