

The Fast and the Furious:
The Dangers of Teenage Driving
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Abstract

Each year, thousands of American teens are killed by car wrecks, and experts are calling this an “epidemic.” Kansas laws are far too lenient towards teen drivers, and stricter laws must be enacted. Some of the changes that should be enacted include raising the minimum age for an unrestricted driver’s license; preventing teen drivers from transporting teenage passengers; forbidding cell phone usage; and limiting teens’ nighttime driving. It is society’s responsibility to take action against these driving dangers and save the lives of teens.

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Sometimes, all it takes is a split second to change a life forever. In a heartbeat, an ordinary car trip can end in a deadly wreck. Brakes screech, and two cars collide with the sound of metal scraping against metal and the crunching and shattering of glass. Within seconds, the once gleaming cars are reduced to unrecognizable pieces of twisted wreckage. Police cars and ambulances rush to the scene, but often, it is too late. Although many teenagers believe they will never have to experience the frightening nightmare of a car wreck, statistics show that for young drivers, car accidents are an all-too-present reality. *Wichita Eagle* reporter O'Toole states that, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Association, "Fatal accidents—caused mostly by inattentive driving and inexperience—are the leading cause of death among 15 to 20 year olds" (2007, p. 5A). Statistics like these, however, are frequently ignored by both teens and parents. Sometimes it takes a tragic accident for people to realize just what a lethal weapon a car can be in the hands of a teenager.

Alex Betancourt and his wife Lulu understand this heartbreaking truth all too well. Their daughter Alicia was described as "a bright, talented artist" and "as responsible a 16 year old as you could find" (Stafford, 2005, para. 1, 2). The Betancourts trusted and respected their daughter, so they had few qualms about letting her go out on a date with a 16-year-old boy. They had no idea that as they told Alicia goodbye that evening, it would be the last time.

References

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