

Help Your Teen Driver Choose the Right Car

Parents can help teens get a good buy on their first vehicle by focusing on safety, affordability, and reliability.

Start early

Start by helping teens understand the responsibilities tied to owning and operating a vehicle.

Roughly six months to a year before the teen gets a license, begin sharing the cost of gasoline, insurance, and repairs. Set clear rules for teen drivers. Ask the teen to help care for the family vehicle.

Create an agreement

When you're ready to buy, set clear guidelines by creating a written agreement that covers:

- Who pays for specific types of expenses, such as loan payments, insurance, or repairs.
- Rules for vehicle usage.
- How the teen's behavior affects driving privileges.
- What the consequences will be if the teen fails to live up to the agreement.

Safety first

Insist that teens shop for vehicles with at least three safety features:

- Air bags, including side impact air bags, which can reduce injuries in a crash.
- Anti-lock braking systems, which can provide directional control in emergency braking.
- Electronic stability control (ESC), which can help reduce rollover accidents.

Safety experts say teen drivers' best option is typically a used sedan or cross-over with a four-cylinder engine.

Shop together

Shop with your teens to teach them about dealer practices and negotiating a good deal. Issues to consider include:

- Is the dealer reliable? Check for complaints with the state attorney general's office or the Better Business Bureau.
- Is the vehicle in good shape? Have a mechanic inspect used vehicles. Another option is choosing used cars "certified" as meeting manufacturer standards.
- What is the bottom line? Add sales tax, title fees, and license fees to the sticker price.

Take your time

Both teens and parents can benefit from taking their time in making a first vehicle purchase.

Remember, the longer the teen drives the family vehicle, the more time you'll have to reinforce expectations for good driving behaviors. In the end, that can save lives as well as money.

OUR Loan Professionals are ready to help with all your auto financing needs. Stop by or call today at 248-549-3838.

