

Permit-Phase Coaching Plan

COLORADO · FOR PARENTS

This is not a study guide for your teen. It is a plan for the role you are about to take on: supervising driver, calm voice from the passenger seat, and eventually the person who hands over the keys. The legal numbers below are Colorado's; the coaching approach works anywhere.

1 • The Colorado legal frame

PERMIT HOLDING PERIOD (MONTHS)	12
SUPERVISED DRIVING HOURS REQUIRED	50
OF WHICH, NIGHT HOURS	10
EARLIEST INTERMEDIATE LICENSE AGE	16
INTERMEDIATE CURFEW — START TIME	12:00 AM
INTERMEDIATE CURFEW — END TIME	5:00 AM
EARLIEST FULL LICENSE AGE	18

Intermediate passenger restriction

For the first six months after license issuance, a driver under 18 may not carry any passenger under 21 unless a parent or another licensed adult driver is in the vehicle. From six months to one year of licensure, the driver may carry one passenger under 21. After one year, the driver may carry as many passengers as there are seat belts in the vehicle. Siblings and passengers experiencing a medical emergency are exempt from the passenger limit at any stage. Regardless of age tier, the total number of passengers in a vehicle driven by a person under 18 may never exceed the number of seat belts.

The rules you'll be enforcing

HANDS-FREE ALSO BANNED FOR MINORS?	yes
BAC LIMIT — MINOR (UNDER 21)	0.02%

Stage-one passenger limits, hour requirements, and night-driving restrictions are not red tape; each one maps to a leading cause of first-year crashes. Enforce them even when it is inconvenient.

2 • The supervised-hours ladder

The legal minimum above is a floor, not a ceiling. Safety research consistently points to roughly 100 hours of supervised driving as what it takes for solo driving to become reliably safe. Plan to coach past the minimum, and add conditions in this order:

1. **Empty parking lots.** Controls, smooth stops, backing, parking. Stay here until none of it takes thought.

2. **Quiet residential streets.** Signs, right-of-way at uncontrolled intersections, speed discipline.
3. **Arterials and busy local roads.** Lane changes, left turns across traffic, timing gaps.
4. **Highways.** Merging, following distance at speed, exiting.
5. **Night, rain, and weather.** The conditions you avoid in supervised driving are the ones your teen will hit unsupervised first. Do not skip them.

The first ten hours are the most important and the most uncomfortable. Your teen will stall, oversteer, and miss exits. What predicts the outcome is whether the practice continues past the discomfort.

3 • When your teen makes a mistake

Mistakes are guaranteed. What your teen remembers is the next thirty seconds. A framework that works:

During the mistake, say nothing about it. "Pull over when it's safe" is fine. Lectures at 40 mph produce the next mistake.

After they pull over, ask what happened. Not "do you know what you did wrong" but "tell me what you saw and what you decided." The answer tells you whether the issue was perception, judgment, or execution.

Name the rule, not the failing. "The rule is three seconds of following distance" lands. "You're following too close again" doesn't.

Decide whether to keep driving. If the mistake was honest and they're calm, keep going; recovery is part of the lesson. If they're shaken or the mistake was reckless, swap seats and talk about it after dinner.

Your tone sets your teen's tone. A calm correction lands; a sharp one creates the anxiety that produces the next mistake.

4 • Test week, day by day

- **Three days out.** One full-length practice test, untimed. Then timed. The score is a study list, not a verdict.
- **Two days out.** Read the cheat sheet together. Have your teen explain each rule back in their own words; explaining is harder than recognizing.
- **The night before.** Pack the appointment confirmation, IDs, and fee. Verify the office address. Set the alarm earlier than feels necessary.
- **The morning of.** Breakfast. No new material; re-read the cheat sheet, not new chapters. Don't quiz them in the car.
- **At the office.** Wait in the lobby or the car. The knowledge test takes most teens 20 to 40 minutes.
- **After.** Pass or not, take them to lunch. If they didn't pass, retake rules are usually forgiving; the Colorado test-day page covers what to do next.

