

HOMEANDDRIVING.COM

# TEEN DRIVING WITH SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

A guide for teens and families







# What We Will Learn Today

## ESSENTIAL KNOW-HOW

---

Introduction

Who can help

Difference between options

Resources







**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.”**

---

**DAVE BARRY**



# Introduction

## CHALLENGES OF LEARNING TO DRIVE WITH A DISABILITY

---

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, attention, working memory, problem solving, and sequencing in order to drive safely. They also need to increase their safety and judgement for monitoring speeding and avoiding/limiting distractions.

When teaching a teen with learning challenges whether the challenges are physical, emotional or cognitive; it is important to choose the proper teacher and teaching environment to help you teen have a positive and successful experience.







## PHYSICAL

Consider what motor challenges your teen may face. If your teen needs equipment to operate the gas/brake/steering wheel, they may need a specialist.



## COGNITIVE

It is important to consider learning differences, executive functioning skills, visual processing skills, & social 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

## SOCIAL SKILLS

Ability to interact with  
other drivers, handle  
frustration/road rage,  
handle stress (i.e.  
traffic)

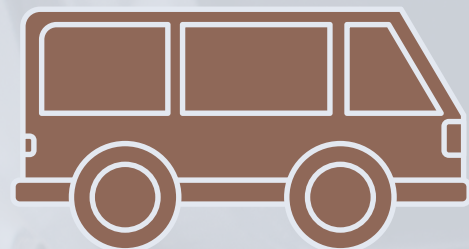




# Driving with Physical Challenges

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

---



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.





# Who Can Help

---

## DRIVING SCHOOL

Teaches driving skills, assists with prepping for test, & enhance driving performance for new drivers.

## OUTPATIENT THERAPIST

Assess & treat pre-driving skills such as cognitive, visual, perceptual, behavioral & physical.

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST DRIVER REHAB SPECIALIST

Integrates physical, cognitive and behavior challenges with on-road performance & learning needs.





# WHAT IS AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST DRIVER REHAB SPECIALIST (OT DRS)

## ■ SPECIAL TRAINING

Able identify skills needed for driving, readiness to learn to drive, appropriate training methods, & ways to compensate for challenges.

## ■ INTERVENTION

Identify areas that are a challenge for the teen & develop an individualized plan to address how they impact driving skills. Provides recommendations to other members of team.

## ■ MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge of how medical conditions impact & influence driving skills.  
Knowledge of medication & side effects.

## ■ ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT KNOWLEDGE

Assess teen's need for modified driving controls, driving position, mirrors, etc.



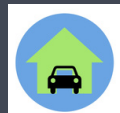


# Diagnosis

## WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM WORKING WITH AN OT DRS?

---

Many diagnosis may benefit from specialized intervention and driving training from an OT DRS including Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD/ADD, Non-Verbal Learning Disorders, Dyslexia, Cerebral Palsy, Spinal Cord Injuries, Traumatic Brain Injury and many others.





**2/3**

ADOLESCENTS WITH HIGHER  
FUNCTIONING AUTISM  
SPECTRUM DISORDERS  
(ASD) ARE EITHER  
INTERESTED IN OR  
CURRENTLY DRIVING

**24.5%**

16 YEAR OLDS GET THEIR  
DRIVER'S LICENSE, A 50%  
DECREASE SINCE 1983





# DIAGNOSIS SPECIFIC INFORMATION

---

## ADHD

Experience more frequent crashes & higher number of traffic violations.  
[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)

## AUTISM

More likely to drive if have paid work experience & are full-time students.  
[www.teendriversource.org](http://www.teendriversource.org)

## DYSLEXIA

Increased difficulty with quickly reading signs, navigation & passing written test.  
[www.idoline.org](http://www.idoline.org)

## ANXIETY

Engage in riskier behavior & more erratic driving behavior.  
[www.anxiety.org](http://www.anxiety.org)





# ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

## 1. TIME LINE.

How soon does the teen want to start driving?  
Have they started the drivers education course?  
Does the adult have time to supervise?

## 2. CURRENT SKILLS.

Is your teen able to ride a bike  
Can they help give directions while driving in a car?  
How are they at eye spy games?  
Are they easily frustrated?

## 3. GOALS.

Where does your teen want to drive? School?  
A job? Church?  
Sports practice?  
To see friends?





# How can you prepare your teen for learning to drive?

---

## DISCUSS ROAD SIGNS

Have your teen point out road signs and markers as you are driving. Discuss what the signs mean and the situations when you follow the sign.

## ENGAGE THEM IN THE PROCESS

Put down the devices in the car! Engage your student in giving directions, watching the speed limit, looking for hazards, and helping you find your way.

## INCREASE EXPECTATIONS AT HOME

Increasing independence at home will help foster maturity, problem solving, making quick decisions and build confidence .





# Timing


## HOW DO I KNOW WHEN MY TEEN IS READY?

---

The decision to learn to drive is an individual decision. Some teens will be ready at 15 y.o., while others may not be ready until they are in their early 20's. It is important to consider your teens maturity level, physical & cognitive skills when making the decision. You can also call an OT DRS to help guide your decision.







Teaching a new driver can be a stressful time for any parent or guardian. New drivers with cognitive or physical challenges can add extra stress to the process. Contact an OT DRS to help you through this process.





# Free Resources

---

Use these free resource links to learn more about teen driving.



[www.homeanddriving.com](http://www.homeanddriving.com)  
DRIVING EVALUATION & TRAINING  
INFORMATION, HELPFUL BLOGS,  
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



[www.aded.net](http://www.aded.net)

LOCATE AN OT DRS/CDRS,  
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



[www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org)

LOCATE AN OT DRS/CDRS,  
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



# References

## ONLINE RESOURCES

---

THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF  
PHILADELPHIA: RESEARCH INSTITUTE TEEN  
DRIVER SOURCE

NHTSA TEEN DRIVING

KEYS2DRIVE: THE AAA GUIDE TO TEEN SAFETY

SPECTRUM OF DRIVER SERVICES: RIGHT  
SERVICES FOR THE RIGHT PEOPLE AT THE  
RIGHT TIME





# Megan Frazier

OWNER,  
[WWW.HOMEANDDRIVING.COM](http://WWW.HOMEANDDRIVING.COM)

---

## 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!

