



Share the Keys is a program specifically designed to educate parents of teen drivers about the New Jersey Graduated Driver's License program or (GDL) and their roles in the successfully supporting their inexperienced young drivers. *Share the Keys* is approximately 60 minutes in length and designed for parents and their teens in the pre-permit or permit state of licensure (parents and their teens already holding a probationary license will also benefit

Teen aged drivers are involved in nearly 43,000 motor vehicle crashes in New Jersey each year. In our nation, nearly 6,000 teens die and more than 300,000 are injured annually. Driver inexperience plays a major role in these crashes. It takes about 1,000 hours of driving practice, or about two years, before a driver is deemed to be "experienced".

Research from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) has determined that driving can be a dangerous endeavor for teens, especially without parental control of the car keys.

Data from CHOP suggests that an authoritative parent can have a major impact on a teen's safety behind the wheel. The Division of Highway Traffic Safety and Kean University have developed a program with this concept in mind: *Share the Keys*. *Share the Keys* is an evidence-based, data-driven safe driving orientation for parents and teens. The orientation brings parents and teens together as a joint audience, empowering them with information, resources and tools to cultivate safe driving attitudes and behavior.

The orientation has five key objectives:

- *Understanding the Graduated Driver License (GDL)* –The GDL is the most effective tool in reducing teen driver crashes, injuries and deaths. It's imperative that both parents and teens fully understand the law in order to benefit from its lifesaving restrictions.
- *Being a Good Role Model* -- Researchers have found that teens mimic their parent's driving behaviors. Parents can effectively reduce their teen's crash risk by adopting safe driving practices such as obeying the speed limit and avoiding distractions.
- *Effectively Enforcing the GDL at Home* – Forty percent of all fatal crashes involving teen drivers occur after 9pm and teens with just one passenger have nearly twice the risk of being involved in a fatal crash than those who drive alone. By enforcing these two restrictions of the GDL parents minimize their teen's exposure to crash risk.
- *Increasing Practice Driving Hours* – During the first 12-24 months of driving, teens are at the greatest risk for being involved in a crash. Since crash risk decreases with driving experience, it's crucial that parents fit in at least one hour per week of practice driving with their teen driver.
- *Controlling the Keys* -- Research by CHOP revealed that teens who requested permission to use the car were half as likely to be involved in crashes when compared

to teens that had primary access. Parents can establish a verbal contract with their teens by asking them where they are going, who they are going with and when they will be back.

Studies by CHOP have shown with or without GDL programs that parents remain the “true-enforcers” of driving privileges for teens. *Share the Keys* provides parents with a detailed explanation of the New Jersey GDL restrictions and the importance of them staying actively involved with their teen drivers training and probationary driving period.

The program was developed by the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety and Kean University. It is designed to assist the parents of permit and probationary drivers on the intricacies of the GDL laws and to offer positive tips on how to coach their kids during the teen driver training process.

The next *Share the Keys* presentation will be held at the Lenape Valley High School Auditorium on Monday, November 7, 2016 at 7:00 PM.

For more information about the program or to obtain other traffic safety education and training resources, visit www.sharethekeys.com.