Kelley Blue Book's 2023 Best Cars for Teens - Information Every Parent Needs

Experts Provide Comprehensive Advice for National Teen Driver Safety Week

ATLANTA, Oct. 18, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- The time eventually comes when most teens need their own vehicle, whether it is for driving to school, work, activities or even heading off to college. Oftentimes parents feel overwhelmed with the choices available and the many factors they need to consider, from budget to safety features and beyond. To help guide parents as they make these important decisions and in honor of National Teen Driver Safety Week (October 15 – 21, 2023), the experts at Kelley Blue Book, a Cox Automotive company, created 2023's Best Cars for Teens: The List Every Parent Needs. The list includes recommended used cars at various price points, along with helpful advice and things parents should consider as they make this major purchase decision.

Teen Drivers: At-a-Glance Stats

- The United States Department of Transportation reports that teen car crashes are the leading cause of death for 15- to 18-year-olds in the United States.
- According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), teens drive less than all but the oldest people (80+), yet their instances of crashes and crash deaths are unreasonably high. In the United States, the fatal crash rate per 100 million miles driven is more than twice the rate compared with drivers ages 20 to 79.
- The most significant risk is at ages 16 and 17.
- In 2020, 60% of deaths among passenger vehicle occupants ages 16 to 19 were drivers of the vehicle.
- The latest IIHS data shows more than 1,000 teen drivers between 15 and 20 years old died in crashes, taking 597 teen passengers with them.

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"When it comes to considering the right vehicle for your teen driver, it's all about safety," said Brian Moody, executive editor for Kelley Blue Book. "For teen drivers, all cars aren't equal. While your teen might be thinking only of their dream car, parents need to balance a vehicle's cost with its safety features. The statistics around teen drivers are quite sobering, so when weighing all the vehicle choices, it really should be 'safety first.'"

Advice for Parents of Teen Drivers: DOs

- Do balance the potential vehicle's cost with the safety features it includes.
  - If budget allows, 2013-and-newer vehicles come with what the Kelley Blue Book experts consider the "big three" of safety features: anti-lock brakes, traction control and stability control, as required by the federal government. Beginning in 2018, carmakers also had to comply with a federal mandate to include rearview cameras in new cars.
  - In addition to regular maintenance costs, factor into the budget the potential cost of repair and bodywork.
- Do take insurance considerations into account – adding a teenager to your car insurance is costly.
  - Your insurance premium can inflate by 150% or more, and it usually is more for a male teen than a female.
  - Some cars are more expensive than others to insure, but the bulk of the new driver's added insurance cost is liability coverage.
  - Involve your insurance agent early in the process - they are the only

person who can accurately ballpark what your new premium might be, and they can help you understand any discounts your provider may offer to reduce the insurance burden.
- Do enroll your teen in a driver safety program. Not only can this possibly lower your insurance costs, but such programs help hone a young driver's awareness and skills.

Advice for Parents of Teen Drivers: DON'Ts

- Don't buy certain types of vehicles for new teen drivers, per the Kelley Blue Book experts. These include:
  - Tiny City Cars – they may be more affordable and get better gas mileage than compact or midsize cars, but in a contest with a full-size truck or SUV on the road, they will always come out in second.
  - Sports Cars – they may look cool, but they could tempt your teenager to drive beyond his or her skill.
  - Big SUVs or Pickup Trucks – they may surround your teen with more metal, but they could be too big for your teen to handle, they are challenging to park and fuel-economy is an issue.
  - High-Horsepower Cars – while they may be at the top of the list for some teen drivers, increased horsepower translates into higher insurance premiums and more potential for trouble.
- Don't let your teen driver dictate buying decisions based on their idea of a dream car – flex your parental muscles, stay grounded and be sure to heavily weigh safety factors in your choices.

Advice for Parents of Teen Drivers: Important Key Safety Features to Consider

- Safety technology gets expensive, and it's one of the factors pushing up the sticker cost of new cars. If your family can afford to buy a new car for your teen, look for a vehicle that has all of the following features:
  - Advanced Safety and Driver-Assist Features: anti-lock brakes, traction control, stability control, forward-collision warning, blind-spot monitoring.
  - Other Features to Consider for Safety: outboard mirrors with turn-signal indicators; power-adjustable driver's seat; tilt-and-telescopic steering wheel; automatic climate control; LED headlights and taillights; automatic high beams; adaptive cruise control; hill-start assist; head-up display; infotainment system with voice recognition; airbags (at least six); auto on-off headlights; 360-degree cameras.
- If you're buying a used car, your chances of finding more of these safety features improves with the newer the car.
  - These features may not come standard on the base model, so you may need to shop for a mid- or upper-level trim. Generally speaking, the higher trim level you can find, the more safety features the car is likely to have.
- Several carmakers, including Chevrolet, Ford, Kia, Hyundai, Lexus, Toyota and Volkswagen, offer some type of programmable driving monitor to help keep track of and set limits for your teen driver.

Kelley Blue Book's Best Cars for Teens Lists

When creating the Best Cars for Teens lists, the Kelley Blue Book experts set specific parameters. Pricing was based on Kelley Blue Book Fair Purchase Price range. Where a model offers both a sedan and hatchback, pricing was used for the sedan. All picks in the "Under $20,000" list come with the advanced safety and driver-assist features listed above. The "Under $20,000" vehicles listed all have at least a "Good" rating in at least five of the IIHS crash tests, but almost all the vehicles listed are a Top Safety Pick or Top Safety Pick+. While older vehicles often are not available with all the latest safety features, the vehicles selected in the more affordable Best Cars for Teens lists have many of them and performed very well in NHTSA and IIHS testing. All vehicles listed are lauded for their reliability and fuel economy.

Kelley Blue Book's Best New Cars for Teens Under $30,000	
1. 2023 Toyota Prius	5. 2024 Subaru Crosstrek
2. 2024 Honda Civic	6. 2023 Hyundai Kona
3. 2024 Toyota Corolla	7. 2024 Chevrolet Trailblazer
4. 2024 Kia Seltos	8. 2024 Nissan Sentra

Kelley Blue Book's Best Used Cars for Teens Under $20,000	
1. 2017 Toyota RAV4	6. 2017 Honda Accord
2. 2018 Mazda CX-5	7. 2017 Toyota Prius
3. 2017 Honda CR-V	8. 2018 Kia Sportage
4. 2020 Toyota Corolla	9. 2018 Honda Civic
5. 2019 Mazda Mazda3	10. 2019 Chevrolet Equinox

Kelley Blue Book's Best Cars for Teens Under $15,000	
1. 2018 Kia Soul	4. 2015 Honda CR-V
2. 2017 Toyota Corolla	5. 2016 Mazda CX-5
3. 2018 Mazda Mazda3	6. 2015 Toyota Prius

Kelley Blue Book's Best Cars for Teens Under $10,000	
1. 2013 Honda Accord	5. 2015 Honda Civic
2. 2013 Toyota Camry	6. 2009 Toyota RAV4
3. 2014 Mazda Mazda3	7. 2010 Honda Element
4. 2013 Toyota Corolla	8. 2011 Toyota Avalon

Kelley Blue Book's Best Cars for Teens Under $5,000	
1. 2006 Honda Civic	4. 2006 Honda Pilot
2. 2007 Toyota Corolla	5. 2004 Toyota Prius
3. 2005 Toyota Avalon	6. 2002 Toyota Highlander

For more information about the Best Cars for Teens from Kelley Blue Book, including detailed expert reviews, safety information for each model and more, visit https://www.kbb.com/best-cars/teens/.

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