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## **As Youth Traffic Safety Month Begins, Experts Remind Parents They Play Crucial Role In Guiding Teens' Safe Behavior Behind the Wheel**

### **Passport to Safe Driving is a Free Tool from National Road Safety Foundation To Help Parents Discuss Safe Driving With Their Teens**

NEW YORK, May 4, 2023 -- May is National Youth Traffic Safety Month and the National Road Safety Foundation reminds parents that they play a crucial role in encouraging their teens to drive safely.

Traffic crashes continue to be the leading cause of death for teens, with nearly 2,500 young people killed every year. Mile for mile, teens are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers, says the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. An average of eight teens die every day in traffic crashes throughout the U.S.

There are several simple things parents can do to help ensure their teens become safe drivers, according to Michelle Anderson, director of operations at The National Road Safety Foundation, a non-profit group that for more than 60 years has been promoting safe driving behavior.

Parents should talk to teens about the dangers of drug and alcohol use, especially as they drive. Remind them that it is illegal to drink under the age of 21, and it is illegal—and deadly—to drink and drive at any age.

Talk to your young people about the danger of speeding, which is a factor in 26 percent of fatal crashes.

Learn about your state's graduated driver licensing (GDL) laws. GDL restrictions vary from state to state, so familiarizing yourself with the restrictions placed on your teen's license can help you enforce those laws. Parents should use the GDL laws to establish important ground rules for their teen drivers such as restricting night driving and passengers, prohibiting driving while using the phone or other electronic devices, and requiring seat belt use at all times.

Don't rely solely on driver's education classes to teach your teen to drive. Driver's education should be used as part of a GDL system, which in most states requires teens to have 30 or more hours of behind the wheel practice with a parent or other adult in order to qualify for a driver's license.

And finally, be a good role model. Your child looks to you as an example of how to drive, so practice safe driving yourself. "Remember that your teen's learning starts at home long before he or she applies for a learner's permit, watching the way you drive every day and learning from your driving behavior," Anderson said. "If they've grown up watching us speed, roll through stop signs and drive while using our phones, they are more likely to become dangerous drivers themselves."

Teens can play a role in traveling safely by speaking up when in a vehicle being driven dangerously. "It's important to have the courage to intervene," Anderson said. "Don't worry about being called a backseat driver. Explain that you care about yourself and the driver, which is why you are calling out risky driving behavior."

The National Road Safety Foundation has a free resource called *The Passport to Safe Driving*, which can be a valuable tool for new drivers, parents, teachers and other adults. It discusses a number of driving skills, with tips for adults to have a discussion with their teens. *The Passport to Safe Driving* can be viewed or downloaded at <https://www.nrsf.org/spread-word>

The National Road Safety Foundation, Inc., a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization founded more than 60 years ago, produces traffic safety programs on distracted driving, speed and aggression, impaired driving, drowsy driving, driver proficiency, pedestrian safety and a host of other safety issues. It distributes the programs free of charge to schools, police and traffic safety advocates, community groups and individuals. It also sponsors contests to engage teens in promoting safe driving to their peers and in their communities.