

Drive for Change



Parents Taking the Lead

Talking with Your Teen

Starting the conversation about safe driving with a teen can be difficult; below are some talking points to help parents and caregivers get started. These important points address some of the greatest dangers for teen drivers including alcohol/drug use, inconsistent or no seat belt use, distracted driving, speeding, and driving with passengers in the vehicle.

Be Sure to...

- ✓ Lead by example. Your teens will mimic your driving behaviors.
- ✓ Practice constant communication with your teen about safe and unsafe driving behaviors. They're listening even when you don't think so!
- ✓ Discuss the importance of obeying teen driving laws. For laws, visit: <http://www.dmvnow.com/webdoc/pdf/dmv16.pdf>
- ✓ Become familiar with Virginia's nighttime driving restrictions, passenger restrictions, and all graduated driver licensing (GDL) restrictions, and enforce them.
- ✓ Extend the period of supervised driving even after he/she receives a license. This will help your teen gain needed skills and experience that can only be learned with continued practice.
- ✓ Have your teen practice driving on a variety of roads and in different driving conditions to gain more experience.
- ✓ Enforce the teen passenger restrictions and the teen curfew law.
- ✓ Reduce nighttime driving for the first few months your teen has a license.
- ✓ Be sure your teen is well rested before hitting the road.
- ✓ Discuss what to do in potentially dangerous driving situations such as poor weather conditions, rough roads, heavy traffic and running off the road.
- ✓ Talk to your teen about stowing their cell phone while driving, designating a texter, or pulling over before answering phone calls or responding to text messages.
- ✓ Ask your teen questions and be ready to listen.
- ✓ Remind your teen driver that driving is a privilege, not a right. If they aren't following the rules of the road, they don't get to have the keys to the car.
- ✓ Set clear rules against drinking and drug use. Discuss a detailed safety plan in case your teen breaks this rule and needs a safe ride home.
- ✓ Establish trust and agreement by completing YOVASO's [Parent-Teen Driving Contract](#)

Enforce these "5 to Drive" Rules to Help Keep Your Teen Safe:

1. No cell phone use or texting while driving
2. No extra passengers (only 1 during first year of licensure)
3. No speeding
4. No alcohol and/or drugs
5. No driving or riding without a seat belt

*National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

For more tips on discussing safe driving with your teen, visit: www.yovaso.org/parent-info/