I. Table of Contents

II. Letter from the Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility President & CEO

III. IKnowEverything Program Overview

IV. Suggested IKnowEverything Messaging
   • Core Messages
   • IKnowEverything video
   • IKnowEverything.com

V. Top 10 Facts for Parents and Teens

VI. Additional Online Resources

VII. Tips for Parents of Teen Drivers

VIII. Tips for Teen Drivers
I Know Everything

Important information and messages for teens and parents regarding safe driving.
The Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility (Responsibility.org) is funded by distillers to fight drunk driving and underage drinking. This means helping prepare our teens to be safe when they get behind the wheel.

In 2009, while attending a licensing ceremony in Arlington, VA with my son, I wondered if there was a way to combine Responsibility.org’s mission to help fight drunk driving and underage drinking with a broader message to teens and their parents about safe driving.

Our result: the IKnowEverything program.

IKnowEverything is an integrated effort that highlights the issues of distracted driving and assists parents in understanding that they are the most important influence in their teen’s driving behaviors. This guide provides background about the IKnowEverything program, a suggested program outline for incorporating IKnowEverything materials into a teen driving program, tips for parents, tips for teens, information about our website – www.iknoweverything.com – data, statistics and more.

While some progress has been made in recent years regarding teen driver safety, Responsibility.org wants to help continue this positive movement. Here are a few reasons why we’ve developed the IKnowEverything program:

- Motor vehicle crashes remain the number one killer of teenagers ages 15 to 20, even though underage drinking and drunk driving among teens is down across the nation.

- Even though it is illegal for people under 21 to drink any alcohol and drive, one-third of all teen drivers killed in vehicle crashes had a .01% BAC or higher in 2010.

- Everyone shares the road – teens, adults, law enforcement, first responders and we believe this education effort will save lives and make the roads safer for all.

This guide is intended to be a supplemental set of materials for delivering the message of teen driver safety. You can also find these materials and other helpful information on the IKnowEverything website: www.iknoweverything.com.

Sincerely,

Ralph S. Blackman
President & CEO
The Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility
Fact

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teens in the U.S.

Over 4,500 young drivers (ages 15-20) were involved in a fatal crash in 2010.

Teens are overly confident and think they’re invincible. Most parents have years of driving experience and feel they are qualified instructors to teach their own children how to drive safely. Everyone thinks they know everything. Instead of fighting these perceptions, the IKnowEverything program recognizes this dichotomy – teens have heard messages about safe driving and parents have repeated messages about safe driving. From this point of understanding, the IKnowEverything program reinforces how to be a safe driver, how to avoid being a distracted driver, and the role parents play in shaping and influencing their teen’s driving behaviors.

**How was the IKnowEverything program developed?**

The Responsibility.org conducted a survey of 750 nationwide teens (ages 15-18) and their parents. Overall, parents and their teens saw eye-to-eye on what constitutes unsafe driving behavior. While both parties were in overall agreement about what constitutes unsafe driving behavior, there were significant differences when it came to the consequences of unsafe driving.

All materials included in this guide are the product of a comprehensive, research-driven approach. The IKnowEverything program can be used as a complete package or you can use materials individually to build out your existing teen driver safety program.
### Teens and Parent *Agree*

- Parents are the most important driving instructor for teens.
- Many parents and teens maintain an on-going dialogue about the dangers of distracted driving – this underscores the importance of parents in communicating with teens about being a safe driver.
- Texting and the use of Smartphones or other handheld devices are distracting to drivers.

### Teens and Parent *Differ*

- Parents are most concerned about potential injury or death with a new driver, while teens are most concerned about being in a crash.
- For parents, a teen with a driver’s license represents responsibility and the convenience of getting to and from school, work or social engagements.
- For teens, the driver’s license is emotional – it’s fun, represents freedom and a step towards adulthood.
- Teens are worried about losing their license if they don’t drive safely whereas this is a lesser concern for parents.
More than half of all fatal crashes that occur at night and involve 16 year-olds happen before midnight.

Most Important Messages About Driver Safety (perceived)

- No cell phone: 42% (Teen), 22% (Parent)
- No Speeding/Racing: 24% (Teen), 27% (Parent)
- Wear your seatbelt: 24% (Teen), 24% (Parent)
- No texting while driving: 12% (Teen), 22% (Parent)
- Be careful: 16% (Teen), 16% (Parent)
- Pay attention: 13% (Teen), 17% (Parent)
- Defensive driving: 13% (Teen), 26% (Parent)
- Number of passengers: 12% (Teen), 4% (Parent)
- Don’t drink and drive: 7% (Teen), 5% (Parent)
- Eyes on road: 5% (Teen), 9% (Parent)
- Follow the rules: 3% (Teen), 6% (Parent)
- Watch signs/lights: 3% (Teen), 6% (Parent)
- Remember Curfew: 1% (Teen), 0% (Parent)
- Other: 14% (Teen), 24% (Parent)
- DK/RF: 4% (Teen), 5% (Parent)
- None: 2% (Teen), 3% (Parent)

Through our national online surveys of parents and teens, as well as focus groups conducted with teens in Richmond, VA, we identified the driving-related topics of greatest importance. These topics resonated with both teens and parents and served as a starting point for the comprehensive development of the IKnowEverything program. Key topics include:

- Driver distractions
- Driving is a privilege, not a right
- Importance of safety belts
- Speeding
- Drinking and driving
- Penalties for violating the law
- License restrictions
- Safety messages
- Responsible driving behavior
- Obeying traffic rules and signs
Most Dangerous Distractions (perceived)

- Driving while texting: 60% (Teen), 63% (Parent)
- Speeding: 31% (Teen), 44% (Parent)
- Driving while on phone: 43% (Teen), 54% (Parent)
- Drunk driving: 25% (Teen), 32% (Parent)
- Inexperience: 35% (Teen), 27% (Parent)
- DUI of illegal drugs: 15% (Teen), 19% (Parent)
- Too many passengers: 23% (Teen), 15% (Parent)
- Aggressive driving: 10% (Teen), 15% (Parent)
- Other vehicles: 13% (Teen), 9% (Parent)
- Running red light / stop sign: 6% (Teen), 3% (Parent)
- Road rage: 4% (Teen), 5% (Parent)
- Driving in poor weather: 4% (Teen), 4% (Parent)
- Driving while tired: 4% (Teen), 3% (Parent)
- Changing traffic patterns: 3% (Teen), 3% (Parent)
- Late night driving: 3% (Teen), 2% (Parent)
- Poor road conditions: 2% (Teen), 1% (Parent)

Drivers in their first month are nearly twice as likely to crash as they are after two years of experience.

INTRODUCTION

Message & Approach:

- Describe the significance of a license and how it represents freedom, maturity and is a valuable step towards becoming an adult

- Outline the IKnowEverything program:
  - Teens: Pay attention 100% of the time when driving
  - Parents: Be a parent and safe driving role model

- Show short video and review resources where teens and parents can learn more about avoiding distractions and being safe, responsible drivers

IKnowEverything VIDEO

Summary: Facilitator shows a short video

Message & Approach:

- Watch a short video about safe driving. Explain how this video underscores many of the safe driving concepts you have already learned.

- You may have heard some of this before but it’s always good to hear it again

- Follow up questions to ask about the video:
  - What facts and statistics stood out to you? Why?
  - What was the most important message you heard? Why was this message important?
CORE MESSAGE: Pay attention 100% of the time when driving

Summary: Facilitator highlights key messages from the video

Message & Approach:

• A driver can become distracted in a split second and lose control of the car

• Common distractions include: radio, texting, making calls, looking up directions, setting GPS, eating food, too many friends in the car, or anything that makes you take your eyes off the road

  • Statistic: 18% of crashes that injure someone are caused by a distracted driver
  

  • Statistic: More than 50% of high school students say they text while they drive “at least sometimes”
  

• Recognize that teens hear this message – “pay attention” – from parents, teachers and other adults on a regular basis

• Paying attention is important at school, during extracurricular activities, and at home. It’s even more important when you’re behind the wheel

• By paying attention, you’ll keep yourself safe, your friends safe, and other drivers safe
**CORE MESSAGE:** Be a safe driving mentor

**Summary:** Facilitator highlights key messages from the video

**Message & Approach:**

- Teens mimic the behavior of their peers, parents and other trusted adults.
- Be a driving role model for teens – always wear your seatbelt, check your mirrors, don’t drive too fast and don’t be a distracted driver
- Remind teens that driving is a privilege – use safe driving skills and make responsible decisions behind the wheel or there will be consequences
- Recognize that this won’t make parents popular but that it’s what’s best for keeping their teens and other drivers safe. This is the time to be a parent/mentor, not a friend

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**Fact**

*More than 50% of high school students say they text while they drive at least sometimes.*

CORE MESSAGE: Be safe in the car and when you’re driving

Summary: Facilitator highlights key messages from the video

Message & Approach:

- Parents and drivers ed instructors have told you (teens) to be safe. You’ve heard it a million times but there are good reasons for repeating, “pay attention” and “be safe”

  - Statistic: Drivers in their first month are nearly twice as likely to crash as they are after two years of experience

  - Statistic: Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teens in the U.S. Over 4,500 young drivers (ages 15-20) were involved in a fatal crash in 2010.

- Ask teens “what are some ways you can be safe when driving?”

  - Wear your seat belt

    - Statistic: Insert local stat about seat belt usage if available

    - Statistic: 10% of high school students reported they rarely or never wear seat belts when riding with someone else

    - Statistic: 71% of teen drivers killed who had been drinking were not wearing a seatbelt

  - Obey traffic lights and posted signs

  - Follow the driving laws. If you are receiving a graduated license, make sure you are aware of any curfews and restrictions on the number of passengers allowed in the car

  - If you are under 21, do not drink alcohol and drive; never take prescription medicine and drive
Summary: Facilitator previews IKnowEverything safe driving website

Message & Approach:

- Parents and teens need to continue talking about safe driving; it's important that this information is discussed and reinforced even after you leave here today
  - *Parents:* Be responsible and talk to your kids about safe driving and avoiding distractions
  - *Teens:* Ask your parents questions

- Parents and teens can access information online – www.IKnowEverything.com

- Website is enabled for smartphones and tablets. Check the website whenever you need to, but not while you are driving

- Find a safe driving checklist and links to IKnowEverything on Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest

Closing Statement

Summary: Facilitator re-emphasizes the most important element of driving: Pay attention 100% of the time while driving

Message & Approach:

- Congratulations on being one step closer to being an adult
- Be responsible with your license; if you abuse it, it will get taken away
- Don’t get distracted when you’re behind the wheel
- Stay safe and help keep your friends safe when they are driving
- Check the website, Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest for more information and updates
Top 10 Facts for Parents and Teens

1. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teens in the U.S. Over 4,500 young drivers (ages 15-20) were involved in a fatal crash in 2010.

2. Drivers in their first month are nearly twice as likely to crash as they are after two years of experience.

3. 57% of crashes where a teen is partially responsible involved going too fast, not paying attention or failing to yield.

4. 18% of crashes that injure someone are caused by a distracted driver.

5. More than 50% of high school students say they text “at least sometimes” while they drive.

6. In 2010, 30% of teen drivers who were killed in crashes had a BAC of .01% or higher.

7. More than half of all teenage passenger deaths in motor vehicles occurred in vehicles driven by another teen.

8. Fatal crash risk for teen drivers increases incrementally with 1, 2, or 3+ passengers.
More than half of all fatal crashes that occur at night and involve 16 year-olds happen before midnight.

You could lose your license if you break the law. Make sure you know your state’s teen driving laws and penalties. For a complete list of them and the penalties for breaking the laws, go to www.iknoweverything.com/resources

Additional Online Resources

- Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, State Teen Driving Law: www.iihs.org
- Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility: www.responsibility.org
- National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS): www.noys.org
- National Sherriffs’ Association: www.nsa.org
- Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Teen Driver Source: www.teendriversource.org
- Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA): www.fcclainc.org
- Governor’s Highway Safety Association (GHSA): www.ghsa.org
Tips for Parents of Teen Drivers

✓ Be a safe driver – your teen will notice.
  • Obey the speed limit.
  • Wear a seat belt.
  • Don’t talk or text on your phone while driving.
  • Don’t drive drunk.
  • Don’t drive when you’re too tired.

✓ Know the law and share driving laws with your teen.
  • Make sure your teenager knows the laws and consequences for bad driving behavior.

✓ Sign a contract with your teen driver.
  • Choose which car(s) your teen can drive.
  • Create rules for your teen driver, curfews, number of passengers allowed in the car, check-in times, etc.
  • Be clear about consequences for unsafe or distracted driving.
  • Be clear about consequences for underage drinking as well as drinking and driving.
  • Make it clear that you will not tolerate underage drinking and driving.

✓ Ride along with your teen – even though they passed a driving test – to make sure they follow the rules of the road and drive safely.
  • Observe your teen’s driving behavior and offer suggestions for being a safer driver.
  • Review rules of the road with your teen.
  • Make your safe driving expectations clear.

✓ Know your teenager’s plans and who they will be riding or driving with.
  • Know who will be in the car and where the driver plans to go.
  • Make sure your teen knows when he or she is supposed to check-in.

✓ Make sure your teenager knows what to do in the event of a risky situation, such as a crash or bad weather.
  • Review safe driving tips for rain, snow, fog and other weather events on the days your teen may be facing such conditions.
  • Make sure the car your teen is driving has a first aid kit and flashlight.
  • Provide your teen with the contact information for AAA or a local tow truck.
  • Program an In Case of Emergency (ICE) number into your teen’s phone so others can reach you in the event that your teen is injured.
Tips for Teen Drivers

✓ Pay attention 100% of the time.
  • Your car or someone else’s car can spin out of control in just seconds.

✓ Know how to be a safe driver.
  • Don’t talk or text on your phone, eat, change music on your iPod or read directions while driving.
  • Don’t drink alcohol and drive.
  • Know and obey the speed limit.
  • Always wear a seat belt.
  • Know your limits and don’t drive when you’re too tired.

✓ Make sure your parents know your plans and whom you’ll be driving or riding along with.

✓ Know what to do in a risky driving situation, such as a crash, bad weather or other unexpected event.

✓ Know what the punishment will be if you violate the law or your parent’s rules.

✓ Know you can always ask your parents about driving.

✓ Know the consequences of what will happen if you break the law as a driver under 18 years of age.
  • Check with the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety to learn about the traffic safety laws for drivers under age 18 in your state: http://www.iihs.org/laws/graduatedLicenseIntro.aspx.
  • For a complete list of penalties for breaking the laws in your state, go to www.IKnowEverything.com/resources.