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# TEEN DRIVING WITH UNIQUE LEARNING NEEDS

A guide for teens and families



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## EDUCATION AND CAREER

An Occupational Therapist for over 15 years and Driver Rehab Specialist for 3 years. She is also certified as a Texas Driving Instructor Teaching Assistant.

## GOAL

Megan hopes to raise awareness that driving and community mobility is accessible for everyone and that there are resources available to help you reach your goals!



# What We Will Learn Today

## ESSENTIAL KNOW-HOW

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Introduction

Driving Skills & Considerations

Who Can Help & Difference Between Options

Parent Recommendations

Resources



A person is driving a car, with their hands on the steering wheel. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be clearly visible. The background shows a blurred view of a road and other vehicles.

## THE APPEAL OF DRIVING

**“THE ONE THING THAT UNITES ALL HUMAN BEINGS, REGARDLESS OF AGE, GENDER, RELIGION, ECONOMIC STATUS, OR ETHNIC BACKGROUND, IS THAT, DEEP DOWN INSIDE, WE ALL BELIEVE THAT WE ARE ABOVE-AVERAGE DRIVERS.”**

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DAVE BARRY

# Introduction

## CHALLENGES OF LEARNING TO DRIVE WITH UNIQUE LEARNING NEEDS

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### Why is learning to drive so important?!

- Getting to school
- Job/Employment opportunities
- Social interaction
- Sports or clubs
- Assisting with home management
- Building self esteem & independence
- MUCH MORE!



# Introduction

## CHALLENGES OF LEARNING TO DRIVE WITH UNIQUE LEARNING NEEDS

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**Driving a car is one of the most difficult tasks a person will participate in daily.**

Teens need to develop critical driving skills including

- scanning/searching
- attention
- working memory
- problem solving
- sequencing
- wayfinding/navigation
- MUCH MORE!



# Introduction

## CHALLENGES OF LEARNING TO DRIVE WITH UNIQUE LEARNING NEEDS

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They also need to increase their safety and judgement for monitoring speeding and avoiding/limiting distractions.



# Introduction

## CHALLENGES OF LEARNING TO DRIVE WITH UNIQUE LEARNING NEEDS

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When teaching a teen with unique learning styles, consider the following areas...

- physical
- cognitive
- emotional
- social

**It is important to choose the proper teacher and teaching environment to help you teen have a positive and successful experience.**





# Physical Considerations

Consider what challenges your teen may face in

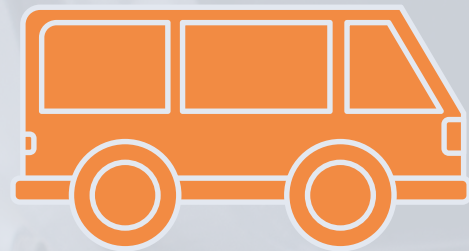
- strength
- balance
- coordination
- range of motion
- endurance



# Driving with Physical Challenges

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

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Vehicles can be highly personalized with adaptive equipment that can be easily operated.



Specialized modifications can allow a person to transfer to driver's seat or drive from wheelchair.



Steering knobs & infra-red electronics allow teens to drive safely with one hand.



# Driving with Physical Challenges

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

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Mirrors & specialized instruction for teens with visual impairments.



Hand Controls can be used for acceleration & braking as alternative.



Special testing required by the TX DPS and license modifiers needed.



# Cognitive Considerations

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It is important to consider...

- learning differences
- executive functioning skills
- visual processing skills

that may impact your teens ability to drive.



# COGNITIVE CONSIDERATIONS

## EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

- Attention to task
- Navigation skills
- Problem solving
- Sequencing
- Following directions

## VISUAL PROCESSING SKILLS

- Looking around environment for hazards
- Reacting to dangers
- Recognizing turns

## LEARNING DIFFERENCES

- Classroom vs. 1:1
- Reading vs. Practicing
- Short vs. Extended Sessions
- Listening vs. Doing



# EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS



Ability to interact with  
other drivers & police  
officers



Handle frustration &  
road rage with situations  
outside their control



Handle stress & anxiety  
(i.e. traffic, detours,  
weather changes)

