

Choosing a Driving Education School

Making sure your new driver is more than ready for the road involves exploring different driving school options. Some adults are better at teaching those lessons to teens than others; so parents need to take the driving school search seriously. Interview owners/instructors, observe a class, and talk to former students (not just their parents – the people who took the class will know it better.)

Here are some tips that will help you find the program that's right for you and your teen:

- **Visit the school in which you're interested.** Before choosing a specific school, ask questions about the program, details regarding road-skills practice, the program's accreditation status, the instructor's credentialing process, how much liability the school carries, and the amount of parent involvement.
- **Seek advice from other parents and teens.** Ask other parents and teens who have recently participated in a program about their experience. Ask for recommendations. If available, review the postings on social media.
- **Look for a school that doesn't rush the learning process.** Although the classroom instruction is important, the behind-the-wheel training is critical. Not all drivers are the same, and some will need practice in certain areas. Make sure the school will teach at your teen's pace.
- **Pass/fail rate:** Does the school boast that its students pass the driver's test with ease? Look for schools that aren't afraid to hold students back if they are not ready to take the test.
- **Hours behind the wheel:** Driving schools should provide a minimum of 8- hours of instruction. Ask how those hours are spent. You want a school that spends plenty of time driving around the streets, but doesn't throw your child out onto the highway on their second or third lesson
- **Choose a school with a curriculum that covers all aspects of driving.** Review what will be covered during the 30-hour classroom instruction. Make sure your teen is learning everything, including the basics, car mechanics, what to do in case of emergencies, driving under the influence, collisions, national statistics, and more.
- **Make sure the behind-the-wheel training is thorough.** Lessons should be planned out ahead of time based on the teen driver's experience to date. The instructor should choose routes that are appropriate for each teen, and also provide challenges in new driving environments.
- **Be sure the school stresses face-to-face interaction between the driving instructor and parent.** Research shows this partnership makes safer drivers. Lack of communication can lead to parents not reinforcing the lessons taught.
- **Look for programs that maximize on-road driving lessons.** Choose a program that offers your teen maximized on-the-road driving lessons, as well as tips for you to continue supervised parental practice and involvement.
- **See what kind of advanced training options are available.** The use of advanced technology such as simulators, fatal vision goggles, break reaction software, and night sight meters can all play an important role in the training process.
- **Compare school and state curriculums.** Be sure to check and compare your driving school's curriculum with state requirements.
- **Check to see if your school is in good standing.** Before choosing a school, make sure it has not received any disciplinary actions for violating licensing laws or rules.
- **Don't let choosing a driving education program be the last step.** Once your teen has completed the class, you become the supervisor and instructor of his training.

Also be sure to ask the following questions about its driving program:

- Does it stress both safety and building basic steps?
- Does it teach new drivers how to handle the vehicle, manage speed and recognize hazards?
- Does it devote at least eight hours of on-the-road training, spread out over several days?
- Does it have a written curriculum that the instructor can share with you?
- Does it offer training with up-to-date equipment?
- Does it require its driving instructors to attend specific classes, clinics or programs?

http://www.teendriversource.org/more_pages/page/choosing_driving_school/for_parents
<http://autos.aol.com/article/teen-driving-schools-safety/>

Once a school has been chosen:

1. When going to the school to register your teen, bring the teen's birth certificate and your proof of identification. If you are not the teen's natural parent listed on the birth certificate, bring your legal documents (guardianship papers, tutor papers, etc.) showing you are responsible for the teen.
2. Read the documents provided by the school closely. Be sure you understand what services the school is providing at what cost.
3. Read the documents presented by the school before signing them. Do not sign the Certificate of Completion prior to your teen completing the course. Your signature on the Completion Certificate constitutes satisfaction for services provided.
4. Ensure your teen does not sign all documents prior to receiving the services. On the Temporary Instruction Permit, your teen must initial each driving session. **DO NOT ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO SIGN THIS IN ADVANCE.** If your child signs prior to receiving instruction, there is no documentation available to state otherwise.
5. Once class has begun, stay involved. Question your teen. What did you learn today? How was class? Was it just lecture, or were there videos? Is class interesting? Are you learning anything? What traffic fact can you tell me this evening that you did not know this morning?
6. If you are not satisfied with your teen's responses, question the school, other students and their parents. Ensure that your teen is receiving the background to provide them a lifelong desire to be a good driver.
7. Once the behind the wheel instruction begins, document your teen's time behind the wheel. Ensure the school is providing the 8 hours required by law, **PRIOR TO** signing the Certificate of Completion.