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## Professional Driver Teaches Teens to Navigate the Road

Professional auto racer and driver trainer George Csanadi implores parents "don't put a teen behind the wheel without proper technique instruction."

By [Deborah Bostock-Kelley](#) | [Email the author](#) | 10:00am

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Despite their inexperience, a newly-licensed teenage driver is allowed behind the wheel of 3,500 pound lethal weapon, often with siblings or friends, warned about distractions, no texting or talking on the cell phone.

Parents let the teen leave with a promise to contact them when they safely reach their destination.

Statistics say they won't.

According to George Csanadi, owner of [GCS Performance Driving Academy](#), 3837 Northdale Boulevard, 36 percent of all teenage driving accidents are fatalities.

Csanadi also said that 60 percent of all teen car accidents occur in the first 12 months, and about 85 percent in the first three years of driving. Accidents tend to occur most on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, higher during the summer months, statistics show.

"Driving is the most dangerous thing we do every day," said Csanadi.

A native of Budapest, Hungary and a professional auto racer for 18 years, participating in competitions at Daytona International Speedway, Sebring International Raceway, Road Atlanta, Mid-Ohio, and Watkins Glen International, Csanadi offers extensive driving instruction not offered in standard driving schools.

Csanadi has mastered the ability to translate his high-performance driving skills into everyday defensive driving education and instruction for teens and adults.

In 1996, Csanadi taught then 14-year-old [Danica Patrick](#) how to transition from racing karts to race cars. Today, she is the only woman to win an Indy Car race and one of the world's highest paid female sports figures.

Though he enjoys instructing his clients on how to get the best out of their high performance vehicles on the weekend, teaching safe, lifelong driving techniques to teenage drivers has been his primary focus during the week.

"I looked online for a driving school that teaches what I teach, and nothing like this existed," Csanadi said.

Only six months into concentrating on the teenage driving population, he has posted advertising for teen driving and parent and teen driving seminars in local newspapers, but admitted his frustration about the lack of response.

"I don't know how else to reach the parents," said Csanadi. "Parents protect their kids every way possible up to the first 15 years, than that magic number comes and the kids are given a dangerous toy."

Csanadi charges \$45 per hour for his driving instruction, which is often less than dance and vocal lessons, or participation in sports. "I can't understand

how a dance lesson is not as important as a driving lesson."

John Erb, owner of [John Erb Auto Truck and RV Service Center](#), attended a driving seminar given by Csanadi. He was so impressed by his message that Erb backed Csanadi's \$25 seminar registration with a matching gift certificate to be used for service at his shop.

Erb said that his grandson sat in on Csanadi's driving seminar, and that he would like to get him in his 10 hour driving training.

"Everyone can benefit from driving lessons, especially a novice," Erb said. "A teenager is pretty close to untrained when he gets his license. The small amount of training they get from the school system is inadequate and provable by statistics. The cost of George's 10 hour (driver training) class is much less than the deductible on his first collision."

Csanadi says that he teaches defensive driving techniques to heighten awareness and performance of new teen drivers, hoping to reduce accidents caused by "driver error."

In order for a teen to get their license, they must be taken out and practice day and evening driving for a minimum of 50 hours. After the 50 hours is met, they must take a multiple choice test, in some locations now online, answer only 15 out of 20 questions correctly and pass a minimal driving test.

Though the Department of Motor Vehicles requires a parent or guardian signature on a form ensuring that the teen has practiced 50 hours, some parents sign the form without meeting the requirement.

"The parents are the driver trainers. Even if they are plumbers, they become driving instructors," Csanadi said. "Sometimes, they're tired or busy or not good drivers themselves. But don't cheat kids out of something this important."

Csanadi offered a suggestion for keeping track of their child's driving hours.

"Ideally, I would like to work with the child at least for the beginning of the first 10 hours, than if the parent wants to take over, I recommend to all my parents to keep a log book in the glove box," he said. "Keep an accurate record of how many hours and miles your child drove."

Sujata Mistry hired Csanadi to train her 15 year old daughter, Natasha, who had never driven before.

"He gave her eight to 10 hours of lessons, and she gained confidence," said Mistry. "George was very good. He taught her very patiently. After the lessons, he gave us feedback of how she did and where she needs improvement."

Csanadi said people have confusion between the difference of operating a vehicle and driving a vehicle.

"Driver's Education is out there," he said, pointing outside to the street. "Not in a parking lot."

*Learn more about teen driving instruction, performance driving instruction and upcoming performance driving events, as well as teen driving seminars at [www.gcsmotorsports.net](http://www.gcsmotorsports.net).*

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