

A parent's guide to

Supporting new drivers

Learning to drive is a major milestone. It represents freedom, independence and new opportunities. It is also a time when skills and judgement are still developing.

In the first six months after passing their test, around one in eleven new drivers are involved in a collision. This early stage carries higher risk than any other, largely because experience is still developing.

Reassuringly, this risk can be mitigated. Evidence from the [UK Driver 2020 study](#) shows that structured support and parental involvement can improve safer driving behaviours. This guide highlights the practical steps that can make the greatest difference, both before and after passing the test.

Why parents matter

Parents and guardians remain one of the strongest influences on a young driver's safety, not only during lessons, but well beyond the test. Staying involved makes a measurable difference because:

- Novice drivers gain a wider range of driving experience
- Risky habits, like speeding or distraction, are less likely to develop
- Safety rules carry more weight
- The chances of a collision in those early months are lower

Being a role model

Your young driver learns a great deal simply from watching you, often long before they start learning to drive. They notice how you drive, even the small things. If they see phone use, speeding or cutting corners treated as normal, they are more likely to copy it.

When calm, careful driving is what they see every day, that's what feels normal. Simple everyday habits make a difference, such as:

- Keeping your phone out of reach while driving
- Avoiding comments like 'everyone speeds here'
- Staying calm in heavy traffic, challenging or frustrating situations



Help them build experience

Learning to drive is about more than passing the test. It's about building the confidence and experience that keep drivers safe once they're on their own. The [DVSA's Ready to Pass? campaign](#) recommends around 45 hours of professional lessons, alongside 22 hours of private practice.

Just as important as the number of hours is the variety of situations they practise in. Try to include:

- Different road types (rural, urban. Note that legally, motorway practice requires a qualified instructor)
- Night driving
- Different weather conditions

With planning, you can help them build confidence in more demanding situations before they're driving independently.

For example:

- Gradually introduce busier or more challenging conditions
- Keep taking the occasional drive together after the test
- Talk through why decisions are made

Instead of saying, 'slow down', ask:

"What might that pedestrian do next?"

This builds hazard awareness. Another helpful approach is "if-then" planning:

- If the weather worsens, then I'll slow down and increase distance.
- If I'm running late, then I'll pull over safely and call ahead.



Safer journeys for all

Stay involved as independence grows

Passing the test isn't the finish line. The first few months of independent driving are when risk is highest.

Set clear expectations together

In many countries, new drivers follow a staged approach that limits higher-risk situations, such as carrying friends or driving late at night, because this reduces collisions. While the UK does not have a formal system, families can take a similar gradual approach at home. A simple parent-teen driving agreement might include:

- Minimising peer-age passengers
- Limiting night driving (especially late-night journeys)
- Zero tolerance for alcohol or drugs before driving
- No phone use while driving (including hands-free where possible)
- How and when you'll review and reset expectations

Vehicle access matters

Starting with access to an appropriately insured family vehicle can help:

- Reduce late-night or higher-risk journeys
- Keep conversations open
- Allow independence to grow gradually

If possible, choosing a car with strong safety features (e.g. a 5-star Euro NCAP rating) can offer added protection.

'Black box' telematics and feedback

Some families choose telematics-based or 'black box' insurance, which provides feedback about driving. When used positively, this can:

- Support fact-based conversations
- Reinforce safe habits

However, telematics is often retrospective and focused on events like speeding, so it should support, not replace, active parental guidance.

Passengers and lifts for friends

Friends can be distracting early on. A gradual approach can help:

- Avoid similar age passengers at first
- Introduce them step by step and encourage them to speak up or pull over safely if passengers are distracting

Also, avoid asking new drivers to transport younger siblings early on, as this adds pressure and responsibility while experience is still developing.

Practical safety habits

Safe driving is shaped by small, consistent habits. Encourage routines such as:

- Checking visibility before setting off (e.g. ice, condensation)
- Planning journeys and checking weather
- Maintaining the vehicle (tyres, wipers, screen wash)
- Keeping a basic emergency kit (e.g. warm layer, water, phone charger)

Supporting a new driver can feel daunting, but your influence remains powerful. Small, consistent actions, before and after the test, can make a meaningful difference to their safety and the safety of others.

For more information visit [here](#)