



Tips for Safe Driving... in a Family Driven System of Care.

Warning

- This is not a joy ride.
- The stakes and the risks are HIGH for all!

Plan with Care

- Consider alternative routes;
- Research the pros and cons before making choices (ask for the data);
- Use maps and traveling tips from other families and youth; and
- Consult with knowledgeable and experienced traveling companions.

Drive with Care

- Know where you want to go;
- Get the training you need;
- Recognize the help you need to get there safely; and
- Have companions watch for landmarks, hazards, and detours.

Take Precautions

- Know where to get emergency help;
- Have a plan for getting back on the road after a setback;
- Have all the needed supplies on hand;
- Take good care of everyone – especially yourself;
- Have a back-up driver available; and
- Make your companions as comfortable as possible.

Help Others

- Share what you did, how you did it, and what you learned;
- Teach youth how to drive responsibly;
- Support others in their journeys; and
- Celebrate success together

Ways to Take the Wheel --- at the start

- Ask about the steps ahead and what to expect along the way.
- Ask about including other agencies involved with your child and family and getting relevant information from them (such as an IEP).
- Ask for referrals for services to meet your child's needs.
- Ask for explanations of all options and ask for the support your family would need to make things work for your child.
- Request services that teach your child how to adapt successfully in their schools and communities.

Ways to Take the Wheel --- as things move along

- Find out about all opportunities to participate in planning and advocate for your child's and your family's services and supports.
- Consult with professionals to learn the evidence about the kinds of treatments, services, and supports that can help achieve your goals.
- Seek opportunities to develop new skills to build (or rebuild) and sustain good relationships with your child.
- Insist on making discharge, and aftercare plans for reintegration into the community at the outset of out-of-home care.
- Ask for help to find the right services and providers and funding to pay for them.

Ways to Take the Wheel --- sustaining gains

- Request services that support your child's gains and will help insure they continue to adapt successfully in their schools and communities.
- Ask for supports that can help your family cope with the stress at home – including support for siblings.
- Seek services that promote wellness and resilience.
- Insist on services that build on your child's and family's strengths and counterbalance risk factors.

Ways to Take the Wheel --- at a Judicial Proceeding

- Find a family advocate attached to the court or other knowledgeable and trustworthy person who can help you learn what you need to know and prepare for court.
- Ask for a description of the courtroom and the court proceedings before hand – including any security measures you are likely to encounter.
- Get help to prepare any statements you wish to make during the proceeding.
- Request transportation, child care, and qualified, professional translators (if necessary) so you can fully participate in the hearing.

(These tips were copied from the Technical Assistance Partnership for Child and Family Mental Health – Family Involvement Resources and can be accessed at: <http://systemsofcare.samhsa.gov/headermenus/familydriven.aspx>)