



## Learner's Permit Driving Contract: Points to Cover\*

A learner's permit driving contract between you and your teenager with AD/HD might include the following points. (Note: Unless otherwise noted, all tips are aimed directly at the teenager.)

### Ground Rules:

- **Abide by the rules established for use of the family car.** Set strict penalties for driving the car without permission. A teenager with AD/HD may need to be reminded that the learner's permit requires a licensed adult to be with him at all times. (The adults with whom he is allowed to drive should be listed in the contract).
- **You must comply with your medication schedule** in order to be allowed to drive.
- **No passengers except parents will be allowed for at least the first three to six months.** A study reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association shows that the risk of fatal injury for a 16- or 17-year-old driver increases significantly with the number of passengers who are under age 30.
- **Keep a driving log and check in after each trip.** You should note where you drove, how long it took, and what difficulties and distractions you encountered. (You and he can then discuss the log and come up with ways to improve his concentration and avoid problems in the future. Your teen is more likely to learn from his experiences and mistakes if you check in with him).

### While You are Behind the Wheel:

- **You will respect and immediately obey all directions given by the supervising adult.** Any disrespect, swearing, arguing, or disregard for directions will result in pulling the car to the side of the road and the driving lesson will be finished for that day.
- **Always wear a seatbelt.** Lap/shoulder safety belts have been proven effective in reducing serious injury and saving lives. Seat belt use is required by law in every state in the country. Know and follow your state's seat belt laws.
- **No cellular phone use while driving.** If you carry a cell phone keep it turned off to stop incoming calls, and restrict phone use to emergencies. Pull over whenever making a call. Studies show that talking on cell phones reduces attentiveness and increases risk of accident equal to that of intoxicated drivers.
- **Never read maps or take notes while driving.** Pull over to a safe place at the side of the road to perform these tasks.
- **No eating or drinking (even non-alcoholic beverages) while driving.**
- **Limit music sources and choices.** Some drivers with AD/HD find music helps them concentrate. Others find it distracting. Whatever the case, choose a music source that limits distraction. Use only pre-set radio stations, and if using a tape or CD player, carry only one selection per trip to eliminate the temptation to search through the stack or play with operating controls on the sound system while driving.

\*The above suggestions are based on the more comprehensive "Learner's Permit Driving Contract" (pp. 93-94) in the book *AD/HD & Driving: A Guide for Parents of Teens with AD/HD* by Marlene Snyder, Ph.D.

For more information on this topic, see our related article:

"When Teens with AD/HD are Learning to Drive: Parent Strategies"

<http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=856>