

**Parents
and young
drivers**

**information
for parents**



Parents



Parents and young drivers



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Parents and young drivers

When your children were young, it was easy for you to take total responsibility for their safety - especially in the car. When they start driving, they are taking responsibility for their own safety as well as the safety of their passengers and other road users.

When they first pass their test, young drivers don't have the experience, driving skills or judgement skills of more practiced drivers. Which is why:

- young drivers in Essex are nearly 4 times more likely to be responsible for road accidents than older drivers;
- more accidents involve 18 year olds than any other single age group;
- driving too fast for the conditions is a factor in a quarter of all young driver accidents.

Long before they are legally allowed to get behind the wheel, young drivers will be picking up driving habits from adult drivers. Some of these habits might be very positive – habits like wearing seat belts, switching the mobile phone off and spotting hazards in good time. They may also pick up less positive driving habits, such as inappropriate speed and inconsiderate and aggressive driving; habits that might put their lives at risk.

Even without realising it, adult drivers, and especially parents, are the young driver's first instructors.

Setting off - helping out

Some 17-year-olds can't wait to have their first lesson. Others might not want to learn to drive immediately. If they have sent off for a provisional licence, sorted out a driving school and can be seen reading a copy of the Highway Code, then you can probably assume that they're keen to get started.

It's a good idea to give them the responsibility for doing the groundwork. Try talking together about choosing an instructor. Both of you should ask around for recommendations. Some useful issues might include:

- Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) qualification;
- length and frequency of lessons;
- keeping a record of progress in a log book;
- the instructor is happy to give you some suggestions for extra driving practice;
- and of course – cost!

Learner drivers are rarely involved in a road crash because they are supervised and driving by the book.



Getting there



There is no set number of lessons needed for passing the driving test – every driver is different. It is also common for learner drivers not to pass the first time round. The instructor should know the right time for a learner driver to apply for the test. Pressure to take the test too soon will only make a learner driver feel stressed.

All learner drivers will benefit from extra practice. This is a good way for parents to help by taking them out in the family car.

Talk to the instructor about when you can start and what particular extra practice they need.

It should be a linked learning process, not two separate activities that will just end up confusing the learner driver. Remember – your own car may be very different from the driving instructor's car.



The driving test has changed quite a lot within the last 10 years, so it might help you to read up on what they have to do. At least you will know what's involved and be in a better position to help them when they ask.

Becoming a driver

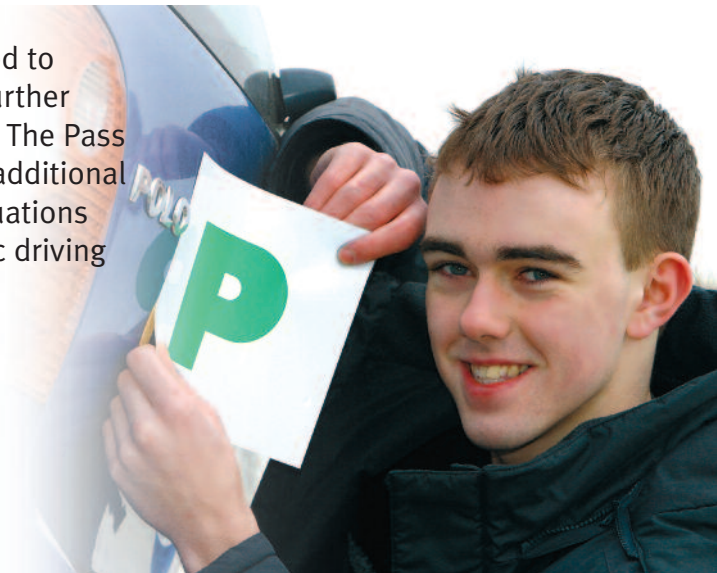


Young drivers are pretty good at the basic skills of driving and their reactions aren't bad either - when they are fully concentrating.

But a lack of experience means that young drivers are:

- not so good at spotting potential hazards;
- inclined to overestimate their driving ability;
- have less idea about how to cope with hazards.

All new drivers still need to build up experience. Further training is a good idea. The Pass Plus scheme provides additional training and covers situations that aren't part of basic driving instruction.



The extra experience and positive driving skills gained from the six modules would otherwise take a long time to acquire. It includes training and guidance in situations such as:

- in town and out of town;
- night driving;
- driving on dual carriageways and motorways.



Pass Plus also gives the opportunity for better insurance deals as well as helping to reduce the chances of a young driver being in an accident.

Displaying **P**robationary plates lets other road users know that the driver is newly qualified and that they need to make allowances and give more time and space.

Young drivers also find it more difficult to handle powerful cars, so think carefully before allowing them to take control of your car if it is going to be more than they can handle. Be realistic about their abilities – because they might not be.

Ground rules



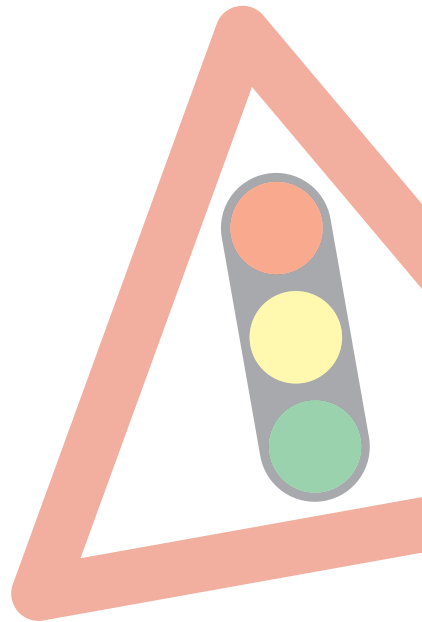
In a recent survey of young drivers, most said they would like ground rules to be developed with their parents. Here are some ideas for negotiating a safer driving agreement with your son or daughter. Some of the issues are not just about driving but involve general personal safety.

Ideas for negotiating

- Do they really need to use the car? Consider what other transport options are available and whether driving is the best option.
- Young drivers in Essex have more crashes late at night. If it is going to be a late night, maybe driving is inappropriate.
- Agree that they should let you know where they're going and who they'll be with – friends can influence their safety.
- Agree a limit on the number of passengers – especially when they are newly qualified.
- Agree they will let you know if they are going to be later than expected.

Get a commitment that:

- seatbelts will be worn by everyone in the car;
- mobile phones won't be used when driving;
- traffic laws, speed limits and parking restrictions will be followed;
- alcohol or drugs and driving won't be mixed;
- a designated (non-drinking) driver will be agreed before going out with friends.



Your responsibility is to sign up to the safer driving agreement yourself – because you never stop being a role model and it's difficult for a new driver to follow a 'do as I say, not as I do' rule.

What about riding a moped, scooter or motorcycle?

Here's some important information that you need to know

Completing Compulsory Basic Training (CBT) before riding on the road is a legal requirement. Courses are conducted by training organisations that have been approved by the Driving Standards Agency (DSA).

The CBT course consists of five stages that must be completed in sequence. A Certificate of Completion of Training (DL196) is issued, which is a legal document that is valid for two years and serves to validate the relevant entitlements on the driving licence.

With a full driving licence a learner machine (up to 125cc) can be ridden with L-plates and NO pillion passengers or motorway use after completing CBT.

For more details about CBT contact the Driving Standards Agency on 0115 901 2595. Information is also posted on the website on www.dsa.gov.uk

You can also contact your local road safety officer for advice.

Click info

The websites below give advice and information about safer driving and journey planning.

www.dsa.gov.uk

www.dvla.gov.uk

www.highwaycode.gov.uk

www.iam.org.uk

www.lawontheweb.co.uk

www.multimap.com

www.passplus.org.uk

www.portman-group.org.uk

www.rac.co.uk/web/learningtodrive

www.rospa.com

www.streetmap.co.uk

www.theAA.co.uk

www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk

www.ukonline.gov.uk

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