

Youth Engagement in Road Safety



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Youth are one of the most at-risk populations for road crashes, injuries and fatalities in Canada. We need to shift away from victim-blaming youth and labelling them as the cause of unsafe roads and toward enabling youth empowerment by equipping them with knowledge, skills and strategies to become safer drivers and community advocates.

Did you know?

Road crashes are the
**3rd LEADING
CAUSE OF DEATH**
among young people aged
15 to 24 years old in Canada

Youth and young adults are
killed in road crashes at a
↑ HIGHER RATE
than any other age
group under 75 years old

Young people account for
**1/4 OF ALL ROAD-
RELATED INJURIES
AND FATALITIES**
even though they only make
up 13 per cent of licensed
drivers in Canada

Why youth are more vulnerable to road crashes, injuries and fatalities



Beliefs and perceptions

Young people's risk perception is dependent on context and influenced by optimism bias – where they underestimate the risk of negative outcomes and overestimate their driving ability.



Driver experience and knowledge

Driver inexperience can mean decreased knowledge and understanding of road rules, inability to safely navigate through dangerous driving scenarios and decreased skill in safe and routine vehicle control.



Peer influence

Driving with a teenage passenger is a unique risk factor for young drivers as peers can exert social influence, and pressure the driver to engage in behaviour that favours more risky driving.



Brain development

The brain is not fully developed until age 25, particularly in males. An immature brain can result in poor judgment, poor organization, poor planning and decision-making, behavioural disinhibition, increased impulsivity and increased sensation-seeking.

Why youth engagement in road safety is important

- ✓ Leads to more effective youth programming and messaging
- ✓ Increases the likelihood of youth adopting injury prevention strategies when they are involved in knowledge generation
- ✓ Contributes to positive youth development as youth increase their confidence and sense of responsibility through participation and decision-making
- ✓ Enhances organizations' relationships with and understanding of younger generations
- ✓ Creates healthier and safer youth

More information on types of youth engagement and recommendations on how to apply them can be found in the For Young Drivers, By Young Drivers framework. Visit <https://parachute.ca/en/program/for-young-drivers-by-young-drivers/>