KEYS TO SAFETY

• Drive the way you want your teen to drive — be a good role model.
• Let them sleep! Biologically, teens need about 9 1/2 hours of sleep daily.
• Adopt a Parent-Teen Driving Agreement.
• When you are coaching your teen, say aloud the actual and potential (hidden) hazards along the road.

DO’s

Do share your driving wisdom and experience!

Do stay cool when your teen says, “Don’t yell at me!”

Do drive in different conditions (weather, lighting, road type).

Do aim for smoothness — pretend there’s a cup of water on the dash and you don’t want to spill a drop.

Do take breaks — every 25 minutes or so, and discuss progress.

DON’Ts

Don’t take the same route twice; use a slightly different route each time.

Don’t view your teen as your chauffeur — they need your eyes, attention and coaching.

Don’t focus too much on basic maneuvers (turning, etc.) — your teen will pick those up quickly.

Don’t say too much, but offer immediate feedback when appropriate; debrief fully after the session.
LESSON 1: YOUR VEHICLE
- Adjust the vehicle to the driver (seat position, steering wheel, head restraints, mirrors, etc.).
- First, start in a large parking lot and drive around the outside edge: 10–15 mph, practicing steering and braking.
- Second: Take a short drive on an uncrowded residential street, focus on being smooth, and looking ahead.

WATCH OUT FOR: Overconfidence, driving too fast.

LESSON 2: PARKING & BRAKING
- When braking, be smooth and check traffic behind you.
- Practice parking in an empty lot.
- Mainly look directly over your shoulder when backing.
- Always keep your foot on the brake when backing up.
- Focus on precision, not speed.

WATCH OUT FOR: Not looking directly at the space into which you are backing. Over-relying on backup camera, and entering or leaving the space too quickly.

LESSON 3: SPEED SELECTION
- Practice adjusting speed based on the three main factors:
  1. Visibility (day, night, fog, etc.)
  2. Amount of nearby traffic
  3. Road conditions (dry, wet, etc.)
- Always know the speed limit

WATCH OUT FOR: Feeling pressure from other drivers to drive faster.

LESSON 4: LOOKING AHEAD FOR POTENTIAL HAZARDS
Goal: See all current hazards
- Practice anticipating what might become a hazard, such as:
  1. Pedestrian stepping into road
  2. Car pulling out from parking lot
  3. Cars hidden behind larger vehicles
- Maintain a “Visual Control Zone” by looking 12–15 seconds ahead

WATCH OUT FOR: Not scanning in all directions. Not looking far enough ahead.
LESSON 5: FOLLOWING SKILLS & SPACE

- Drive 3–4 seconds behind vehicle ahead (+1 second for nighttime, rain, etc.)
- Keep open space to at least one side at all times
- When stopped, leave enough room between you and the car ahead so you can see their rear tires and some pavement

WATCH OUT FOR: Causing another driver to have to change speed or steer around you.

LESSON 6: DRIVING IN DIFFERENT CONDITIONS & ON DIFFERENT TYPES OF ROADS

- Goal: Identify current hazards
  - Darkness
  - Rain
  - Snow, etc.
- Variety is key — practice on:
  - City streets
  - Country roads
  - Interstates
  - Suburban roadways, etc.

WATCH OUT FOR: Driving too fast at night/in rain.
Not driving on different roads during your next practice session.

EXAMPLES OF WISDOM PARENTS HAVE SHARED:

- “I find it useful to look through the car ahead — to see how traffic is moving (or not).”
- “When turning, I try to turn my head first, and then turn the wheel — that way, I’m looking where I want to go, instead of where I am now.”
- “I expect every driver to take the action that puts me at the most risk.”
- “I find it’s best to assume other drivers have no idea I’m there — they don’t see me at all.”
- “To get more space around me, I just adjust my speed a bit.”

Note that these lessons should build upon each other. • Copyright 2021 AAA. All rights reserved. Do not duplicate.