FAMILY QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN DETERMINING DRIVING READINESS

This list of questions was developed by autism and driving safety researchers at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) to assist families of autistic teens and young adults who are considering learning to drive. We recommend discussing these questions as a family and with your team of support professionals, including your physician*:

• Do you feel your teen/young adult consistently demonstrates good judgment and maturity at school, around peers, and at home?
• Is your teen/young adult receptive to constructive criticism and instruction?
• Does your teen/young adult demonstrate knowledge of the rules of the road and other skills taught in driver education classes? If not, is specialized instruction or a driving assessment needed?
• Is your teen/young adult agreeable to practicing driving with a skilled adult prior to driving independently? If so, is there an adult willing and able to serve in this important role?
  o Previous research showed that autistic teens/young adults were more likely to be licensed when they had a parent who had previously taught a teen to drive.
• Have you prepared your child to acquire independent life skills in diverse domains, including: personal hygiene, health, food preparation, housekeeping, and transportation?

*Questions to Ask Your Physician
  o Are there any medical or behavioral conditions (such as significant visual impairment) that may prevent your teen/young adult from driving safely?
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LEARNING TO DRIVE
If your child is ready to begin driver’s education and parent-supervised practice, CHOP experts recommend that families:
• Add goals about driving to the child’s individualized education plan (IEP) and follow up with school personnel.
• Seek the advice of a driving rehabilitation specialist or occupational therapist who has training in working with individuals with neurodevelopmental differences.
• Consider treatment for ADHD symptoms, including impulsivity and inattention, if needed.
• Provide plenty of parent-supervised driving instruction in partnership with professional driving instruction. The TeenDrivingPlan Practice Guide from CHOP experts offers online evidence-based instruction in six driving environments, at night, and in inclement weather.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM CHOP
• Center for Injury Research and Prevention at CHOP: Learn about autism and driving research and resources from this Center of Emphasis at the CHOP Research Institute.
  o CHOP Research on Neurodevelopmental Differences and Driving
  o Young Autistic Drivers Crash Less Than Their Non-Autistic Peers
  o Teaching Autistic Adolescents to Drive
  o Newly Licensed Autistic Drivers Crash Less Than Other Young Drivers
  o Many Voices Needed in Autism and Driving Research
  o Can Autistic Teens Drive?

• TeenDrivingPlan Practice Guide: This online resource offers practice driving lessons from CHOP experts, including 54 short videos and tips to create the right learning environment.

• Center for Autism Research at CHOP: Beyond this Roadmap, access helpful information and guidance as your child transitions to adulthood from CHOP experts.

OTHER ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
  • Driver Rehabilitation Institute
  • Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists
  • The Challenge of Driving with Asperger’s, from the New York Times

DriveWise and DriveAdvise, from the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
The Center for Autism Research and The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia do not endorse or recommend any specific person or organization or form of treatment. The information included within the CAR Autism Roadmap & trade; and CAR Resource Directory & trade; should not be considered medical advice and should serve only as a guide to resources publicly and privately available. Choosing a treatment, course of action, and/or a resource is a personal decision, which should take into account each individual’s and family’s particular circumstances.