



share the drive: Parents Matter

THREE WAYS PARENTS CAN HELP THEIR TEENS BE SAFE ON THE ROAD

1. **Enforce graduated driver's licensing: It's the law for a reason.** GDL laws are proven effective and work by giving young drivers increasing privileges over time. This approach allows time for them to gain experience under safer conditions before they drive under more risky conditions.

Practical tips:

- Read your state's law together and discuss why it needs to be enforced. Provide real penalties for not following GDL guidelines: take the keys.
- Be the scapegoat if your teen needs to save face. ("No way! My Dad would kill me if I did that.")
- Work out a code word or phrase your teen can use if he is in an unsafe situation. If he calls and uses that word, you know he needs your help. ("Forgot to walk the dog? Oh, right. I'll be right there.")

2. **Schedule lots of supervised practice driving.** Teens need lots of supervised practice to become experienced and safe drivers.

Practical tips:

- **Schedule plenty of time.** The required 50 hours is a minimum to learn a complicated skill like driving.
- **Use everyday trips.** Supervise driving to soccer practice and the grocery store to practice different skills. You'll be surprised how quickly the hours add up if you always let your teen drive when you're in the car together.
- **Vary experiences.** Teens need to learn skills on various road types under various weather conditions, as well as at nighttime.
- **Keep a log.** Record the number of hours you spend and the different skills you practiced.

3. **Catch your teen doing it right.** Teens are between being a dependent child and an independent adult. They need to hear positive reinforcement to help them become responsible adults.

Practical tips:

- Praise them when they use good judgment and obey GDL.
- Be honest. Teens can tell when you are sincere.
- When needed, discipline and let them know the reasons why. ("You are late. You broke the law and put yourself at risk of being in a crash.")

Learn more about teen driver safety at www.chop.edu/youngdrivers.

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