

With October 20<sup>th</sup> through the 26<sup>th</sup> being National Teen Driver Safety Week, I thought it might be a good time to review the parent's role in teaching a teen aged child how to drive safely. The theme of this year's NTDSW is: It Takes Two – shared Expectations for Teens And Parents.

Learning to drive is an important and life changing process for most teens and for their parents as well. In NC, our public schools take on some of this instruction but most teens generally only receive about 6 hours of time behind the wheel in drivers' education programs. Obviously this is not enough time to learn to drive safely. We advocate that parents try to spend at least 100 hours in the passenger seat with their teen behind the wheel learning from them. These supervised hours are critical to the success of the driving training that a parent offers to his or her child and may make the difference between surviving the teen driving years and not doing so.

Understanding the statistical realities for inexperienced drivers will also help a parent to know where to focus the training. For instance, a recent study found that 75% of serious teen automobile accidents were the result driver error and that more than half of these wrecks were caused by one of three mistakes made by the teen aged driver. The three most common errors in judgment were:

1. Driving too fast for road conditions
2. Driving while distracted
3. Failure to detect a hazard

To help with the teaching process, Clinard Insurance Group has created a driver training booklet that breaks down the teaching process into an organized, step by step approach. You should also keep a log of the hours that your child drives to help give them the incentive needed to learn these skills so that your teen will understand where he or she is in the training process and will know what is required to finish this training. [Learn more about this training booklet here](#)

Once your child has completed the training while driving with you under a license permit, then he or she will be ready to obtain a restricted driving license. Do not let up in your supervision of your child at this point. Now you will have to take the time to learn the rules of the graduated license system in your state and make sure that you consistently apply them to your newly licensed teen driver. Your teen will tell you that no other parents are making their children

follow these rules to the letter of the law. They will be wrong when they say this and it is your job to make sure that they move through the graduated licensing process correctly. Graduated licensing programs have had a major impact in reducing deaths and injuries for teen drivers in states that have implemented them so please follow that process all the way to the end.

It's pretty scary when your child gets in the car and pulls out of the driveway for the first time without you in the car. I know, I've been there with all three of my children. You can reduce those fears by teaching your teen the skills needed to be a safe and competent driver from the beginning. If you need any help with this process, call us, we are here for you and will do all that we can to help you. You can reach us, toll free, at 877-687-7557.