

Surviving the Teenage Years

PTA Council Information & Tips for Parents of Teens

You're not only a parent. You're a safety feature.

Nothing kills more teenagers than car crashes. Research shows which behaviors contribute to teen-related crashes. Inexperience and immaturity combined with speed, drinking and driving, not wearing seat belts, distracted driving (cell phone use, loud music, other teen passengers, etc.), drowsy driving, nighttime driving, and other drug use aggravate this problem. Luckily many get help from an important safety feature – parents!! Your influence matters.

What You Can Do As A Parent of a Teen

1. Set a Good Example

Your teen will copy your driving habits. If you don't obey traffic laws, buckle up, keep your cool in traffic, drive speed limits, or stay off the cell phone behind the wheel, they won't either.

2. Be a Teacher

Teach your teen about driving and the technology behind it. Point out what to look for – traffic signs, bad drivers, emergencies, and more, as you drive with them.

3. Supervise Practice Driving

Give your teen as much supervised practice as possible on different roads, in different weather, and in all kinds of driving conditions – even after your teen receives a license.

4. Monitor and Restrict

Parents who control driving privileges – when, how often, and under what conditions – have safer teen drivers. Studies show that teens are less likely to take risks if schoolwork and grades are monitored, ground rules are established, and parental relationships with friends are good. On the other hand, teens with lenient parental driving restrictions are more likely to have more traffic violations and crashes.

5. Use a Parent-Teen Driving Agreement

A formal agreement between you and your teen should cover all driving rules and agreements, plus the consequences for breaking those rules. (Crossroads – The Maryland Parent-Teen Driving Agreement is available on the Maryland MVA website.)

6. Reduce Risks

Understand the possible risks that may tempt your young driver. Driving with other teen passengers, driving at night, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, speeding, and being inattentive are all dangerous actions that should be avoided.

7. Think Safety First

Consider purchasing a new or used vehicle with good safety features – side impact as well as dashboard and steering wheel air bags, automatic door locks, and anti-lock braking system, traction control devices, and other technological improvements.

8. Don't Rush It

Parents often rush the licensing process for their teens to free up their own time – and to encourage their teens to run errands for them. Remember – inexperience is the number one contributing factor to unsafe and potentially hazardous driving situations.

The best person to teach your teen how to become a safe, responsible driver is you. Your wisdom, your guidance, and your continued involvement will not only make a big difference, it could save lives. **Get Involved. Stay Involved.**

Source: Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration <http://mva.state.md.us>

Project Safe and After Prom
PTA Council of Howard County
410-740-5153 www.ptachc@gmail.com

