




ajc.com
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

 **PRINT THIS**

 [Click to Print](#)

[EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

[ajc.com](#) > [Living](#)

Parents can help young drivers stay safe on road

By [VIRGINIA ANDERSON](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Published on: 07/04/06

Traffic fatalities involving 16- to 20-year-old drivers declined by only 61 deaths in a decade, despite efforts such as graduated licensing laws and increased safety belt usage, a physicians' group focused on teen traffic deaths reported last week.

It's a particularly scary message during a holiday week, when young people are driving to lakes, beach houses, fireworks and other celebrations on crowded roads — and sometimes under the influence of alcohol, said a spokesman for End Needless Deaths on Our Roadways, a nonprofit group of doctors and healthcare professionals.

The number of deaths involving a 16- to 20-year-old driver was 8,596 in 1994, and 8,535 in 2004.

That's not a significant decline — in fact, it's verging on disappointing, said Dr. Thomas Esposito, a trauma surgeon in Chicago and co-chairman of the End Needless Deaths group.

"These are not accidents; these are predictable occurrences," Esposito said.

He believes that the high number of deaths among young drivers is proof that the United States must take the issue more seriously. That means stronger laws and enforcement of existing laws, better engineering of cars and the objects they are likely to hit — such as concrete impediments and utility poles — and more education.

We asked Esposito what role parents can play.

Q: Would it help to raise the driving age?

A: I truly believe it would, from the scientific basis of lack of brain and reflex maturation. But you get into issues of profiling and people saying you are denying civil liberties. But if somebody in your neighborhood was raising mosquitoes with West Nile virus, you'd be screening them, wouldn't you?

Q: What can parents do to help keep their kids safe and make them safe drivers?

A: It starts young — instilling in them certain values, wearing safety belts. Kids imprint and take up the behavior of adults. Sometimes scare tactics work, and sometimes they don't.

Q: What's the most important thing to tell a young person who's about to get his or her driver's license?

A: Your life is precious. You need to take responsibility for that life and for others. You need to think about what you do.

Find this article at:

<http://www.ajc.com/living/content/living/stories/0704LVCARCRASH.html>

 [Click to Print](#)

[EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.



Pinehurst at Heron Bay
Locust Grove, Henry County
678-610-5500

BRAYSON HOMES
BRAYSONHOMES.COM
Love Your Home