

Dear Educator,

When it comes to driving safety, we tend to think of driver responsibilities. Yet passengers also have responsibilities—from wearing seat belts and not distracting the driver, to speaking up if a driver (or another passenger) is being reckless, to refusing to ride with a driver who is unsafe or should not be behind the wheel.

This year, the National Road Safety Foundation (NRSF) is focusing its annual Drive2Life PSA Contest on passengers and empowering them to speak up for safe driving. NRSF has teamed up with Young Minds Inspired to create a program that provides students with important passenger safety facts and tips to help them avoid unsafe situations. The activities also support language arts, health, media, and communication lessons.

The program concludes with an activity that challenges students to enter the **2023 Drive2Life PSA Contest** by writing a short script (not more than two pages) for a 30-second video that will empower passengers to speak up for driving safety. All students ages 13 to 19 in grades 6–12 can enter for the chance to win one of these great prizes:

- **Grand Prize:** One student Grand Prize winner will receive \$2,000 and the chance to produce their PSA script with an Emmy Award-winning producer. Plus, the winner and their PSA will be featured on Teen Kids News.
- **Runner-up Prizes:** Four student runners-up (two from grades 6–8 and two from grades 9–12) will receive \$500 each and will have their name, school, city, state, and PSA title posted on the NRSF website.
- **Teacher Prizes:** The teacher of each student winner will receive a \$100 Visa gift card!

The **contest deadline is March 21, 2023**. Visit ymiclassroom.com/drive2life for complete contest details, entry forms, and the official rules.

We hope you will share this program with other teachers in your school. And please let us know your opinion of these learning materials by visiting ymiclassroom.com/feedback-drive2life. We look forward to your comments.

Sincerely,



Dr. Dominic Kinsley
Editor in Chief
Young Minds Inspired



PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Available at ymiclassroom.com/drive2life:

- This two-page teacher's guide
- A reproducible student activity sheet
- A reproducible take-home letter for parents/caregivers
- **Drive2Life PSA Contest** Overview, Entry Form, and Official Rules
- PSA lesson and student handouts
- Standards alignment chart
- Program feedback form at ymiclassroom.com/feedback-drive2life

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Raise awareness and empower students to speak up and intervene if a driver or other passengers are being unsafe
- Support language, communication, and creative skills with the **2023 Drive2Life PSA Contest**

HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM

Download, photocopy, and distribute the reproducible activity sheet to all students. Prepare the materials for the activity. Distribute the take-home letter to help parents and guardians continue the conversation at home.

USING THE ACTIVITY SHEET PASSENGERS: SPEAK UP FOR SAFE DRIVING!

Start the activity by asking students what they do when they're a passenger in a car. Ask: *Do you buckle your seat belt automatically? Do you talk a lot? Are you aware of the level or volume of your voice? Do you share things with the driver to look at while driving, like text messages and images?* Have the students reflect on the questions; then ask how they can support the driver as a passenger.

Next, if you have student drivers, ask them what they experience when they have passengers in the car. Ask: *Do passengers distract you? Are the passengers considerate? Do you set any parameters or rules for your passengers to help you focus on driving?*

Tell students that 2019 statistics show that*:

- 62% of all traffic fatalities were passengers.
- 13% of people who died in alcohol-related fatalities were passengers.
- 53% of children killed in alcohol-related crashes were passengers.



nrsf.org

**SPEAK UP
FOR SAFE
DRIVING**



Explain that passengers share a responsibility for road safety with drivers. Ask the students: *How can passengers demonstrate their responsibility for road safety?* Next, distribute the activity sheet. Review the directions for Part 1, and then have the students complete the chart on their own or with a partner. Before proceeding to Part 2, review the answers and ask students to correct any unsafe behaviors.

Answers: Part 1:

1. Safe
2. Unsafe – Passengers and drivers should speak at a conversational level.
3. Unsafe – Passengers should not distract the driver by playing with the radio station.
4. Safe
5. Safe
6. Safe
7. Unsafe – Passengers should encourage the driver to keep their eyes on the road; the text can wait or be read aloud if important.
8. Safe
9. Unsafe – Passengers who are being loud and moving around in the car can distract the driver; they should act calmly and speak at a conversational level.
10. Unsafe – Passengers should be alert and not let friends who are extremely tired drive; they should make other arrangements for themselves and the driver.

Using examples of unsafe drivers from the chart (drivers impaired, tired, talking on the phone, driving recklessly), ask students: *What should the passengers in these situations do to keep themselves and the driver safe?* Share the following answers with students if they don't suggest them:

- Tell the friend not to drive and that they won't get into the car with them.
- Tell the friend they're not comfortable driving with them.
- Speak up and do not let an impaired friend drive.
- Remind the friend of the possible consequences and that it's not worth it.
- Take the car keys.
- Offer an alternative or arrange another ride for themselves and their friend.
- Tell the friend to stop the car so that they can get out if the driver becomes reckless.
- Call their family for a ride.

For passengers who may not be comfortable speaking up, ask students what they might do to avoid getting in a car with an impaired driver or to get out of the car if a friend is being a reckless or unsafe driver. Teens might:

- Create a "safe word" with their families that they can text to them signaling that they need help. The parent/caregiver will then call explaining that they need the teen to come home and that they will pick them up.
- Give the driver a reason to stop the car by using one of the "three Ps"—say "I have to pee" or "I have to puke" or "I hear the police" to make the driver stop.

Explain to students that it's not always easy to speak up to our friends, but remind them that in these situations, their lives and their friend's life (the driver) are at stake, as well as the safety and well-being of other people that they might encounter on the



road. Practicing how to respond in these situations can help prepare us to speak up when it matters.

Have students work in teams to complete Part 2 and take turns role-playing the passenger and the driver. Then have them share their responses to help reinforce the importance of speaking up in these potentially dangerous situations. Answers will vary.

TAKE-HOME LETTER

We encourage you to make copies of the take-home letter or include a link to it in email communications with parents and caregivers to inform them about Drive2Life and provide them with tips for talking with their children about passengers speaking up for safe driving to help keep your community safe.



2023 DRIVE2LIFE PSA CONTEST

To enter the **Drive2Life PSA Contest**, students ages 13 to 19 in grades 6–12 must write a script not more than two pages on 8.5 x11-inch paper for a 30-second PSA video to empower passengers to speak up for safe driving. See the Contest Overview, Entry Form, and Official Rules at ymiclassroom.com/drive2life for contest details and entry information. Entries may be submitted online or by mail by teachers or parents/caregivers.

Deadline: Entries submitted online must be received by 11:59 p.m. ET on March 21, 2023. Entries submitted by mail must be postmarked by March 21, 2023, and received by March 28, 2023. For a supporting lesson on creating PSAs, download the PSA Lesson at ymiclassroom.com/drive2life.

RESOURCES

- National Road Safety Foundation – nrsf.org
- We Save Lives – wesavelives.org
- NationalPassengerSafety.org
- YMI Drive2Life – ymiclassroom.com/drive2life

Passengers: Speak Up for Safe Driving!

Anyone in the driver’s seat of a car has a big responsibility. They need to follow driving laws and traffic rules to keep themselves and others safe on the roads. *What about passengers?* Like drivers, passengers also have responsibilities. For everyone’s safety, passengers need to be considerate and refrain from doing things that disturb or distract the driver. Passengers also need to speak up to protect themselves and others if a driver or other passengers are being reckless or if a driver should not be behind the wheel.



PART 1 Imagine a few friends are driving together. Review the list of passenger actions and behaviors in the chart below. Decide if each action is safe or unsafe and put a checkmark in the corresponding column.

Passenger Action or Behavior	Safe	Unsafe
1. Buckles up before the car starts moving.		
2. Speaks very loudly so the driver and everyone else can hear.		
3. Changes the radio station to skip commercials.		
4. Asks the driver to let it go to voicemail if they get a phone call.		
5. Keeps music at a regular listening level.		
6. Won't let a friend drive buzzed, drunk, or drugged.		
7. Shows the driver a funny text message to read.		
8. Says "Stop it" if the driver is being reckless or unsafe while driving.		
9. Has a loud, lively discussion with the other passenger.		
10. Talks non-stop with a driver who is feeling sleepy to help them stay awake.		

PART 2 For their own safety, passengers need to speak up when a driver makes them uncomfortable or if they feel that they are in danger. This might mean not getting into a car or asking the driver to pull over safely so the passengers can get out. Read each situation below. What would you do if you were the passenger? Write your answers on the back of this sheet and then role-play your responses with your partners.

- Your friend is taking you home after school and they're talking to their cousin on the phone. They're more focused on the call than the road and miss a stop sign.
- Your friend's brother and his friends pick you and your friend up from a Friday night football game. They're super loud. You see beer cans in the car.
- Your friend has been sick with a bad cold but wants to go to the mall. The friend tells you that they're taking medicine and will collect you in 30 minutes. When they pick you up, you notice that they look sleepy.
- You're walking home from school and your friends drive by. They tell you to jump in and they'll give you a ride home. You get in the back and as you pull away the other passengers start arguing over a text and grabbing a phone from each other.

PASSENGER TIPS FOR SPEAKING UP FOR SAFE DRIVING

- If your friend is impaired:
 - Don't get in the car. Tell them not to drive.
 - Tell your friend you're not comfortable.
 - Remind your friend that the possible consequences aren't worth it.
 - Arrange another ride for both of you.
 - Call your family for a ride.
- If your friend is driving recklessly, tell them to stop and get out.
- If you're hesitant about being direct, use the "Three Ps" – just say:
 - I've got to pee!
 - I've got to puke!
 - I hear the police!
- Create a "safe word" with your family that you can text them to signal you need a ride. When they receive the text, they will call and say that they need you to come home and are coming to pick you up.

