



Start the Conversation Early on Safe Driving



Riding in a car is one of the most dangerous activities we do on a day-to-day basis – it is the leading cause of preventable death for people ages 1-24 – and driver distraction is making this problem even worse, according to injuryfacts.nsc.org.

Fortunately, as a parent, you can take action to teach your children the dangers of distracted driving, particularly of cell phones, and help them form safe driving habits long before they get behind the wheel.



Use the following suggestions to get the conversation started early. You can then use the included 'Distracted Driving Family Pledge' to set rules around cell phones in the car and pledge to drive safely.

Young Children

- **Be a role model:** Young children should be introduced to the habits of safe driving early on. A great first step is to simply set a good example and keep your phone and other distractions out of sight while you drive. Not only will this help keep you and your passengers safe, it also avoids the risk of teaching your child that this dangerous behavior is acceptable.
- **Talk about the risks of distracted driving:** Talk early and often. The sooner your young children are aware of the dangers of distracted driving, the better.



Tweens

- **Teach your children to speak up about distracted driving:** As your children grow up and move from booster seats to regular safety belts, it is important to reinforce the risks of distracted driving and extend this conversation to other situations. If, for example, your child is part of a carpool and notices the driver is distracted, he or she should feel comfortable pointing this out in order to keep everyone in the car safe.
- **Point out the dangers of hands-free:** You can also talk to your children about the dangers of using hands-free phones behind the wheel, which have been shown to be just as distracting as handheld phones.

Teens

- **Make it official:** Once your children reach driving age, it is more essential than ever that you talk with them about the dangers of driver distraction. Teens are already more likely to be involved in a crash due to their inexperience behind the wheel, and distractions like cell phones only make the odds worse. Driving cell phone free should be a part of your driving agreement with your teen and a regular topic of conversation as you teach him or her how to drive responsibly.
- **Encourage your teen to spread this message:** Though it may not always be easy, everyone should feel empowered to speak up and ask friends, loved ones and other drivers to put their cell phones away while behind the wheel. For your teen, that includes friends, classmates and teammates. The earlier your children learn this lesson, the safer they will be on our roads.



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