



## **1 Establish rules and consequences with your teen**

Talk to your teen in the lead up to them learning to drive and getting their drivers license. Agree rules and consequences up front, (and even record them for clarity) when everyone is calm. Always uphold the consequences!

## **2 Avoid punishment**

Avoid punishment, where you react from emotion and issue consequences that have not been previously discussed - this makes things worse. The difference between punishment and consequence is if the teen knew this would be the consequence if I do this.

## **3 Acknowledge the emotional brain**

Understand the teen lives more typically in their emotional brain than the parent, so you need to acknowledge their emotions in order to demonstrate that you are indeed listening to them. Kids do as you do, not as you say, so if you want them to listen to your advice, boundaries and logic, then you need to demonstrate good listening by reflecting back their emotions before doing any of that.

## **4 Choose the right time for conversations**

Choose your times well for more difficult conversations. Don't follow your emotions and bring it up when they are not going to be likely to listen anyway - just after an argument; when they first get out of bed; when they are hungry (which may be 95% of the time admittedly!). Instead choose the time of the day they are most likely to be reasonable. This also gives you the chance to gather your own thoughts and be more centred yourself.

## **5 Drink water**

Drinking water requires you to regulate your whole system in order not to drown when you drink it. Use this to calm yourself or your teen down should conversations get tricky.

## **6 Agree a SAFE WORD**

Try having a 'safe' word, that only you and your kids know, that if they use this in text or on the phone with you it means "Help mum/dad and get me out of this situation!". Often our kids feel pressured into doing something they don't really want to do but it is difficult for the teen brain to ignore pressure from their peers. Using the 'safe' word tells you to act as the mean parent who demands they return home or gets picked up immediately. Your kids will be grateful you rescued them and it's one less potentially risky situation your child will face.

## **7 Get out of jail FREE card**

I gave my kids one "get out of jail free" card where I would just rescue them and issue no consequence regardless of how many rules they had broken to get in that situation in the first place! It is often valuable learning for the child without you needing to issue a consequence as the situation was dire enough to ring you! It again can save our kids from making a bad situation much worse.

## **8 Lead by example**

If you have rules for your kids, be sure to have the same rules for yourself when driving. No talking on your mobile phone, checking text messages or speeding when driving. .



## **1 Research the brand and model of car**

If buying a second hand car, and not New Zealand new, make sure it is a popular model that is or was sold new in New Zealand. If you need repairs then parts will be much cheaper and easier to find.

## **2 Technology**

The age of your car will determine the level of technology and driver safety systems that are fitted. Make sure you have a good understanding of any systems the car has and exactly what driver support they are designed to provide. That said, never rely on, or expect Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) to do the driving for you and fix your mistakes or poor decisions.

## **3 Anti-Lock Braking System (ABS)**

This is the single most important piece of technology in a car. In an emergency situation, ABS allows the driver to stand on the brakes as hard as they can without locking the wheels, and continue to be able to control and steer the car in a direction to possibly avoid hitting something. ABS gives you the chance to change an outcome. Make sure your car has ABS!

## **4 Warrant of Fitness (WOF)**

The Warrant of Fitness is a health and safety check for your car. Making sure your car's brakes, suspension, tyres and other critical items are in a safe condition is of paramount importance

## **5 Tyres**

Having the correct tyres for your car and good tyre tread is super important. Talk to your tyre supplier about the correct tyres for your car. The tread of your tyres is really important. The deeper the tread of your tyres - the safer you are, especially in wet driving conditions. Never go under 4mm across the whole width of the tyre.

## **6 Driving Seat Position**

Being comfortable and positioned correctly in the driver's seat to ensure proper control is really important. A lot of cars have more than just forward and back adjustability of the seat, so make sure you are aware of all the adjustments available. With your foot pressing hard on the brake pedal, you should still have a slight bend in your knee. A straight leg means you are stretching which is not good. With your hands at "9" and "3" on the steering wheel and your back against the seat, you should have at least a 75 degree angle bend in your elbows.

## **7 Air Bags**

These are for when it's all gone wrong and you don't have any control of the outcome anymore. They certainly don't guarantee your safety in a crash but you wouldn't want to be in a car without them.

## **8 Loose items in car**

Loose items can become dangerous projectiles inside your car in a crash, and could cause very unnecessary damage to you and your passengers. Be aware of unsecured items in your car and move them to the floor or the boot.