

TEENDRIVINGPLAN

The Intermediate Period

When teens pass the behind-the-wheel driving test, some may incorrectly believe they are equally skilled as other “licensed” drivers. This makes it difficult for them to understand why certain activities are restricted during the early months of licensure. Consider framing the Intermediate Period as a learner permit “plus” not a full license “minus.”

By passing the behind-the-wheel test, teens have demonstrated that they’re ready to practice independently. The Intermediate Period establishes a supportive framework for them to continue to learn without the additional pressures and dangers associated with full licensure.

Here are some other tips to help your teen driver transition from a supervised learner to an independent learner:

Co-develop house rules.

Work with your teen to establish house rules for driving, including no texting or talking while driving and no driving while intoxicated, and consequences for not following them. Many families use their state’s driving laws as a guide, but family rules should be modified to your teen’s growing maturity and competence. Your teen should know that rules are about safety, not control.

Parents should keep the keys.

Research shows teens that own or have easy access to a car are more than twice as likely to crash than teens who share a car with family members. Having to ask to use the car also gives teens the opportunity to share their plans, where they are going and when they will be back. Have your teens turn in the keys to you when back home.

Encourage two-way communication.

To keep your teen safe, setting rules, asking questions and watching closely, sometimes called “monitoring,” is important but not always enough. How to get your teen to tell you what you need to know when you need to know it? Start early to establish trust. When setting rules, your teen wants to hear and deserves the reasons for the rules -- that they are in place for safety, not to control his or her life. Listen and be responsive to your teen’s concerns, which are often quite practical. You can reward responsible behavior with increased privileges. Among your teen’s friends, be the scapegoat for your child’s safety-oriented choices.



PARENT-TEEN COMMUNICATION

Watch [this video](#) for tips on how to talk to your teen.