



Parent-Teen Homework Assignments to Increase Driver Safety

INFORMATION SHEET FOR HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT #3

KEYS to... Vision, Balance, & Judgment

Purpose

To increase the safety of everyone involved, families should ensure that teens have the safety knowledge, skills, & behaviors related to Vision, Balance, & Judgment.

- ♦ **Goal for Parent:** Make it clear to your teen that you expect her/him to be a safe driver. For Activity #3, assess your teen's knowledge, skills, & behaviors related to vision, balance, & judgment.
- ♦ **Goal for Teen:** Fully explain to your parents the concepts & show them the procedures that you have learned in driver education. For Activity #3, show your parents that you have the knowledge, skills, & behaviors for vision, balance, & judgment.

Instructions

Completing activities may take some time & energy, but the safety impact will be long-lasting!

- ♦ **TOGETHER:** Parents & teens need to: (1) read over this Information Sheet, (2) fully & thoroughly perform the parent-teen activities listed on the Assignment Sheet for Homework Assignment #3, & (3) complete & turn in the Assignment Sheet to your driver education class.
- ♦ **As your family completes the activities, remember to REMAIN PATIENT with each other! This is a new experience for both parents & teens!**

Information for Homework Assignment #3: Vision & Balance

Box A: Use Your Vision Effectively

Safe driving includes constantly searching your path-of-travel for any changes.

Vision—look into the future

- ♦ See a clear path (i.e., make sure line-of-sight & path-of-travel are clear) before putting the car in motion.
- ♦ ALWAYS turn your head to look for traffic & obstacles before turning the steering wheel.
- ♦ When driving, **(1) project your vision as far ahead as possible**, (2) select a stationary object or target in the center of the path you want to travel, & (3) steer toward it.

Search for changes in your path-of-travel

- ♦ To search effectively, you need to know where to look, what to look for, & what to do when you find changes.
- ♦ **Where to look:** Use your **central, side/fringe, & peripheral vision** to systematically search throughout your intended path-of-travel & the surrounding area.
- ♦ **What to look for:** Make sure your line-of-sight & path-of-travel are clear.
- ♦ **What to do when you find changes:** Once you become aware of changes in your line-of-sight or path-of-travel, make safe choices for **speed control and/or lane position**.

Use your mirrors & check your blind spots

- ♦ Always use your mirrors & check your blind spots under the following conditions: when your foot goes on the brake; before & after changing lane positions; before & after changing lanes; before & after turning; when backing up; & when stopped in traffic.
- ♦ **Frequently check your mirrors throughout driving to be aware of your surroundings.**

Box B: Keep Your Vehicle in Balance

Safe driving includes making smooth starts, steering motions, & stops.

Keep your vehicle in balance

- ♦ Jerky starts & stops signal to other road users that there are problems with the vehicle or with the driver.
- ♦ To help keep your vehicle in balance, keep the heel of your right foot on the floorboard to where your toes can easily reach gas or brake pedal.
- ♦ Use the toes of your driving foot (not your whole foot) to apply pressure to the brake or gas pedal.
- ♦ Pivot using your heel to move from one to the other.

Make smooth starts

- ♦ To make smooth starts, ease your foot off the brake & let the vehicle begin to roll on its own.
- ♦ Then apply steadily increasing pressure to the gas pedal.
- ♦ Once you are at speed, readjust pedal pressure to maintain it.

Make smooth motions in steering

- ♦ To make smooth steering motions, turn your head in direction of your intended movement or path-of-travel before turning the steering wheel.
- ♦ Then turn steering wheel with a smooth motion toward the target.

Make smooth stops

- ♦ To make smooth stops, ease your foot off the gas pedal & let the vehicle begin to slow on its own.
- ♦ Then apply steadily increasing pressure to the brake pedal.
- ♦ Close in on vehicles gradually.
- ♦ Stop far enough behind a vehicle to see its rear tires touching the pavement.

Any abrupt changes in balance—starting, steering, or stopping—can result in reduced vehicle control or an out-of-control vehicle.

Information for Homework Assignment #3: Judgment

Box C: Choose Your Speed & Lane Position Wisely

Safe drivers need to be able to determine the best speed & lane positions for driving conditions.

3 speed control options

1. Keep the same speed

2. Decrease speed

3. Increase speed

- ♦ The choice of your speed can help you safely maneuver through or around obstacles in your path-of-travel.
- ♦ If you choose to “decrease speed,” you can do so by easing your foot off the gas pedal & **covering the brake** OR by easing your foot off the gas & **applying the brake**
- ♦ When in doubt, slow down!

Problems with driving too fast for conditions

- ♦ Crash risk & crash severity increase as speed increases.
- ♦ It is more difficult to safely maneuver a vehicle at higher speeds.
- ♦ It is more difficult to steer safely around curves or objects at higher speeds.
- ♦ Small errors in judgment such as oversteering or braking too sharply can result in an out-of-control vehicle.
- ♦ Distances necessary to safely follow & stop are increased at higher speeds.
- ♦ The amount of time available to detect & to react to unexpected events is shortened at higher speeds.
- ♦ At higher speeds, drivers should keep longer distances between vehicles & look farther ahead for changes in your line-of-sight or path-of-travel.

3 lane position options

1. Middle of your lane (lane position 1)

2. Left of your lane (lane position 2)

3. Right of your lane (lane position 3)



- ♦ The choice of the location of your vehicle in your lane can help you safely maneuver through or around obstacles in your line-of-sight & path-of-travel.

Box D: Choose Your Next Move Wisely

Safe drivers need to be able to make accurate judgments to safely navigate roadways & interact with roadway users.

Gap Selection

- ♦ When turning or changing lanes, drivers must determine if there is enough space to maneuver.
- ♦ Only make a move when there is enough space to not only begin, but to complete the maneuver.

Intersections

- ♦ When approaching an intersection, search your intended path-of-travel. Look for traffic lights, signs, cross traffic, pedestrians, etc.
- ♦ Before braking, look in the rearview mirror to identify any problems behind you, such as vehicles being too close
- ♦ When reaching the intersection, search to the left, straight, to the right, & then in whichever direction you plan to travel
- ♦ If you are turning, only make a move when there is an open path to enter.

Approaching curves & hills

- ♦ Once you see a curve/hillcrest in your intended path-of-travel, check your mirrors for potential problems around you.
- ♦ Reduce your speed to get the best speed control depending on the degree of curve/hillcrest.
- ♦ Stay to the right of your lane in case an oncoming vehicle crosses the middle line.
- ♦ Search through the curve/hillcrest for vehicles, pedestrians, signs, etc.
- ♦ Once on the other side, check your mirrors & evaluate your new intended path-of-travel.

Remember, any abrupt changes in steering, speed control, and/or lane position can result in an out-of-control vehicle.

Skid control

- ♦ Keep your eyes focused on where you want the vehicle to go.
- ♦ Ease your foot off pedals—no brake or gas!
- ♦ Steer in the direction to make the front of the vehicle point towards the intended path-of-travel.

Family Activities to Increase Teen Driver Safety: For Now & In the Future

Families should complete parent-teen homework assignments to assess teen knowledge & practice of driver safety.

For Homework Assignment #3, teens will talk to parents about how to do the following:

- ♦ Determine visual searches for changes in your line-of-sight or path-of-travel
- ♦ Determine choice of speed control options & lane position for driving conditions

Families should talk about driver safety OFTEN.

Parents & teens should discuss the following:

- ☐ The importance of vision, balance, & judgment for safe driving
- ☐ The dangers of driving at high speeds

Families need to supervise driving under high-risk conditions OFTEN.

- ☐ Teens should have extensive supervised practice on high-speed roads before they are allowed to drive at high speeds on their own
- ☐ Once licensed, teens should have extensive independent experience driving in low-risk conditions—at lower speeds—before they drive at high speeds

Families should set expectations for driver safety EARLY.

MAKE CLEAR that teens are expected to:

- ☐ Obey all traffic laws & signs, including speed limits
- ☐ Never put yourself or others at risk by driving too fast for conditions

MAKE CLEAR that teens who violate safety expectations will:

- ☐ Lose driving privileges for _____
(write in amount of time)
- ☐ Other: _____
(write in what & amount of time)



Parent-Teen Homework Assignments to Increase Driver Safety

ASSIGNMENT SHEET FOR HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT #3

Vision, Balance, & Judgment

Date:

Student:

Parent:

Phone number:

Instructions

Together, parent & teen need to: (1) read over the Information Sheet for Homework Assignment #3, (2) fully & thoroughly perform the parent-teen activities listed on this Assignment Sheet, & (3) complete & turn in this Assignment Sheet to your driver education class.

- **Materials needed:** Parent, teen, this assignment sheet, the **Driving Pictures** handout, pencil or pen, & vehicle.
- **Time needed:** Each activity can take 10-30 minutes & can be done separately, at different times.
- **Directions:** After completing each activity, check (☑) the box to show that it was completed & then parent rates teen's performance as "good," "fair," or "needs improvement." No matter what the rating, please list comments about teen's performance to help us keep track.
- **Grading:** Grading of Homework Assignment #3 is based ONLY on completing the activities, not on the actual ratings for teen progress. Thus, a "needs improvement" rating will not lower your teen's grade. This information is important for tracking student progress & providing you with feedback for ways to improve.
- **Driving Activities:** For the activities that involve driving, parent should drive so teen can focus on the activity & write down answers. If teen drives, parent will need to write down the answers that teen gives.

☑	Activities for Vision, Balance, & Judgment (Use info from Boxes A-D on the Information Sheet)	Rating (☑) NI = Needs Improvement			
☑	Family Discussion: Vision, Balance, & Judgment. To assess knowledge, teen tells parent about each of the following. Parent checks accuracy using information from Boxes A-D on the Information Sheet	Good	Fair	NI	Comments
☐	The importance of vision, balance, & judgment in safe driving	☐	☐	☐	
☐	The importance of searching the intended path-of-travel	☐	☐	☐	
☐	The 3 options for speed control	☐	☐	☐	
☐	The risks of driving too fast for conditions	☐	☐	☐	
☐	The 3 options for lane position	☐	☐	☐	
☐	How to approach intersections	☐	☐	☐	
☐	How to approach & drive through curves/hill crests	☐	☐	☐	
☐	Conditions that lead to an out-of-control vehicle & how to steer through a skid	☐	☐	☐	
☑	Family Exercise: Driving Pictures. To assess skill, use the Driving Pictures handout. With it, parent & teen do each of the following for each picture.	Good	Fair	NI	Comments
☐	Determine the "target" for driving	☐	☐	☐	
☐	Determine vision ranges for driving—central, side/fringe, & peripheral	☐	☐	☐	
☐	Determine all potential issues related to line-of-sight or path-of-travel	☐	☐	☐	
☐	Determine the 3 most immediate issues	☐	☐	☐	
☐	For those 3 issues, determine the appropriate speed control option (keep the same speed, decrease speed—either cover brake or apply brake, or increase speed) & lane position (middle/lane position 1, left/lane position 2, or right/lane position 3)	☐	☐	☐	

☒	Driving Activity: Curves, Hillcrests, & Intersections. To assess skill, parent drives a predetermined route while teen sits in the front passenger seat & (1) points out & (2) writes down any issues with line-of-sight or path-of-travel for the following.	Good	Fair	NI	Comments
☐	Curves or hillcrests	☐	☐	☐	
	Issues for the first curve or hillcrest	☐	☐	☐	
	Issues for the second curve or hillcrest	☐	☐	☐	
☐	Intersections	☐	☐	☐	
	Issues for the first intersection	☐	☐	☐	
	Issues for the second intersection	☐	☐	☐	
☒	Driving Activity: Speed Control & Lane Position. To assess skill, parent drives a predetermined route while teen sits in the front passenger seat OR family parks in a busy parking lot or near an intersection & teen (1) points out & (2) writes down examples of the following.	Good	Fair	NI	Comments
☐	Other drivers using speed control options	☐	☐	☐	
	Correct Use: Examples (write down the ones you saw):	☐	☐	☐	
	Incorrect Use: Examples (write down the ones you saw):	☐	☐	☐	
☐	Other drivers using lane position options	☐	☐	☐	
	Correct Use: Examples (write down the ones you saw):	☐	☐	☐	
	Incorrect Use: Examples (write down the ones you saw):	☐	☐	☐	