

PARENT GUIDE

Season 5, Episode 7 – *New Drivers, New Dangers*

(For Parents & Caregivers)

WHAT THIS EPISODE COVERS (Key Takeaways)

From the episode conversation and materials, parents learn:

- Kids learn how to drive long before they ever get a license
 - Adult modeling shapes driving habits more than rules alone
 - Focus, rest, and emotional state affect driving safety
 - Family plans and shared language help kids ask for help early
 - Most kids and teens want to make safe choices
 - Clear expectations reduce risk when teens begin driving
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AGES 6–9 (WITH THE EXPLAINER VIDEO)

Before Watching

Keep it simple:

“This video is about how families stay safe in cars.”

You can add:

“We’re going to make a family plan together.”

During Watching

Pause briefly at key moments:

Traffic Light Brain

- “What color should your brain be to drive safely?”
- “What color means stop and get help?”



Code Word Scene

- “What should our family code word be?”
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After Watching

Make it interactive:

Create a **3-Rule Safe Driving Plan**:

1. Buckles first
2. No distractions
3. Use the code word if something feels unsafe

Choose a fun, easy code word together.

Reinforce:

“If you ever need help getting home safely, we come get you. Safety first.”

AGES 10–13 (USING THE IDEAS WITHOUT THE VIDEO)

Before the Conversation

Frame it as preparation:

“This is about learning skills before you ever drive.”

Ask:

- “What do you think makes driving dangerous?”
 - “What distracts drivers the most?”
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During the Conversation




Discuss:

- How phones, emotions, and fatigue affect focus



- Why it's okay to speak up in a car
- How the **Traffic Light Brain** applies to many decisions

Explain:

-  Green = clear and focused
-  Yellow = tired, distracted, or upset
-  Red = unsafe to drive

After the Conversation

Agree on:

- Who trusted adults are
- How the code word works
- That asking for help is always okay

Reassure:

“We care more about your safety than getting mad.”

AGES 13+ (TEENS)

Acknowledge independence:

“Driving is freedom — and responsibility.”

Conversation focus:

- Distraction, impairment, and tired driving
- Passenger limits and nighttime driving
- Why alcohol or drugs + driving is never safe

Be explicit:

“If you ever need help, we come get you. No punishment that night.”

Introduce the **Family Safe Driving Contract** (below) as a shared agreement.

PARENT-ONLY CONTEXT (FROM THE EPISODE)

(Do not share verbatim with kids)

This episode reinforces a critical truth for parents:

Kids learn how to drive by watching adults long before they drive themselves.

They absorb:

- How you handle stress in traffic
- Whether you put your phone away
- How fast you drive
- How you treat other drivers

Your habits now become their habits later.

Modeling safe driving today supports safer choices years down the road.

PRACTICAL TOOLS YOU CAN USE

1. Model the Behavior

Buckle up, put phones away, fully stop, and stay calm.

2. Use Driving Time as Connection Time

Car rides are often when teens talk the most.

3. Practice the Plan

Review the code word and Traffic Light Brain more than once.

FAMILY SAFE DRIVING CONTRACT

(Kid-friendly but serious — works for all ages)



Family Safe Driving Contract

This agreement helps our family stay safe, make good choices, and know how to help each other.

1. Our Safety Habits

- ☒ Buckle up every time
- ☒ Phones put away while driving
- ☒ Eyes forward, hands on the wheel

2. Traffic Light Brain Check

- Green = clear, focused
- Yellow = pause, ask for help
- Red = do not drive

3. Lifeline Code Word

Code Word: _____

Meaning: "I need help getting home safely."

Agreement:

- No yelling that night
- Safety first
- Talk later when calm

4. Passengers & Safety

- Drivers can say no
- Passengers can speak up
- Anyone can ask to stop

5. Consequences (Teens Only)

Agreed-upon consequences if the plan is broken.

6. Signatures

Driver/Teen: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Caregiver: _____ Date: _____

CORE LINE (CONSISTENT ACROSS EPISODES)

“We don’t have to know everything — we just have to stay connected.”

Important Note for Parents and Caregivers

This parent guide is provided for **educational and informational purposes only**. It is not intended to replace medical, psychological, legal, or substance use treatment advice.

Every child and family situation is different. The strategies and suggestions shared here are meant to support thoughtful conversation and prevention-focused parenting, but they may not apply to all circumstances. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to use their own judgment and to consult qualified professionals when appropriate.

Neither the producers of *Awkward Conversations*, nor the participating organizations, hosts, or guests assume responsibility for decisions made based on this material.

If you believe a child or family member may be at risk of harm, please seek immediate professional support or contact local emergency services

