

Practical Tips on How to Use Driving Through the Eyes of Teens, A Closer Look

On the heels of two studies published September 28, 2009 in the journal *Pediatrics*, the Young Driver Research Initiative (YDRI) has developed a comprehensive report of recently published research providing evidence-based recommendations for teen driver safety practitioners and parents that may reduce teen crash risk. YDRI, a unique multidisciplinary academic-industry research alliance of The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and State Farm Insurance Companies,[®] focuses on reducing the number of teen driver-related crashes by developing and disseminating evidence-based interventions, education, and policy to promote safe driving-related behaviors among teens and their parents.

As you may already know, motor vehicle crashes remain the number one cause of death among teens in the U. S. In fact, teen drivers (ages 16 to 19) are involved in fatal crashes at four times the rate of adult drivers (ages 25 to 69). Many of these crashes are preventable. It is our hope that organizations such as yours can join the YDRI effort by sharing the following research-based resources and materials with your members and target audiences.

Key research findings

- Teens don't consider themselves inexperienced drivers.
- Parents play a crucial role in teen driver safety.
- Limiting primary access to vehicles during the first six to 12 months of driving is important.
- Unlicensed teen drivers engage in more unsafe driving behaviors, such as not wearing a seat belt and talking on a cell phone while driving, than licensed teen drivers

Tips for engaging members within your organizations

- Identify key members to discuss these findings and their implications with teens and parents
- Broaden your agency's communication to and with parents to include driver safety messages and awareness resources
- Learn more about and advocate for Graduated Driver Legislation (GDL) laws
- Identify other parent or youth serving organizations interested in partnering with your agency on teen driver safety

Tips for engaging families

- Provide families with weblinks to the free downloadable resources at <http://www.research.chop.edu/programs/youngdriver/nyds.php>
- Download Parent Fact Sheets and copy to hand out as part of your organization's events or members' high school Back to School Nights, Parent-Teacher Conferences, and Town Meetings
- Include the NYDS key research messages on your website or directly link to www.chop.edu/youngdrivers
- Learn more about and advocate for Graduated Driver Legislation (GDL) laws
- Identify other parent or youth serving organizations interested in partnering with your agency on teen driver safety
- Encourage discussion on the materials by including guiding questions such as:
 - What "knowledge gap" does the research highlight as impacting teen driver safety?
 - What are the public health recommendations of this research?
 - What do the findings say about parental support and parental control?
 - Why and when are rules about driving important?
 - If friends asked if their newly-licensed high school son should drive a young sibling to practice, what would you say? Why? (Use the Parent Fact Sheet, "Teach Your Teen to be A Smart Passenger," as your factual guide.)

We thank you for your interest in the Young Driver Research Initiative (YDRI) at the Center for Injury Research and Prevention (CIRP) at CHOP. CIRP is a comprehensive pediatric trauma research facility dedicated to addressing injury, the leading cause of death for children and adolescents. If you have any questions about the resource materials or our research, please contact Verna Cole, PhD, at colev@email.chop.edu