Parent-Teen Homework Assignments to Increase Driver Safety

INFORMATION SHEET FOR HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT #3
KEYS to... Vision, Balance, & Judgment

Purpose

To increase the safety of everyone involved, families should ensure that teens have the safety knowledge, skills, & behaviors related to Vision, Balance, & Judgment.

♦ Goal for Parent: Make it clear to your teen that you expect her/him to be a safe driver. For Activity #3, assess your teen’s knowledge, skills, & behaviors related to vision, balance, & judgment.

♦ Goal for Teen: Fully explain to your parents the concepts & show them the procedures that you have learned in driver education. For Activity #3, show your parents that you have the knowledge, skills, & behaviors for vision, balance, & judgment.

Instructions

Completing activities may take some time & energy, but the safety impact will be long-lasting!

♦ TOGETHER: Parents & teens need to: (1) read over this Information Sheet, (2) fully & thoroughly perform the parent-teen activities listed on the Assignment Sheet for Homework Assignment #3, & (3) complete & turn in the Assignment Sheet to your driver education class.

♦ As your family completes the activities, remember to REMAIN PATIENT with each other! This is a new experience for both parents & teens!

Information for Homework Assignment #3: Vision & Balance

Box A: Use Your Vision Effectively

Safe driving includes constantly searching your path-of-travel for any changes.

Vision—look into the future

♦ See a clear path (i.e., make sure line-of-sight & path-of-travel are clear) before putting the car in motion.

♦ ALWAYS turn your head to look for traffic & obstacles before turning the steering wheel.

♦ When driving, (1) project your vision as far ahead as possible, (2) select a stationary object or target in the center of the path you want to travel, & (3) steer toward it.

Search for changes in your path-of-travel

♦ To search effectively, you need to know where to look, what to look for, & what to do when you find changes.

♦ Where to look: Use your central, side/fringe, & peripheral vision to systematically search throughout your intended path-of-travel & the surrounding area.

♦ What to look for: Make sure your line-of-sight & path-of-travel are clear.

♦ What to do when you find changes: Once you become aware of changes in your line-of-sight or path-of-travel, make safe choices for speed control and/or lane position.

Use your mirrors & check your blind spots

♦ Always uses your mirrors & check your blind spots under the following conditions: when your foot goes on the brake; before & after changing lane positions; before & after changing lanes; before & after turning; when backing up; & when stopped in traffic.

♦ Frequently check your mirrors throughout driving to be aware of your surroundings.

Box B: Keep Your Vehicle in Balance

Safe driving includes making smooth starts, steering motions, & stops.

Keep your vehicle in balance

♦ Jerky starts & stops signal to other road users that there are problems with the vehicle or with the driver.

♦ To help keep your vehicle in balance, keep the heel of your right foot on the floorboard to where your toes can easily reach gas or brake pedal.

♦ Use the toes of your driving foot (not your whole foot) to apply pressure to the brake or gas pedal.

♦ Pivot using your heel to move from one to the other.

Make smooth starts

♦ To make smooth starts, ease your foot off the brake & let the vehicle begin to roll on its own.

♦ Then apply steadily increasing pressure to the gas pedal.

♦ Once you are at speed, readjust pedal pressure to maintain it.

Make smooth motions in steering

♦ To make smooth steering motions, turn your head in direction of your intended movement or path-of-travel before turning the steering wheel.

♦ Then turn steering wheel with a smooth motion toward the target.

Make smooth stops

♦ To make smooth stops, ease your foot off the gas pedal & let the vehicle begin to slow on its own.

♦ Then apply steadily increasing pressure to the brake pedal.

♦ Close in on vehicles gradually.

♦ Stop far enough behind a vehicle to see its rear tires touching the pavement.

Any abrupt changes in balance—starting, steering, or stopping—can result in reduced vehicle control or an out-of-control vehicle.
**Information for Homework Assignment #3: Judgment**

**Box C: Choose Your Speed & Lane Position Wisely**

Safe drivers need to be able to determine the best speed & lane positions for driving conditions.

**3 speed control options**

1. Keep the same speed
2. Decrease speed
3. Increase speed
   - The choice of your speed can help you safely maneuver through or around obstacles in your path-of-travel.
   - If you choose to “decrease speed,” you can do so by easing your foot off the gas pedal & **covering the brake** OR by easing your foot off the gas & applying the brake
   - When in doubt, slow down!

**Problems with driving too fast for conditions**

- Crash risk & crash severity increase as speed increases.
- It is more difficult to safely maneuver a vehicle at higher speeds.
- It is more difficult to steer safely around curves or objects at higher speeds.
- Small errors in judgment such as oversteering or braking too sharply can result in an out-of-control vehicle.
- Distances necessary to safely follow & stop are increased at higher speeds.
- The amount of time available to detect & to react to unexpected events is shortened at higher speeds.
- At higher speeds, drivers should keep longer distances between vehicles & look farther ahead for changes in your line-of-sight or path-of-travel.

**3 lane position options**

1. Middle of your lane (lane position 1)
2. Left of your lane (lane position 2)
3. Right of your lane (lane position 3)
   - The choice of the location of your vehicle in your lane can help you safely maneuver through or around obstacles in your line-of-sight & path-of-travel.

**Box D: Choose Your Next Move Wisely**

Safe drivers need to be able to make accurate judgments to safely navigate roadways & interact with roadway users.

**Gap Selection**

- When turning or changing lanes, drivers must determine if there is enough space to maneuver.
- Only make a move when there is enough space to not only begin, but to complete the maneuver.

**Intersections**

- When approaching an intersection, search your intended path-of-travel. Look for traffic lights, signs, cross traffic, pedestrians, etc.
- Before braking, look in the rearview mirror to identify any problems behind you, such as vehicles being too close
- When reaching the intersection, search to the left, straight, to the right, & then in whichever direction you plan to travel
- If you are turning, only make a move when there is an open path to enter.

**Approaching curves & hills**

- Once you see a curve/hillcrest in your intended path-of-travel, check your mirrors for potential problems around you.
- Reduce your speed to get the best speed control depending on the degree of curve/hillcrest.
- Stay to the right of your lane in case an oncoming vehicle crosses the middle line.
- Search through the curve/hillcrest for vehicles, pedestrians, signs, etc.
- Once on the other side, check your mirrors & evaluate your new intended path-of-travel.

Remember, any abrupt changes in steering, speed control, and/or lane position can result in an out-of-control vehicle.

**Skid control**

- Keep your eyes focused on where you want the vehicle to go.
- Ease your foot off pedals—no brake or gas!
- Steer in the direction to make the front of the vehicle point towards the intended path-of-travel.

**Family Activities to Increase Teen Driver Safety: For Now & In the Future**

Families should complete parent-teen homework assignments to assess teen knowledge & practice of driver safety.

**For Homework Assignment #3, teens will talk to parents about how to do the following:**

- Determine visual searches for changes in your line-of-sight or path-of-travel
- Determine choice of speed control options & lane position for driving conditions

**Families should talk about driver safety OFTEN.**

Parents & teens should discuss the following:

- The importance of vision, balance, & judgment for safe driving
- The dangers of driving at high speeds

**Families need to supervise driving under high-risk conditions OFTEN.**

- Teens should have extensive supervised practice on high-speed roads before they are allowed to drive at high speeds on their own
- Once licensed, teens should have extensive independent experience driving in low-risk conditions—at lower speeds—before they drive at high speeds

**Families should set expectations for driver safety EARLY.**

MAKE CLEAR that teens are expected to:

- Obey all traffic laws & signs, including speed limits
- Never put yourself or others at risk by driving too fast for conditions

MAKE CLEAR that teens who violate safety expectations will:

- Lose driving privileges for ___________________________
  (write in amount of time)
- Other:___________________________________________
  (write in what & amount of time)
**Instructions**

Together, parent & teen need to: (1) read over the Information Sheet for Homework Assignment #3, (2) fully & thoroughly perform the parent-teen activities listed on this Assignment Sheet, & (3) complete & turn in this Assignment Sheet to your driver education class.

- **Materials needed:** Parent, teen, this assignment sheet, the *Driving Pictures* handout, pencil or pen, & vehicle.
- **Time needed:** Each activity can take 10-30 minutes & can be done separately, at different times.
- **Directions:** After completing each activity, check (☑) the box to show that it was completed & then parent rates teen’s performance as “good,” “fair,” or “needs improvement.” No matter what the rating, please list comments about teen’s performance to help us keep track.
- **Grading:** Grading of Homework Assignment #3 is based ONLY on completing the activities, not on the actual ratings for teen progress. Thus, a “needs improvement” rating will not lower your teen’s grade. This information is important for tracking student progress & providing you with feedback for ways to improve.
- **Driving Activities:** For the activities that involve driving, parent should drive so teen can focus on the activity & write down answers. If teen drives, parent will need to write down the answers that teen gives.

### Activities for Vision, Balance, & Judgment

(Use info from Boxes A-D on the Information Sheet)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Rating (☑)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Discussion: Vision, Balance, &amp; Judgment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>To assess knowledge, teen tells parent about each of the following.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent checks accuracy using information from Boxes A-D on the Information Sheet</td>
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<tr>
<td>The importance of vision, balance, &amp; judgment in safe driving</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The importance of searching the intended path-of-travel</td>
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<tr>
<td>The 3 options for speed control</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The risks of driving too fast for conditions</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The 3 options for lane position</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How to approach intersections</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to approach &amp; drive through curves/hill crests</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conditions that lead to an out-of-control vehicle &amp; how to steer through a skid</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Exercise: Driving Pictures. To assess skill, use the <em>Driving Pictures</em> handout. With it, parent &amp; teen do each of the following for each picture.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Determine the “target” for driving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Determine vision ranges for driving—central, side/fringe, &amp; peripheral</td>
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<tr>
<td>Determine all potential issues related to line-of-sight or path-of-travel</td>
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<td>Determine the 3 most immediate issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>For those 3 issues, determine the appropriate speed control option (keep the same speed, decrease speed—either cover brake or apply brake, or increase speed) &amp; lane position (middle/lane position 1, left/lane position 2, or right/lane position 3)</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Driving Activity: Curves, Hillcrests, & Intersections
To assess skill, parent drives a predetermined route while teen sits in the front passenger seat & (1) points out & (2) writes down any issues with line-of-sight or path-of-travel for the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>NI</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curves or hillcrests</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issues for the first curve or hillcrest</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issues for the second curve or hillcrest</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intersections</td>
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<td>Issues for the first intersection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issues for the second intersection</td>
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### Driving Activity: Speed Control & Lane Position
To assess skill, parent drives a predetermined route while teen sits in the front passenger seat OR family parks in a busy parking lot or near an intersection & teen (1) points out & (2) writes down examples of the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>NI</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other drivers using speed control options</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Correct Use: Examples (write down the ones you saw):</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incorrect Use: Examples (write down the ones you saw):</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other drivers using lane position options</td>
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<tr>
<td>Correct Use: Examples (write down the ones you saw):</td>
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