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For additional information on the digital world of kids, visit the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding's Digital Kids Initiative at digitalkidsinitiative.com.

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CELL PHONES, TEXTING, AND DRIVING AT A GLANCE

- More than 4 out of 5 teen drivers admit to using their cell phone while driving.
- Research shows that hands-free cell phone use while driving is no less dangerous than using a hand-held phone. It's the conversation – not the type of device – that's the distraction.
- Over 39% of all teen drivers admit to texting or emailing while driving in the prior 30 days. Teenage and young adult drivers are the age group most likely to send a text or read an email while driving.
- Teens say that texting is the number one driving distraction.
- Texting and driving is a form of distraction. Almost 80 percent of all vehicle crashes and 65 percent of near-crashes involved some type of driver inattention or distraction during the three seconds before the crash or near-crash.
- Talking on a cell phone while driving impairs drivers at a rate equal to a blood-alcohol level of 0.08.
- The U.S. Department of Transportation reports that cell phones are involved in 1.6 million crashes a year.
- Texting while driving results in 330,000 distracted driving injuries per year.
- About 6,000 people a year die as a result of using their phone while driving.

TEXTING WHILE DRIVING

"In a split second you could ruin your future, injure or kill others, and tear a hole in the heart of everyone who loves you."

SHARON HEIT, MOTHER OF TEXTING WHILE DRIVING VICTIM

"I ignored those warnings about texting while driving because everyone else was doing it. So I thought it was okay. I thought I was invincible. But clearly, I was completely wrong."

LIZ MARKS, WHO SUSTAINED A TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY IN A CRASH WHILE SHE WAS TEXTING WHILE DRIVING AT AGE 17.

WHEN YOU TEXT AND DRIVE...

- You are six times more likely to cause an accident than when driving while intoxicated.
- You are 23 times more likely to crash.
- You are taking your eyes off the road for an average of 5 seconds. At 55 miles per hour, that equals driving the length of a football field while wearing a blindfold.
- Your response time diminishes greatly. The average time it takes a drunk driver to respond and apply the brakes is 4 times more than normal. The average time it takes a texting driver to respond and apply the brakes is 40 times more than normal. Still, most young drivers view texting and driving as less dangerous than drunk driving.
- You risk injuring/killing yourself and others. It results in car crashes that kill an average of 11 teenagers a day.

SAFETY STEPS...

- Know and obey your state's cell phone driving laws. These laws exist for your protection.
- Get in the habit of turning your cell phone off when you get in to the car.
- If you must use your phone while driving, purchase and use a hands-free device that enables you to talk on the phone without using your hands.
- Ask a passenger to read and respond to your text messages.
- Speak up if you are a passenger in the car and the driver is driving distracted.

IF YOU'RE A PARENT...

- Research indicates that parent intervention is a crucial element in helping your driving teen make good choices.
- Teens who do not text and drive are more likely (82%) to have had frequent talks with their parents about safe driving practices than those (67%) teenagers who do text and drive.
- Continue to talk with your teen about safe driving after your teenager gets their driver's license.
- Provide a good example. 77% of teens report that adults close to them instruct them not to text and drive, yet they see the same adults text while driving.
- Drill into your teenager this one simple rule: "On the road. Off the phone."