

Parent Topics

The Teachable Moment—Teaching Your Teen To Drive

(NAPSA)—A “teachable moment” occurs when interest in a particular subject is higher than usual because of a current event.

Educators have long used the teachable moment to emphasize important lessons in the classroom. When a teenager’s thoughts turn to driving, parents have a unique opportunity for a string of teachable moments leading to that teen obtaining their driver’s license.

“From the minute your child expresses an interest in driving, you can begin pointing out and demonstrating good and bad driving behaviors,” says Phil Berardelli, author of *Safe Young Drivers: A Guide for Parents and Teens*. “Take full advantage of having a captive audience hanging on your every word.”

Every day 21 teens die and 1,500 more are injured in car crashes. Crashes are the number one killer of U.S. teens, and the number one cause of crashes is inexperience. First-time drivers do not know how to act and react to other drivers on the road, pedestrians and distractions. Here are tips parents can use when teens are most attentive:

- **Don’t rush to put your teen behind the wheel.** Spend time reviewing safe driving tips and techniques. Listen to what your teen is telling you about their concerns and issues. Make sure both of you are comfortable before putting your teen in the driver’s seat.

- **Provide a safe car.** Avoid trucks or SUVs with a high center of gravity that may be more difficult to control. Choose large or mid-size vehicles with the newest safety features.



Practice makes perfect—there is no better time for you to have your teen drive you crazy than when they have their learner’s permit.

- **Review driving obstacles and situations.** Ask your teen how they would respond to given situations, such as a tire going off the road, then offer practical tips.

- **Show your teen newspaper articles.** Sharing a news story about a teenager dying in a crash gives you an opportunity to discuss how the crash could have been avoided.

- **Do your homework.** By visiting the CARFAX Safe Teen Drivers Program (www.carfax.com), parents with teenagers in the permit stage can obtain step-by-step lessons via concise, weekly tips. These nuggets of information can be used during teachable moments when the teen is behind the wheel.

Driving a car is the greatest risk a teenager faces. Take full advantage of any time spent together in the car in this period of heightened interest. That permit stage—when a teenager is just learning to drive—offers the best opportunity for teachable moments in which a parent can impart safe driving techniques and habits.