Transitioning Teens from Passengers to Drivers

Considerations for Intervention Development

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LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR TEENS

Crashes kill 5 times as many teens as cancer or poisoning.

For each fatality, 400 more children and youth receive medical treatment for injuries.
WE’RE MAKING PROGRESS

Crash Fatalities with Teens Behind the Wheel (2005 – 2011)

Total number of deaths in 2011: 3,150
Total number of fatal crashes in 2011: 2,400

Since 2005, deaths in crashes with teens behind the wheel declined 47 percent.
263 fewer people died in 2011 as compared to 2010, an 8 percent reduction in teen-driver related crashes.
TEENS AND DRIVING
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

• They often drive with their friends
  • As children age, they are more likely to ride with a teen driver
• They are novice drivers
  • Inexperience leads to majority of teen crashes
  • Peer passengers increases the risk
TEENS RIDING WITH TEENS

As children age, they are more likely to be killed in crashes with a teen driver.

Passengers increase the risk of fatal crashes for novice teen drivers.


Need citation.
**TEEN PERSPECTIVE**

**PASSENGERS**

Things Passengers do that take the driver’s eyes and focus off the road

- There are other teenagers in the car: 64% (64% Witnessed often or always)
- The driver and passengers are dancing or singing along to the music: 33% (21% Makes a lot of difference to safety)
- The driver pays attention to the passengers because they are acting wild: 65% (16% Witnessed often or always)
- The passengers in the car are trying to get the driver to speed, drive on the sidewalk, do donuts, etc.: 62% (13% Witnessed often or always)
- The passengers in the car have been drinking alcohol: 47% (12% Witnessed often or always)
- The passengers in the car have been smoking marijuana: 48% (12% Witnessed often or always)
**Peer Passengers: Influence on Crashes**

- In-car distraction more common among boys
- Peers increase in-car distraction for girls
- Peers increase aggressive driving by boys
INFLUENCE OF PEERS ON DECISION-MAKING

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Stop-light game

What can we do?

Teens told us

Safe behaviors everyone would use include:

- wearing seat belts
- establishing safe driver-passenger interaction
- reducing driver distractions
- asking for help as drivers
- turning down radio volume
RIDE LIKE A FRIEND
DRIVE LIKE YOU CARE

Available courtesy of the
Research and Outreach
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State Farm

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RESEARCH INSTITUTE
MESSAGES FOR DRIVERS

• Set your rules
• Ask for help
• Expect respect

If your passengers are your friends, they should help.
MESSAGES FOR PASSENGERS

• Buckle up
• Be there to help (give directions, answer cell phones, etc.)
• Show respect

If you’re their friend, you should care.
STAY POSITIVE

RESEARCH SHOWS

Scare tactics lead to fear and short-term change

Positive messages lead to long-term change

Witte, K. et al., The Handbook of Communication and Emotion (1998)
**Key elements: The minimum**

- A peer-to-peer poll
- Poll follow-up activities:
  - School intercom announcement
  - Cafeteria Posters (Q & A)
- One other activity from the RLAF menu
- Distribution of at least one type of RLAF communication tool
  - flyer, poster, table tent, stickers, bookmark
KEY ELEMENTS: EXAMPLE

POSTERS, FLYERS, TABLE TENTS

Free & downloadable from ridelikeafriend.com

- 4-color
- black-and-white
Drivers use an online tool to select their in-car rules:

- Wear your seatbelt
- Don’t pressure me to speed
- No drinking or drugs
- Keep the music down
- Keep your phone conversations short
- No yelling
- Help if I ask you to
  - Answer my cell
  - Give me directions
  - Just chill
**SHARED ACTION PLAN**

**TEENS LEAD**

Students do the real work and make decisions

- How will we recruit our organizing team(s)?
- How will we promote this?
- How will we turn our plans into action?
SHARED ACTION PLAN

ADVISORS OFFER SUPPORT

Guide the group to resources including:

• Ideas for generating support and donations
• Templates for promotion (press releases, letters to editor)
RESOURCES FOR YOU TO USE
WWW.TEENDRIVERSOURCE.ORG

We can all help keep teens safe on the road. Whether you’re a teen, parent, policymaker, educator, or researcher, this site will support your efforts with free information and downloadable resources. Together we can make a difference.