

before the wheel™

communities supporting safe teen driving

Summer/Fall 2012



three's a crowd!
distractions increase with each
new teen passenger.

Teens make the transition from a home environment and enter the vehicle and feel just as safe and secure as they felt at one of the parents' home or at a restaurant. They continue to converse, goof around, laugh, text and play loud music. They are tuned into the interactions that they are having with each other and forget that they are in a moving vehicle and that there are very dangerous consequences when the driver loses his or her focus.

continued on page 3

phase privileges for your new teen driver

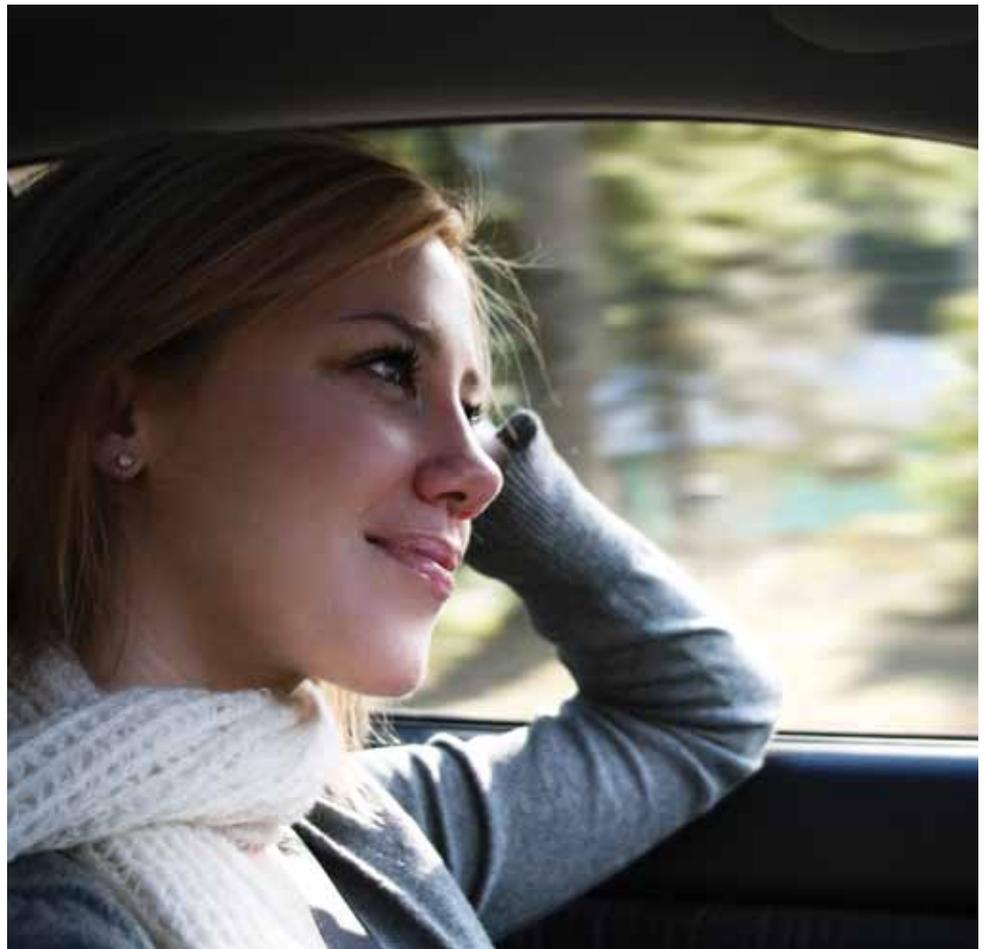
Your teen has an uneasy feeling about all the different situations that may occur on the road when he/she is handed the car keys without clear guidelines and expectations.

“How can you be a highly supportive parent that guides your teen without controlling your teen?”

Introducing your teen to a “limited set of driving scenarios” the first few months after receiving his/her license will help your teen acclimate to the different levels of decision making required on the road.

When he/she has mastered the skills needed for this first group and is violation and collision free, does not engage in distracted behaviors, respects the agreed upon curfew, follows the Graduated Driver License rules, wears his/her seat belt, requires seat belt use for all passengers, and stays within the speed limit at all times, he/she should be rewarded and provided with an additional set of privileges.

The National Safety Council and the Insurance Institute For Highway Safety recommend “phasing privileges for your new teen driver.”



The September 25, 2009 *US News and World Report* article, *Firm Parents Keep Teen Drivers Safe*, also recommends appropriate monitoring and parental guidance for your new driver.

The *US News and World Report* article provides information from two studies done by Kenneth Ginsburg of Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.

Dr. Ginsburg’s research revealed that:

“Teens with authoritative parents who were highly supportive and set rules were half as likely to get in a car accident, 71% less likely to drink and drive, and 29% less likely to talk and text on their cell phone while driving compared with teens with uninvolved parents.”

How can you be a highly supportive parent that guides your teen without controlling your teen?

The following steps help you provide opportunities for your teen to “earn privileges” and attain more access to the vehicle by showing maturity and respect for the rules.

Phase I

First meet with your teen in a casual setting, a favorite restaurant or coffee shop and talk to your teen about the privileges he/she will have during the first 3 to 4 months of driving.

Review the Parent/Teen Driving Agreement on page 4. Talk with your teen about the responsibilities and expectations and sign the agreement. File this in a safe place and review it with your teen every few months.

All recommendations are guidelines. The program for your teen must be tailored to your teen’s skill set, the environment you live in, and automobile availability in your household.

Possible Phase I Privileges, first few months of driving

- Drive to and from school and work
- Drive to and from sports activities and or extra-curricular activities
- Drive to and from malls, theaters, and restaurants that are within 10 miles from home
- Take roads with frequent stop signs or traffic lights that regulate traffic flow
- Drive one weekend night with one passenger and follow all curfew rules
- Drive to and from friends' homes on familiar routes



Restrictions: Remember to provide the non-negotiable restrictions

- Absolute Sobriety, not a drop of alcohol
- Cell Communication, pull into a parking lot, park safely or go to a coffee shop or fast food restaurant
- Follow Graduated Driver License restrictions
- Seat Belts, driver and all passengers must wear at all times
- Speed Limit, stay within speed limit at all times

Phase II Privileges, 4 to 7 months after receiving the license

Your teen has “earned a new group of privileges.” Meet with your teen and talk about the next phase of privileges. You may allow your teen more access to the car on weekends and evenings in this phase.

Compliment your teen on taking the initiative to show maturity. Arriving home at the agreed upon times, and wearing seat belts and requiring passengers to wear seat belts are all indications that your teen respects and understands rules and laws that protect

drivers, passengers, and everyone on the road.

Dr. Ginsburg also recommends:

“It is important to make sure there is a reward for your teen for good driving behavior, there has to be something in it for the teen.”

Start the conversation for this phase by talking about different “What if” scenarios and seeing how the teen feels he/she should respond to the scenario.

- “What if a passenger says he/she is not going to wear a seat belt?”
- “What if your teen’s best friend wants to drag race?”
- “What if your teen drank alcohol?”
- “What if a passenger turns up the music and won’t turn it down?”

Discussing “What if” scenarios helps your teen become a better decision maker.



Phase III 6 to 9 months after receiving the license

Your teen has been driving for 6 to 9 months. This is a good time to meet again and require your teen to take a defensive driving class and fine tune his/her skills.

Also review the Parent/Teen Driving Agreement and determine if your teen is ready for full privileges after he/she has completed a defensive driving class.

Go to www.beforethewheel.com and visit the following link for more information, *Earned Privileges*. ■

three's a crowd!

continued from page 1

When teens get in a group of three or more, the dynamics change dramatically. They feel euphoric and connected to each other.

“They tune into their small group and tune out everything else.”

It is imperative that you, the parent, discuss the potential dangers of this type of situation before your teen enters a car with several other teens.

What can you as a parent do?

1. Keep the number of teens in a vehicle to a minimum by suggesting that teens break up into much smaller groups and take several cars to attend an event. Explain to your teen that he or she has more options to come and go on their own schedule with their own car.
2. Set up a casual meeting with your teen and go over the Parent/Teen Driving Agreement. Both you and the teen agree to the points and sign the agreement and review it once every three months.
3. Summer Graduation Parties, Going Away to College Parties and other major events create more excitement, adrenaline and higher risk. As parents, it is your responsibility to ask for details regarding who is supervising the event, when does the party start and end, who is driving together and what food & beverages are being served at the party. ■

Go to www.beforethewheel.com/links.html



Parent/Teen Driving Agreement

Parent/Guardian

I agree to follow all safety laws

- always wear a seat belt and require all passengers to wear seat belts
- stay within the speed limit at all times
- be a role model for my new teen driver by being a courteous driver
- be available anytime to pick up my teen

I agree to stay focused while driving

- pull over to a safe location when I need to make or receive a cell phone call or text
- pull over to a safe location to eat, reach for an item or change the music
- never drive while impaired by alcohol or another substance including prescription medication

Teen Driver

I agree to follow all safety laws

- always wear a seat belt and require all passengers to wear seat belts
- stay within the speed limit at all times
- follow Graduated Driver License Laws and stay within passenger limits

I agree to stay focused while driving

- pull over to a safe location when I need to make or receive a cell phone call or text
- pull over to a safe location to eat, reach for an item or change the music
- never drive while impaired by alcohol or another substance including prescription medication
- never enter the car of another teen driver who has abused a substance or drank alcohol
- contact my parents or another adult to request a ride when necessary

Consequences: _____

Parent Signature

Teen Signature

Date