

[Home](#)[Colleges](#)[Grad Schools](#)[High Schools](#)[Online Programs](#)[Community Colleges](#)[Global Universities](#)[National Rankings](#)[State Rankings](#)[High School Notes Blog](#)

in

AK



Go

High School Notes



3 Reasons Why Parents Need to Talk to Teens About Safe Driving

Teen fatalities from car accidents tend to rise in the summer.



Parents should model safe driving behavior to their kids from a young age, one father says.

By [Alexandra Pannoni](#)

June 29, 2015 | 8:00 a.m. EDT

[+ More](#)

Teens have more time for adventures when [high school](#) is out for the summer, but these escapades can often turn deadly when they're driving.

[Ohio](#) dad Brock Dietrich knows this all too well. His 17-year-old daughter, Sydnee Williams, died in a 2013 car crash after using her phone behind the wheel.

"She was not wearing her seat belt either, and so as a result, she was thrown from the vehicle and suffered fatal head trauma," says Dietrich. He now works with the nonprofit organization [Impact Teen Drivers](#) to educate teens and parents on the dangers of driving while distracted and safe driving practices.



Sydnee Williams died at the age of

Parents should keep the following facts in mind when talking to their teen about safe driving.

17 in a car crash after using her phone behind the wheel.

1. Car accidents are the leading cause of death for teens. Plus, the number of teen crash fatalities tends to rise during the summer months, [according to a AAA analysis](#).

These accidents are often preventable. Parents can help by modeling appropriate behavior, such as by turning off or silencing cellphones prior to driving, and by discussing what safe driving looks like, says Dietrich. These actions should begin at an early age and continue once a teen is licensed.

"I have the regret of, I didn't do a good enough job of modeling that normal, good driving behavior for Sydnee," says Dietrich. "I live with the guilt that she learned some of the behaviors from watching me."

[Read about [how teens learn texting while driving from parents](#).]

The [National Safety Council](#) and [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) offer online resources for parents of teen drivers.

2. Often people other than the teen driver get injured or killed. And all states have [graduated driver licensing laws](#), which can include restrictions on passengers for teen drivers.

Dietrich had rules for his daughter that were stricter than laws in his state, he says. The night of the crash, she was only allowed to have one passenger in the car, but actually had two.

"There's lots of rules thrown at teenagers," he says. Teens need an explanation as to why those rules are important – something he says he didn't provide to his daughter – or else they will rebel, he says.

3. About half of teens who died in car accidents weren't wearing a seat belt. Teens have the lowest rate of seat belt use, despite the fact they cut crash-related injuries and deaths by about half, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

One passenger in Sydnee's car was wearing a seat belt appropriately and walked away from the crash physically uninjured, Dietrich says. The other passenger was wearing a seat belt too, but she placed the shoulder harness behind her back and suffered serious injuries.

Dietrich says the passengers told him that on the night of the crash, Sydnee – who typically wore her seat belt – was wearing it early in the evening, but forgot to put it on the last time she got in the car.

"They let what's going on at the time when they get in the car distract them from what they really need to do," he says. Teens need to make a habit of making sure everyone is wearing a seat belt each time they hit the road.

Distractions are often [a factor in teen crashes](#).

[Get [tips to steer your teen into the right online driver's ed class](#).]

"It's not that the teens are intentionally going out there attempting to be reckless," Dietrich says.

He believes that cellphones, for example, have become so ingrained in our culture that when a phone rings, people don't even think before they respond. When someone gets in a car, it's just their natural reaction to look at their phones when they get an alert. Teens may see adults displaying this behavior and think it's OK.

"It comes down to not lecturing to them, but providing the teens with the information to encourage them to make the right decisions when they are in the car," he says.

Have something of interest to share? Send your news to us at highschoolnotes@usnews.com.

ADVERTISEMENT

TAGS: education, students, teens, parenting, high school, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, driving



Alexandra Pannoni is an education staff writer at U.S. News. You can follow her on [Twitter](#) or email her at apannoni@usnews.com.

ADVERTISEMENT

U.S. News **BrandFuse**




The Remedy for Healthcare’s Labor Cost Challenges

Most experts agree that today’s U.S. healthcare model is unsustainable.



Sponsor content presented by: **Accenture**


You Might Also Like




U.S. News College Compass

Get instant online access to full college rankings and complete school data.






2015 U.S. News Best High Schools Rankings



Photos: Top 10 Public High Schools for 2015



Blog: College Admissions Playbook

News	Rankings & Consumer Advice				
News Home	Education	Health	Money	Travel	Cars
Opinion	Colleges	Hospitals	Jobs	Vacations	New Cars
National Issues	Graduate Schools	Doctor Finder	Financial Advisors	Cruises	Used Cars
Cartoons	High Schools	Diets	ETFs	Hotels	Law
Photos	Online Programs	Nursing Homes	Mutual Funds	Hotel Rewards	Law Firms
Videos	Community Colleges	Health Products	Retirement	Airline Rewards	
Special Reports	Global Universities	Health Insurance			
The Report	Arab Universities	Medicare			



[About U.S. News](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Store](#)
[Site Map](#)

[Press Room](#)
[Advertising Info](#)
[Ads – Self-Service](#)

Connect with us: [f](#) [t](#) [g+](#)

Copyright 2015 © U.S. News & World Report LP.
[Terms and Conditions](#) / [Privacy Policy](#).