

# Youthsafe's Tips for parents

## *When our children learn to drive*

Parents, as supervising drivers, have a key role in instilling low risk driving behaviours in their children when managing the challenging task of teaching them to drive.

Given that young drivers remain the most impacted by death and serious injury than any other age group: almost a quarter of all drivers and motorcycle riders involved in fatal crashes are young people (between 17 to 25 years), while this group accounts for only 15 per cent of licence holders.

Here are a few ideas for parents to consider to get the best outcome for themselves and their young drivers.

### **Family Roundtable**

Even prior to getting the learner licence it's a great idea for the supervising adults and the pre-learner to sit down together to agree on how the learning process will take place and what commitments participants will make to that process.

Make a note of any agreements you reach on practical details like

- How many hours each week will be given to supervised driving and on what days?
- Which vehicle will be primarily used for supervised driving (if the family has more than one vehicle) and how will the participating adult supervisors share the 120 required hours if there's more than one.
- Who will decide what routes will be taken for each on-road session? *Note: the learner can be more involved in this process as their on-road experience increases.*
- Will the young driver be expected to pay for any costs associated with chalking up the 120 hours required by the Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) before being eligible to undertake their driving test?

Be clear at the outset about the need for all participants to respect the agreements reached, as well as the consequences of any breaches. It can be helpful to document and co-sign agreements reached.

Another Family Roundtable can be useful as a young driver approaches their life as a provisional driver to discuss agreed car use (where and when), passenger numbers and financial contributions, if any, to the cost of running the vehicle.



***Know the road rules***

All supervising drivers should take the time to reacquaint themselves with current road rules. Road rules change frequently and it is important that time is taken to brush up.

A copy of the current NSW road rules can be accessed [here](#).

The rules governing the four years of the GLS itself continue to be refined and it is vital that you understand the rationale of the GLS as well as its requirements like

- The Driver Knowledge Test
- required hours of supervised night-time driving for learners
- The Hazard Perception Test and Driving Test
- NO mobile phone use by novice drivers (not even to listen to music!)
- speed restrictions
- passenger restrictions etc.



## **Learn about what other supports are available**

- **[Youthsafe](#)** – has a great free eBook: [Ls to Ps: Teaching Aussie Teens to Drive](#) parents can download. Our [Steering Young Drivers](#) information session for school communities provides practical safety tips for parents and young drivers to build low risk driving behaviours.
- **[Keys2Drive](#)** - provides families with a free driving lesson as an opportunity for the learner, driving instructor and parent/supervisor to work together to support the learner driver.
- **[Safer Drivers Course](#)** - teaches learners how to reduce road risks by developing safer driving behaviours. Completing the course, learners earn a bonus of 20 hours of log book credit.
- **[GLS Workshops](#)** – are delivered to groups of parents by Road Safety Officers working with local councils.
- **[Learner Driver Mentor Programs](#)** - community based programs designed to assist learner drivers in accessing a supervising driver and vehicle so they can gain the driving experience needed to obtain a drivers licence, if getting this support from immediate family members is a challenge.
- **[Professional Driving Instructors](#)** - the right instructor is going to give your learner driver the right information and the current techniques to enable your learner to be a safer and competent beginning driver.
- **[Defensive Driving Courses](#)** – focusing on hazard perception and vehicle control, such courses may be useful for more experienced drivers however evidence suggests it's not recommended for novice, inexperienced drivers. Low risk driving courses are now superseding Defensive driving courses as being more helpful in developing useful skills on-road.
- **[Advanced Driving Skills](#)** – there is no evidence that such courses have any positive impact on road safety and they are not recommended for novice drivers. The danger is that once young people practise 'controlling skids', 'performance driving' and deliberately provoking loss-of-control situations, they will attempt these dangerous manoeuvres on the road, heightening the risk of getting themselves and others into serious danger.



Above all, we strongly advise all parents taking on the responsibilities of being learner driver supervisors to *practise what they preach*. In many ways the horse has well and truly bolted by the time your children are undergoing the GLS: your children have been keen observers of *your* driving behaviours for their entire lives. Nevertheless, it's never too late to change and the learning phase is an ideal opportunity for all supervising drivers to check on their own driving habits to ensure they are in keeping with the expectations they ask of their children. Look to your own on-road conduct with respect to factors like speed, safe driving distance, merging and overtaking, distractions and temperament.