

# Getting to School Safely

There comes a time when your little boy or girl transforms into a young adult, fully capable of driving to school. While this can be an overwhelming experience for mom and dad, it also is one that can teach your child great independence and responsibility.

As technology continues to evolve, it is more important than ever to outline the dangers of distracted driving. Below are some eye-opening statistics that could lead to further conversation with your teen on the importance of staying focused while driving.

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that distraction was a factor in nearly six out of 10 moderate to severe teen crashes, which is four times as many as official estimates based on police reports.

The most common forms of distraction leading up to a crash by a teen driver, according to the AAA, include:

- Interacting with one or more passengers: 15 percent;
- Cell phone use: 12 percent;
- Looking at something in the vehicle: 10 percent;
- Looking at something outside the vehicle: 9 percent;
- Singing/moving to music: 8 percent;
- Grooming: 6 percent; and
- Reaching for an object: 6 percent.

## CHILD PASSENGER TIPS

You may decide to enlist the help of your teen driver in transporting younger siblings to school or daycare. Here are some tips on passenger safety from the American Academy of Pediatrics:



- All passengers should wear a seat belt or use an age- and size-appropriate car safety seat or booster seat.
- Your child should ride in a car safety seat with a harness as long as possible and then ride in a belt-positioning booster seat.
- Your child is ready for a booster seat when she has reached the top weight or

height allowed for her seat, her shoulders are above the top harness slots, or her ears have reached the top of the seat.

- Your child should ride in a

belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle's seat belt fits properly (usually when the child reaches about 4-foot-9 in height and is between 8 and 12 years of age).