



Teaching Your Teen to Drive Safely Handbook[©]

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Introduction:

It's about that time ... the time for mixed emotions, the time for independence and the time for your teen to drive. It's become a rite of passage.

Where should you start and what should you do?

Start with a plan of action. Every teen is unique and each situation is different, so you will need to customize your plan. You will want to determine which stages of the plan to implement and when. In customizing your plan, you will have to account for your teenager's maturity, decision-making ability, and level of responsibility.

The first thing that you will want to consider is your own driving behaviors and patterns. This is because you are probably displaying behavior that is risky and will certainly influence the habits of your new teen driver. For example, do you ever eat a burger or drink a 32-ounce soda while you drive?



How about that cell phone? It's hard to keep both hands on the wheel at the 10 and 2 o'clock position when you're talking to another parent about an upcoming school event. Is your teen going to be able to maneuver a vehicle with a soda or cell phone as well as you do?



Stop and think about each of your driving habits. Ask yourself if your teen could be able to do the same things you do and still be a safe driver. If the answer is no, then stop the behavior. Remember, your teen will pick up many of your driving behaviors. Wouldn't it be better that they copy the safe ones? If it isn't the safest behavior for you after over 20 years

of driving experience and developed skills, then it certainly isn't the safest behavior for them.

Another important step to teaching your teen to drive safely is communication, so start talking about responsible driving with your teen as soon as possible. For example, the next time you and your teen get in the car together, go through all the things that are in your mind from A –Z, beginning with what you check for before even getting into the vehicle like checking for fluids that may be leaking under the car, a tire that may need some air, or a stranger that could be hiding in the backseat. Then discuss what you do as you put the vehicle in motion, pointing out the obstacles you are looking for like small neighborhood children that may wonder in the driveway.



Talk with your teen about the driving environment including weather conditions, traffic conditions, and residential vs. highway driving. Discuss when to pull out in traffic and the many factors that contribute to those decisions. Provide a running commentary each and every time you drive with your teen. Point out what you see, the potential dangers, and decision-making process that you encounter. This will help to guide them in their own decision-making skills.

Part of your discussion should also center on the cost of insurance. Call your insurance company and ask whether a driver education course or a good student discount is available. Also, find out how much the insurance increases after a single accident or ticket. Discuss these issues with your teen and enlist their help in keeping their insurance rates as low as possible.

You'll also need to obtain a copy of the Florida Drivers Handbook from the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles or online at DriversLicenseCourse.com. Review each section with your teen to make sure they are clear on the information provided. You can also enroll your teen in a DMV Test Prep course at DriversLicenseCourse.com. Enrollees are guaranteed that they will pass the DMV written test during their first visit to the DMV office or

they will get their money for the course refunded. This can save you time and save your teen the embarrassment of failing the test, while at the same time providing him or her with additional driver training. Also, look for newspaper articles that you can share related to driving with your teen. The National Safety Commission publishes the [“Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin”](#) to families for a very modest fee. It’s packed with valuable information that will continue to train your teen in becoming a Safe Driver after they receive his or her license. Teens are most susceptible to crashes when they have a little experience under their belt and are feeling confident in their driving ability. The Bulletin helps remind them that they are not invincible.

Have you noticed that, until now, we haven’t even placed your teen behind the wheel? There is a lot of preparation and training involved with teaching your teen to drive safely. This handbook has been designed to assist the parent in accomplishing this goal. We begin by answering the question; what is a Safe Driver anyway? Then we discuss the process for getting your teen’s Learners Driver License. Once this accomplishment is complete, we move on to discuss implementing a plan for teaching your teen to become a Safe Driver. We show you how to evaluate and monitor your teen’s progress, and provide a [Teaching Checklist and Evaluation Report](#) along with a [Logbook of Driving Experience](#). Everything you need to begin Safe Driver training. Enjoy the Handbook and good luck with your teaching!