

Keeping Young Drivers Safe

Increased Knowledge and Effective Learning Tools for Parents and Teens



Motor vehicle crashes remain the No. 1 cause of death among teens in the United States. Teen drivers (ages 16 to 19) die at four times the rate of adult drivers (ages 25 to 69). To reduce injury and death from young driver-related crashes through scientific research and outreach, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and State Farm Insurance Companies® have formed an alliance called the Young Driver Research Initiative (YDRI). This academic-industry alliance also created Partners for Child Passenger Safety, the world's largest study of children in crashes.

Teen Driver Research

In early 2006, the alliance conducted the first National Young Driver Survey to learn how teens perceive and experience driving. The survey's weighted data represent 10.2 million ninth through 11th graders in U.S. public schools. The initial results were published in a report called *Driving: Through the Eyes of Teens*.

The alliance formed a multidisciplinary YDRI Expert Panel. Its findings were published in a special 11-article supplement called *The Science of Safe Driving Among Adolescents* in the June 2006 issue of the scientific journal *Injury Prevention*.

YDRI conducts quantitative and qualitative research that incorporates scientifically rigorous survey, ethnographic observation and interviews to gain knowledge about teen driving from teens and parents. The panel regularly shares its study findings with the traffic safety and practitioner community to advance the science and to help pass stricter Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws, a key part of proven teen-driver crash prevention.

Project Goals

Keeping adolescents safe on the road by establishing an evidence-based, comprehensive, safe driving program is YDRI's long-term goal. This multipronged program will provide interventions to help teens eventually master driving independently with limited risk. To achieve this, parents must help their children acquire skills, gain experience on the road, and adopt safe driving behaviors and judgment.

This program will be based on results from our ongoing research program. Focusing on the various stages of driving, from pre-learner to learner to independent driver, each successive stage will build on the growth and development mastered by the teen in the previous stage. Our goal is to develop a program of interventions that will be informed by adolescent development and driving-skill acquisition and embraced by teens, parents and communities. As interventions are developed and demonstrated effective, we will continue to share our products with our extensive network of educators, legislators and public health professionals. Our work will evolve over time to respond to societal trends and new product availability.

Raising Awareness

The YDRI Outreach team uses a variety of media and public health education tools to create awareness about the dangers of teen driving.

The team's Web site (www.chop.edu/youngdrivers) offers award-winning information for parents and community leaders. From research news to helpful handouts, the site provides much-needed guidance to navigate the teen driving experience.

The YDRI team works tirelessly to make teen driver safety a priority among policymakers. We recently provided testimony in support of GDL in Pennsylvania and helped pass a Congressional resolution supporting an annual National Teen Driver Safety Week (NTDSW), the first of which was Oct. 15 through 22, 2007. The week brought students, community leaders, educators and parents together to act to prevent teen crashes and injuries. As this is now a nationally sanctioned week, every third week in October will mark NTDSW.



More details are available at www.chop.edu/injury.