COACHING YOUR NEW DRIVER

An In-Car Guide for Parents

**DOs**

- Share your driving wisdom and experience!
- Stay cool when your teen says “Don’t yell at me!”
- Drive in different conditions (weather, lighting, road type)
- Aim for smoothness—pretend there’s a cup of water on the dash and you don’t want to spill a drop
- Take breaks—every 25 minutes or so, and discuss progress

**DON’Ts**

- Don’t take the same route twice; use a slightly different route each time
- Don’t view your teen as your chauffeur—they need your eyes, attention and coaching
- Don’t focus too much on basic maneuvers (turning, etc.)—your teen will pick those up quickly
- Don’t say too much, but offer immediate feedback when appropriate; debrief fully after the session

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**KEYS TO SAFETY**

- Drive the way you want your teen to drive—be a good role model
- Let them sleep! Biologically, teens need about 9½ hours of sleep daily.
- Adopt a Parent-Teen Driving Agreement.
- When you are coaching your teen, say aloud the actual and potential (hidden) hazards along the road.
- Visit AAA’s Keys2Drive website at TeenDriving.AAA.com.
- Take the StartSmart Online Parent session, visit: TeenDriving.AAA.com

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**DRIVING LOG**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>DRIVING CONDITIONS</th>
<th>SKILLS PRACTICED</th>
<th>FUTURE FOCUS AREA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/16</td>
<td>1.0 hr</td>
<td>Nighttime</td>
<td>Turning in city traffic, following distance, smooth steering</td>
<td>Smoother steering, looking farther ahead</td>
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**REMEMBER—every trip counts!**

- Check yourself! Be mentally and physically ready
- Walk around the car to inspect for anything that may not be in place or working
- Buckle up, focus, phones off!

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**START OF EACH DRIVE:**

- Teen to self-rate their anxiety from 1–10
- Review the last drive, and future focus areas
- Buckle up, focus, phones off!

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**END OF EACH DRIVE:**

- Teen to self-rate their anxiety from 1–10
- Teen: What three things went well?
- Teen: What one thing could be improved on?
- Schedule the next practice session
LESSON 1: Your Vehicle

- Adjust the vehicle to the driver (seat position, steering wheel, head restraints, mirrors, etc.)
- First, start in a large parking lot and drive around the outside edge: 10–15 mph, practicing steering and braking
- Second: a short drive on an uncrowded residential street, focus on being smooth, and looking ahead

WATCH OUT FOR: Overconfidence, driving too fast

LESSON 2: Parking & Braking

- When braking, be smooth, and check traffic behind
- Practice parking in an empty lot
- Mainly look directly over your shoulder when backing
- Always keep your foot on the brake when backing
- Focus on precision, not speed

WATCH OUT FOR: Not looking directly to the space into which you are backing
Over-relying on backup camera, and entering or leaving the space too quickly

LESSON 3: Speed Selection

- Practice adjusting speed based on the three main factors:
  1. Visibility (day, night, fog, etc.)
  2. Amount of nearby traffic
  3. Road conditions (dry, wet, etc.)
- Always know the speed limit
- Always keep your foot on the brake when backing
- Focus on precision, not speed

LESSON 4: Looking Ahead for Potential Hazards

- Goal: see all current hazards
- Practice anticipating what might become a hazard, such as:
  - Pedestrian stepping into road
  - Car pulling out from parking lot
  - Cars hidden behind larger vehicles
- Maintain a “Visual Control Zone” by looking 12–15 seconds ahead

WATCH OUT FOR: Not scanning in all directions
Not looking far enough ahead

LESSON 5: Following Skills & Space

- Drive 3–4 seconds behind vehicle ahead (+1 second for nighttime, rain, etc.)
- Keep open space to at least one side at all times
- Stop behind car ahead so you can see that car’s rear tires plus some pavement
- Maintain a “Visual Control Zone” by looking 12–15 seconds ahead

WATCH OUT FOR: Causing another driver to have to change speed or steer around you

LESSON 6: Driving in Different Conditions & on Different Types of Roads

- Goal: Identify current hazards
  - Darkness
  - Rain
  - Snow, etc.
  - Variety is key—practice on:
    - City streets
    - Country roads
    - Interstates
    - Suburban roadways, etc.

WATCH OUT FOR: Not driving different roads on next practice session
Driving too fast at night/in rain

Note that these lessons should build upon each other
## START OF EACH DRIVE:
- Check yourself! Be mentally and physically ready
- Walk around to inspect the car
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- Buckle up, focus, phones off!

## END OF EACH DRIVE:
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To print additional copies of this driving log, please visit AAA.com/teendrivinglog.