



# Safer teen driving



Children's  
of Alabama

**A**utomobile crashes are the number one killer of teenagers and the number one cause of disabling injuries for teens. Sadly, many of these accidents are preventable.

Leslie Brown is the coordinator of Alabama Safe Kids at Children's of Alabama. She said parents play an important role in encouraging their children to be safe as a driver and a passenger. "Parents can start by talking to their child when in elementary school about being a safe passenger," Brown said. "Things like modeling safe behavior, wearing a seatbelt every time and putting the cell phone down. They're going to do what we do."

In Alabama, the Graduated Driver License Law is a mandatory restriction in place for inexperienced drivers. One of the

requirements is that a new driver may not have more than one non-family passenger in the vehicle with them other than the parent, guardian or a supervising licensed driver at least 21 years of age.

Brown said parents should become familiar with the Graduated Driver License Law and download a Teen Driving Agreement for their new driver to sign. This helps to establish important ground rules to keep the new driver safe. And Brown says, if the teen violates any of these rules there should be consequences. "Take away keys when they don't follow rules," she said. "You can also offer rewards when they do make good choices." Brown said it's important teens and adults do these three things:

- ♦ Obey the law
  - ♦ Wear a seatbelt
  - ♦ Put down the cell phone
- Brown has teenagers of her own,

so talking about safe driving isn't just part of her job description, it's personal. "I always say to my teenagers, 'Are you a great friend or a good friend?'" she said. "I tell them, 'Encourage your friends to wear their seatbelts. Ask, 'Can I send that text for you?' instead of allowing them to text and drive.'"

Getting a new driver's license is an exciting time for a teenager. By helping them to know the law and apply safe driving practices, parents can play an important role in keeping their teens alive.

## for more info



Children's of Alabama offers links to the Graduated Driver License Law, the Teen Driving Agreement and more resources for parents and teens. Go to [www.childreusal.org/Safe-Teen-Driving-Toolkit](http://www.childreusal.org/Safe-Teen-Driving-Toolkit) to access.