



MEDIA RELEASE

Department of Public Safety

Ohio Department of Public Safety • Cathy Collins-Taylor, Director
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“Parents Are the Key” Campaign Unites Columbus Parents and Agencies to Keep Teens Safe Behind the Wheel

Car Crashes are the # 1 Killer of Youth

COLUMBUS, OH – Last year, 121 teens were killed in motor vehicle crashes on Ohio roads. To help prevent these deadly crashes, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has brought the “Parents Are the Key” campaign to Columbus. CDC has created a local partnership to conduct a pilot test of the campaign and educate area parents about their important role in keeping teens safe behind the wheel. The pilot test is also being conducted in Central Arkansas.

“Car crashes take thousands of young lives every year, mainly because all new drivers lack experience,” said Dr. Grant Baldwin, Director of CDC’s Division of Unintentional Injury Prevention. “All young drivers – even straight ‘A’ students – face greater risk of a deadly crash. Parents can reduce the risk by actively managing and monitoring their teen’s driving. This is a proven fact.”

The “Parents Are the Key” campaign encourages parents to take several simple, life-saving steps to prevent teen crashes:

- Talk with your teen about safe driving early and often. Emphasize your concern for their well being.
- Extend your teen’s supervised driving period. Schedule as many supervised practice driving hours as possible.
- Understand and enforce Ohio’s Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws. GDL laws help new drivers gain skills under low-risk conditions and are proven to reduce teen crashes and deaths.
- Enforce the rules with a parent-teen driving contract.

CDC has worked in partnership with The Allstate Foundation and other national and local organizations to create the campaign. To spread the word in Columbus, a coalition of diverse organizations has committed time and resources to reaching area parents with “Parents Are the Key” materials. Groups include Center for Injury Research and Policy at The Research Institute at Nationwide Children’s Hospital; Columbus Public Health, Franklin County Safe Communities; Franklin County Board of Health; Grant Medical Center-Trauma Program; National Safety Council, Central Ohio Chapter; Nationwide Insurance; Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics; Ohio Department of Health; Ohio Department of Public Safety; Ohio State University Medical Center, Level I Trauma Center; Riverside Methodist Hospital Trauma Services; Somali Community Access Network: SomaliCAN; and YMCA of Central Ohio.

“Columbus is pleased to be one of the first communities to work with CDC to implement the campaign,” said Cathy Collins-Taylor, director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety. “We’re encouraging all community members to join the effort and spread the word.”

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The “Parents Are the Key” Web site, located at www.cdc.gov/parentsarethekey, offers simple-to-use campaign tools, fact sheets and resources. CDC urges local parents and partners to explore the following materials and promote safe teen driving within their community:

- **Parents Are the Key** provides parents with easy, proven steps to keep their teen safe on the road.
- **8 Danger Zones for Teens Behind the Wheel** details the leading causes of teen crashes and how they can be avoided.
- **Help Spread the Word About Teen Driving** offers suggestions to foster peer-to-peer teen safe driving communication among parents and their circle of friends.
- **Parent-Teen Contract** establishes the rules – along with the potential consequences – before parents hand over the keys to their new driver.
- **Take Action for Safe Teen Driving** provides partners with ideas about how to spread the word within their organization and local community.
- **Newsletter Article** can be tailored for partner groups to share within their organization and/or community.
- **Campaign Posters and Flyers** can be customized with local partner logos – and flyers also include Ohio’s specific GDL Laws, which are proven to prevent crashes.
- **Social Media Tools** provide new technology to communicate teen driver safety information, including a podcast, e-Cards, a widget, and badges and buttons to share with online social networks.

“Teen crashes are preventable,” said Ms. Collins-Taylor. “It’s up to each and every parent to make sure his or her teen is ready to get behind the wheel – because parents are key to keeping teens safe.”

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