

Supervisor's Guide

Being there for your learner driver

How you can help them become a safer solo driver:

Support

Discussion

Effort

Much practice

Frequent practice

Varied practice



This document brings together the pages from the Supervisor's Guide on the *key2drive* website. As such it is not formatted as a stand-alone booklet. A table of contents and page numbers have been added to make navigation easier. Accredited driving instructors can download this document from the instructor's part of the site. The document layout is designed for double-sided printing.

www.keys2drive.com.au

Supervisors Guide

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Introduction

You accept the *keys2drive* challenge – you want to help your learner driver achieve a good foundation for lifelong safe driving – six months on P plates with zero harm. This guide will help you achieve that target.

This is not a guide on how to teach basis driving skills. There are many other complementary resources that do this.

The single best protective measure for safe P plate driving is meaningful experience on L's: this requires lots and lots of useful driving practice. In fact, when you supervise a learner driver, you may actually be safer than when you drive normally; learner drivers are involved in far fewer casualty crashes than experienced drivers.

You provide meaningful experience through diversity of driving situations by helping your learner question those experiences before, during, and after them. Read more about this on the pages that explain how to provide long, wide and deep experience.



About the contents

The following is a brief summary of each topic

Quickly tell me what I need to know – a snap shot of essential information

You can both feel in control – how to feel in control without controlling your learner

How to find the time for supervised drives – ideas for saving and using time effectively

Before you drive checklist – the must knows and tips for a safe and legal start

Calm is good – how to maintain a learner friendly environment

Manage confusion and surprises – they're not all bad; it's how you manage them

Question how you're going – you're both learning so you both need feedback

Help provide long experience – do a lot of driving and eventually basic driving skills will become automatic

Help provide wide experience – do a lot of different driving and frequently have driving experiences that are new and challenging

Help provide deep experience – do a lot of thinking about the different driving experiences you have, discover much about yourself, your driving and how others affect you.

Manage the P plate risk – there's a lot you can both be doing

Quickly tell me what I need to know

Immediately drivers move from L's to P's their risk of being in a crash jumps dramatically and stays extremely high for about six months. The abrupt change in circumstances from being closely supervised on L's and being told what to do, to unsupervised on P's, often means they're not ready to "find their own way".

Supervised

"Do as I say"

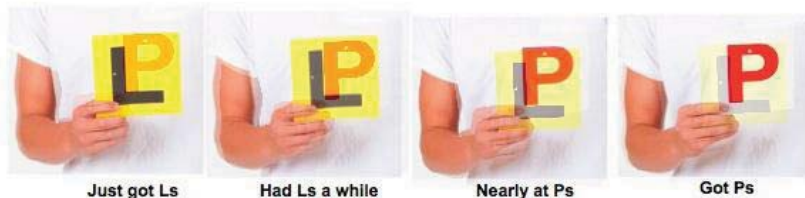


Unsupervised

"Now find your own way"

Supervised

"Find your own way and I'll help you in whatever ways I can for as long as you want"



Unsupervised

Your challenge is to avoid saying, "Do as I say" and help your learner "Find Their Own Way". Gradually they should become responsible for their own learning. The sooner you can move safely to this arrangement the better. On P's they will have much to learn about the new circumstances without you alongside to help. Your learner driver needs to acquire the skills of learning on their own when they start their P's

In your role as a supervisor saying, "Find Your Own Way", does not mean you have to be out of control. To better understand this concept read the section titled "You can both feel in control". You will have done a great job as a supervisor if you have helped your learner get lots and lots of diverse driving experience and at the end of it, they say to you:

- It felt like we were learning together
- We talked lots about driving situations I got in and what we both thought and felt about them
- We both listened closely to what each other had to say

What would your learner driver say right now if you asked them?

You can both feel in control

You are an experienced driver and are used to feeling in control of the car. You will now be sitting in the passenger's seat alongside a driver who has very little behind-the-wheel experience. You may feel a need to control the car by controlling the driver. Your learner may see you as being controlling. That is a recipe for trouble and it does not help your driver learn to take control of their safety.

This section will assist you in understanding how you can feel in control without being controlling.

The desire to teach and control is natural and understandable. However, how much control will you have when your learner driver commences P plate driving?

Why not put effort into preparation for this and start by exploring the current situation. Ask your learner:

'Do you think I'm being controlling and telling you what to do?'

If the answer is **yes**, ask:

'Why do you think that is?'

'What is the outcome we both want? How can we work together?'

Move to a situation where you can agree on the outcome and respect each other's needs.

The driving of learner drivers should never be 'out of control', so help them 'find their own way' *gradually*.

If they want to immediately take full control of where they go and what they do, use questions to keep their determination in check. Try these types of questions:

'If we do that, what do you think could happen? How do you think you will go at that?'

If you're still worried, say, 'That would make me feel uneasy, why do you think that is? How could we compromise?'

You can expect several false starts, recognising that, for some, being told what to do may be the most appropriate approach in the beginning.

The more learners see themselves as learners the more they are likely to listen to you and appreciate guidance. Here a progress chart is useful. Keep the progress slow and spend much time getting good at each task. Make tasks more challenging rather than rush on. You could make suggestions like these:

'While you do this task tell me what's happening in the situation around us.'

'How about we do it in a different situation and see how you go?'

Your learner's confidence may roll into over-confidence. They can soon believe they have greater control over the car, and their safety, than they actually do. You can keep this in check by phasing out praise for their car control skills and replace this with praise for safe driving. You could also use questions like these:

'Thanks for slowing down. Why did you?'

'Why did you seem surprised back there? What could have happened?'

Regardless of your learner's skill, ultimately you should still be in control. As a supervisor, you should drive the car, in your mind, from the passenger's seat. Look well ahead and use your experience to warn the learner of danger you think they've not yet recognised. If you have to help with control it should not come as a surprise. When you first start supervising, have a go at helping to physically control the car from the passenger's seat. Talk this through with your learner and try it when you are both ready and in a safe place.

How to find the time for supervised drives

The single best protective measure for safe P plate driving is meaningful driving experience on L's" this requires lots and lots of driving. However, lots of driving can mean lots of time and lots of effort.

This page has suggestions for how you can handle this part of your challenge and some tips for finding practice time.

You probably agree, the more driving your learner does on L's the more protected they will be on P's. Sure there is a benefit, but it may also seem to come at a cost – such as the effort involved. The table below is designed to help you think through what you feel may be the cost and benefits of helping your son, daughter, friend or student get lots of experience. Reflecting on this will help you judge how real the costs actually are and come to a decision that you feel comfortable with.

Consider what you think and feel about the costs and benefits that people talk about

Thoughts about	Possible costs	Possible benefits
Helping them gain much experience	<p>Give up precious time I feel I don't have</p> <p>It's effort and energy I may not have</p> <p>Will cost me money, e.g. fuel</p> <p>Could be inconvenient</p> <p>Sounds very stressful for lots of reasons</p> <p>Other...</p>	<p>They'll be much safer when they get their P's</p> <p>It will show them how much I care and how important I believe it is.</p> <p>It's a great opportunity to build our relationship. I can make it quality time.</p> <p>I'll know I've done my best</p> <p>I'll learn lots, too, about myself, my learner, and driving</p> <p>Other...</p>
Not helping them gain much experience	<p>Live every parent's worst nightmare</p> <p>My kids or someone else's could be hurt for life</p> <p>I could have to look after them for life</p> <p>I couldn't handle the repair bills and extra expense</p> <p>I'd feel really guilty knowing I could have done more</p> <p>They may learn to cheat or falsify records such as their logbook</p> <p>Could send the message that you don't value safe driving...</p> <p>Other...</p>	<p>Time to do what I want to do</p> <p>Easier to say go to someone else to get your hours up</p> <p>It's less stressful</p> <p>I'll have to spend less money</p> <p>Other...</p>

Here are some tips that may help you find more practice time:

- Consider having trustworthy friends provide practice opportunities for you learner driver.
- To make practice more efficient, plan the practice drive over breakfast and debrief over dinner.
- Test the time it takes your learner to drive somewhere and compare it to the time it takes you. It's likely that the difference will be smaller than you think.
- If you feel saving a few minutes is important, have the L plates on and your learner ready to drive, before you get to the car.
- If you have to drive, your learner can still practice most driving skills from the passenger's seat. They can also direct you and take some responsibility for making decisions.
- If you have to drive or feel it's safer that you drive, perhaps you don't have to drive all the way. Build in time to swap seats and let your learner drive when and where appropriate.

Before you drive checklist

If you haven't supervised a learner before, there are legal requirements that you must know about before you start. When you 'tick off' the other matters as done, lots of problems can be prevented. Use the checklist on the next page to confirm that you and your learner are ready to drive.

Supervising a learner driver so they become a safe P plate driver, is a serious business. You need to prepare properly for the role. A *keys2drive* driving instructor can coach you in getting started and help you both 'hit the target' – six months on P plates with zero harm.

A basic 'before you drive' checklist

The following checklist covers the most basic information. If you study and use this checklist regularly, soon you may no longer need to.

PRE DRIVE CHECKLIST

Legal matters

- I know I can legally supervise a learner driver: (check requirements for your state or territory).
- My learner and I each have our driver's licence with us, it's current, and we are complying with our licence conditions.
- Our car is road worthy and registered.
- I know the conditions on my car insurance that apply while my learner is driving.
- We have L plates correctly positioned on the front and back of our car.
- The learner has their Logbook (as required); I have read and understand the instructions and advice.

Attention matters

- We have both had enough sleep. Ask your learner how much sleep they've had in the last 48 hours if you're not sure.
- We both feel calm and we have enough time.
- The type of possible distractions in and around the car will suit the learning situation (few if any when they've just got L's. Later, gradually introduce distractions and help your driver learn to manage them).

Learning matters

- I have a good understanding of my learner's knowledge, ability, and experience.
- I have asked my learner what concerns he or she has about learning.
- I have asked my learner what he or she wants to do or feels they need to do (if this is different to what you think is best, see if they can work out why rather than say, 'you must do it my way', or 'you do as I say').
- We have talked about and agree to what we are going to do and why

Any new task my learner tries, I will first check that it has been explained and demonstrated.

Safety matters

- I have bought a stick-on rear vision mirror that I can use from the passenger's seat.
- I know I must check first that it's safe for my learner to get into and out of the car. I appreciate they may not be thinking clearly.
- I have double checked passengers are seated correctly, have their seatbelts fitted properly, and have adjusted their head restraints.
- I have explained to my learner that I am a co-driver and I will be looking around and behind to double check our safety. They know I'm not being controlling.
- My learner driver knows how to slow and stop the car before they move off. I have demonstrated it.
- We have talked about where we are going and how we are getting there.
- I have checked there is safe space around the car for us to move off, given my learner's skill.
- I judge the situations we are likely to encounter fit with my learner's skill level.
- We have talked about tricky traffic situations we could meet on this driver and how we will manage them.
- We have discussed and practiced what I will do if I have to take over some control of the car (you might guide the steering wheel and talk your learner through the situation).

Directions matter

- I know I have to be careful about using words like 'stop' or 'right' (they could be taken literally).
- I know I have to give directions for going, slowing, or turning well ahead of time.
- I know the At, Do method works best, e.g. At the traffic lights near the service station, we'll Do this: take the left lane, turn left and then keep in the left lane.

Words matter

- I know I have to be mindful that some words I use may have little meaning to my learner. I have asked them to tell me if I use words they do not understand.
- I may hear driving instructors use terms I am unsure about. I will ask them what they mean. For example, blind-spots, block-outs, head-check, friction point, cover the brake, set-up the brake, crash avoidance space, scanning, hazards, safe following distance, and there are many more.

Calm is good

Both good learning and good driving generally benefit from calmness. When you and your learner are calm you're both more likely to listen to each other, think clearly, talk comfortably, and make better decisions.

This section suggests ways to get calm, stay calm, and get back to being calm.

Calmness is very much influenced by:

- The time you have to interpret the situation you are in
- How you manage your physical stance and breathing
- How you think and feel about the situation

The time you have

- Get time by making time: build enough time into practice sessions so you don't feel rushed, and slow down your conversation, your instructions, and the car's speed
- Pause in a safe place and prepare for potentially challenging situations
- Learn how to manage confusion and surprises
- Take a break when the situation is not calm and manage your stance and breathing

Manage your stance and breathing

- Relax your upper body, slowly breathe in deeply through your nose – helped by pushing your stomach out, not by lifting your chest – and breathe out steadily through your mouth. Repeat this several times. This should have a calming influence.
- When learners concentrate 100% on a task – that could be you as a supervisor – they may stop breathing. Prompt your learner to keep breathing.
- Do the Breathe And Talk Check (BAT Check) often. Pay attention to how your learner breathes and talks. If either speeds up a lot or stops, it may be time to pause and breathe. When a learner does OK at a task, and they can BAT normally, it's a sign they are ready to move on.

Question what you think and feel

- Lack of knowledge can trigger stress. This applies to you and your learner. This guide should help you understand your role. If you don't know the answer to a situation, say so and show a willingness to learn with your learner; good teachers do this.
- Some thoughts and feelings about learning situations can be very unhelpful. They will probably remain that way if they stay locked up in your mind or your learner's mind. The key to unlocking them is in conversation.
- Agree to respect each other's comfort zone. Say what will help you stay in it. Say what makes you go out of it. To do this use 'when you.... I feel' messages. For example;
 - When you drive really close to parked cars I feel nervous.
 - When you tell me to get lost, I feel saddened.
 - When you demand to go that way I feel uneasy. Can we talk about it some more?

Manage confusion and surprises

As a supervisor you can do without confusion and surprises; for your learner such experiences can be very helpful, while at other times they can be very unhelpful. This page may help you understand the role of confusion and surprises in helping someone gain useful driving experience.

Analyse the most basic of driving tasks – such as moving out from the side of the road, or changing lanes – and you will find they comprise many small parts (possibly hundreds). You probably find such tasks very easy and view them as one large, single, simple task. Learners don't!

Learners have to consciously think through and apply, in sequence, all the small parts of a task. They can easily get confused. The slightest extra load – such as the need to make another decision – can cause their brain to overload. When this happens the surrounding situation will become a blur to them and their driving will be clumsy and possibly unsafe.

You should aim to avoid unhelpful confusion or surprises. They can affect safety and turn you off supervising your learner. They can also cause your learner to doubt their ability. If this happens, then afterwards you should question how you might have contributed to the confusion.

Professional driving instructors rarely have such problems. They are trained to break large tasks down into easy-to-learn, digestible pieces or 'chunks'. They are good at matching the size of the chunks to the learner's ability. They also know how to help learners put the pieces together in the correct sequence, and in situations they can manage. This is a good reason to have a *keys2drive* accredited driving instructor help you and your learner get started and coach you through any new or challenging task.

Other *keys2drive* resources that will help you learn to manage confusion and surprises are:

- Calm is good (pg. 18)
- Learn to manage different situations (pg. 33)
- Before you drive checklist (pg. 15)

Confusion has a useful role in learning too. If you take full responsibility for simplifying and teaching a task, you may leave little for your learner to do. When a learner has to take responsibility for working through a confusion situation it will have greater meaning to them. In addition, they are learning problem-solving skills along the way. Provided it is safe, invite your learner to work out how to do new tasks and manage new traffic situations on their own. They'll need to do this on P plates so why not let them try now while you are still with them?

Surprises are a normal part of driving and have their advantages too. Big surprises should be rare but if they do happen you have a real life experience to digest, work out possible ways it could have been prevented, and use it to connect with the seriousness of driving.

Tiny surprises are ever-present in driving and are extremely valuable. They let us know when our mind is wandering, our eyes aren't looking in the right places, or we are bending the rules. Without awareness of our errors we become complacent and over-confident. As your learner gains experience they should gradually be making fewer big mistakes and be noticing more small mistakes.

Question how you're going

If you have never supervised a learner before then, in some ways, you're a learner too; think this way and you'll probably question how you're going and want to find ways to improve. While you are working out the questions to ask yourself you're learning an important skill – the ability to give yourself useful feedback. It is this skill that your learner needs most to hit the target of six months on P plates with zero harm. So learn and practice together.

This section suggests questions you can both practice.

Feedback questions should help you work out what you are doing and how it compares to what you should or could be doing.

Effective feedback also:

- guides you to the **clue that will help you** improve
- is most useful when it is **soon after** the event
- is best when you're both **calm** and attentive
- it should leave you both **feeling good**

if all this sounds difficult then here is an easy approach that may start a useful conversation. When you notice something is not quite right, ask questions like:

'How do you think you went?'

'What would help you do it better next time?'

To get good at giving feedback use the checklist below with your learner.

Checklist to help you judge and improve your use of feedback

Desirable	More information about what you should do
Soon after and calm	If you wait too long, memories of what happened will fade. When you and the driver are calm; you have the attention you need to make feedback effective. <i>Soon after</i> and <i>calm</i> live together. If one is absent you may have to wait until the mistake is repeated later on but the situation is different.
How did you (or I) go?	To notice errors you have to pay attention and be able to work out which part or parts of the action are incorrect. For example, saying 'You didn't change lanes properly back there' is unhelpful – it describes an action that has <i>many parts</i> and it says what didn't happen rather than what did happen. In this case perhaps the learner began to steer first before looking over their shoulder.
How should you (or I) go?	This step requires you to know what the correct action is and preferably be able to explain and demonstrate it. If you're not absolutely sure, find out the facts; you could learn with your learner. Ask a <i>keys2drive</i> accredited driving instructor. When you both know and agree on the facts there shouldn't be any arguments. Wrong information can lead to poor habits that later on will be hard to change.
What's the clue that will help you (or me)?	<p>You agree there is a difference between 'did do' and 'should do'. At this point if you say, 'Have another go', or, 'Do more practice', it's unlikely you will see a quick improvement. Worse, the same mistake could be repeated, which could lead to frustration.</p> <p>Before having another go there must be a <i>clue</i> for solving the learning problem. This is the step most often missed or done poorly. Clues can be prompts, suggestions for trying it a different way or a question that leads to new understanding. You can access clues by saying 'We know exactly what you should do. What will help you get it right next time you try?'</p>
Feel good?	When giving feedback, aim to stay in the 'feel good zone'. Praise the bits that are good enough and provide encouragement for the bits that need to improve. Don't praise poor actions as this will send the wrong message. But you can praise effort. When the driver gains confidence; ease back on the praise so they don't get over confident. It's a good time to 'raise the bar'.

Help provide long experience

Do a lot of driving and eventually basic driving skills will become automatic

Think of any endeavour – football, netball, bowling, chess, piano, computer gaming. Just to do OK at such endeavours requires hundreds of hours experience and many repetitions of correct performance. Driving is no different.

This section explains the importance of repetition in driving and how to benefit most from it.

As an experienced driver you may have forgotten that driving a car in traffic was once a challenging task for you. The reason you've probably forgotten how hard it can be, is that you have turned the many actions that comprise driving into thinking, feeling, and doing habits. You have also learned to interpret situations quickly and easily through being exposed to them many times. For you, driving has become 'automatic'. Without thinking about it, you put a seat belt on, move off, and turn at intersections. At the same time you can talk with passengers.

When your driving became automatic it provided you with spare attention. Safe drivers use their spare attention to assess and respond to the situation around them. Unsafe drivers may use it for talking on a mobile phone. What do you use it for?

A part of your job as a supervisor is to help your learner repeat the correct driving actions over and over again until these become habits and their skills automatic. You will know you have succeeded when they do OK, while at the same time they breathe normally and can answer a question that requires them to think. You could question them on ways they could use their spare attention.

Driving lots in the types of situations your learner will go for their driving test in will help them pass their test but it will do little to help them learn to be safe. Imagine a netball team that always played at similar venues, had the same umpire, used the same game plan, whose opponents were always similar, and who they always beat. They would have the skill to play netball but they would probably be overconfident and perform poorly when the situation suddenly changed.

Long experience is only one dimension of learning to drive safely. Experience must also be wide and deep. Gradually build wide and deep experiences into your journey from the start.



Here are some general suggestions for guiding **long experience**

Suggestions	More Info
Get L's as soon as possible, and get P's as late as possible	The more you can extend the learning period at either end the more opportunities there are for lots of practice.
Get clear about what's to be learned and progress	A document of the correct actions will help greatly. Ask your accredited <i>keys2drive</i> instructor. Read Good driving habits. When you discuss progress provide feedback on the attention the learner requires to do the task, e.g. do OK, breathe and talk normally.
Take the right sized, frequent steps	Remember driving can be very complex. Practice small, simple parts in sequence. Avoid, if you can, big gaps between practice sessions.
Take positive steps and repeat them correctly	Bad experiences can turn you both off practice. Read the Before you drive checklist and Manage confusion and surprises. Once successful at a task, repeat it correctly many times.
Fix problem immediately	Repeating errors or actions that aren't exactly right will not develop good habits. Problems with relationships should be fixed too. Read Question how you're going.
Do clever practice, even when you're not behind the wheel	Make practice purposeful. Talk about what you're doing and why. Many tasks can be practiced when the learner is not behind the wheel.
Drive lots. Keep your logbook up to date and whenever it's easy, go wider and deeper	Read How to find the time for supervised drives. If ever driving feels easy for a learner driver their understanding of good driving needs to be expanded. Widen and deepen the experience.

Help provide wide experience

Do a lot of different driving and frequently have driving experiences that are new and challenging

If you drive for one hour along a stretch of road and do it 100 times you have just had 100 hours of much the same experience. Drive 100 different roads each for one hour and you've had much 'wider' and more beneficial experience.

This section explains the importance of difference for your learner driver, how you can create it without having to find one hundred different roads, and how you can help them learn to manage different.

If your learner does lots of different driving they will invariably gain **wide experience** and come across new situations or ones they find 'hard'. If they sense it is hard it means their brain is being stretched. Within reason, that is good. Your learning driver is having to work things out for themselves and solve problems. There are some of the thinking skills they will need in order to anticipate and manage different driving situations when you are no longer sitting alongside them.

If your learner driver goes mostly the same way and does much the same thing in every practice session, they will progressively find that driving becomes easier and easier. Yet they've been told driving is a difficult, complex, and potentially dangerous task! Finding something easy, that you've been told is very hard, can lead to overconfidence. Overconfidence people are generally more accepting of risk or are partially blind to it. This is another reason to build more and more difference into practice sessions.

Difference is good but it is not always easy to achieve. Here are some ideas that may help you.

- Go different ways and times
- Go different places whenever you can
- Go in different cars and conditions
- Go for different reasons
- Go but then turn around or turn off
- Go with different passengers
- Go with different distractions
- Go with a method for Managing 'different' (see Appendix 1)
- Go deeper – think deeply about the experience you have



Help provide deep experience

Do a lot of thinking about the different driving experiences you have, discover much about yourself, your driving and how others affect you.

Deep experience contributes to a deep understanding of traffic situations and personal situations, and the ability to manage problems. Safe driving depends most on deep experience – a person can drive lots and not become a safe driver. The gaining of deep experience can be accelerated through deep thinking. You encourage deep thinking when you help a person ask and find answers to what-, why-, how-type questions.

This section explains how.

You get the most power out of questions when you help a person question their own actions thoughts and feelings.

Here's an example. Say you drive past a crash like the one in the picture and you ask your learner,

'How do you think that crash happened?'

They say,

'The driver behind was probably following too close.'



Crash scene

This shows they have a basic knowledge of safe following distances. Moments later your learner is following a car too closely and you ask,

'How do you feel at the moment?'

They say,

'OK'



Moments later

You say,

'Why do you feel OK when you are making the same mistake as that driver who just crashed?'

Here you are helping them question their own behaviour. Now they are having to think deeply about their own driving.

How do you feel when...? Why's that? These are two potentially powerful questions, but what happens when you're not beside them? Three key people sit alongside a learner driver while they learn to drive. Mostly it's a **supervisor**; sometimes it's a **driving instructor**; and eventually it will be a driving **assessor**.

Immediately when the learner gets their P's, these people vanish along with their powerful questions. You can solve much of this problem by assisting your learner driver learn to self-supervise, self-instruct, and self-assess. You help them learn to ask these people's questions. This may be hard to do because intuitively we want to tell a learner driver how to drive.

Listed below are some questions you could encourage your learner to ask of themselves.

Self-supervise

- What do I want to do? Why is that?
- What do I think others want me to do? Why is that?
- How do I feel and how is it affecting me? Why is that?
- How can I decide what is best?

Self-assess

- How well will I go?
- What am I doing well? What mistakes am I making?
- How well did I go and what are the reasons why?

Self-instruct

- How will I fix my mistake/s?
- How did I go fixing my mistake/s?



Manage the P plate risk

The more you can make driving on L's be like driving on P's the less dramatic, and therefore risky, the change to P's will be. Having got their P's there is still much you can do to manage the risks your new P plate driver faces.

This section explains how.

As your learner driver gets nearer to P's, gradually making the driving more like the situations they will experience when they drive on their own or with their friends. You can't make it exactly the same – you will still be alongside them and watching closely – but the more typical it is of P plate driving the better.

Following are some ideas to create P plate situations.

P plate reality	Simulation ideas
Go when and where they'll go	Ask them when and where they'll go and give it a go
Get distracted	How do they respond to friends, mobiles, MP3s, CDs, food...?
Feel the pressure	Ask what friends might say to them and say it. What then happens?
Have fun, feel good	What's their idea of fun? How do they manage the situations?
Feel in a hurry	Let them hurry if they feel the need. Can they see the effect?
Feel annoyed or frustrated	Let them react. Do they manage unhelpful thoughts and feeling?
Be free	Say, 'Grab the keys, I'll come, too, but you pay for the petrol!'
Be confused or surprised	Ease them towards complex situations. Watch closely and be prepared to help.

Below are 10 specific and practical ‘tactics’ to reduce a P plate driver’s risk of crashing.

Tactic for learner driver	What you both can do
Stay on L’s for as long as possible. Delay getting P’s	Negotiate a reward for staying on L’s; continue to be ‘a taxi’; help to work out transport options; ask friends or family to help out with driving practice.
Keep focused on the target – six months zero harm	Negotiate rewards for making safe progress towards six months on P plates with zero harm or consequences for not making safe progress.
Drive supervised even on P’s	Drive in the P plate driver’s car. Continue to invite them to drive you in your car (remember to put the P plates on).
Get real about P readiness	Ask a <i>keys2drive</i> accredited driving instructor for a P plate ready assessment.
Stay within experience	Get wide experience on L’s. Don’t drive lots immediately on P’s. Drive within the range of L experiences and then gradually widen the P experience
Drive with room for error	Follow at least three seconds from the car immediately in front; ease up on the accelerator if any of the five cars in front slow; if ever in doubt, put your foot over the brake. Be very cautious in right turn situations (common P plate driver crash).
Keep thinking like a learner when you get your P’s	Experience the benefit of thinking like a learner on P’s. notice smaller and smaller mistakes. Continue to get deep experience.
Drive in a safer car	Buy a car with the highest ANCAP star rating that you can afford. When the risk to the P plate driver could be higher, e.g. driving at night, borrow the supervisor’s car if it’s a safer one.
Drive to use less fuel	Learn how to drive to use less fuel. Generally it’s safer because you have to think further ahead and drive more smoothly.
Manage special P plate driver risks	Minimise driving at night, particularly late on Friday and Saturday; limit passengers; learn not to use a mobile; avoid driving during normal sleep times.

Appendix 1: Tactics for handling ‘different’

Keys2drive encourages learner drivers to get wide experience. Wide experience includes having many different experiences but it also means learning how to prepare for and manage different situations. We call these skills tactics for handling different situations.

Tactics for handling different situations include:

1. Proactive tactics – for when you know you are going somewhere different
2. Responsive tactics – for when you meet with difference and have time to think
3. Reactive tactics – for when you meet with difference and have little time to think

Tactics for managing different situations engage mental skills. Just like physical skills you only learn them through purposeful practice. You have to give it a go, find any weaknesses, solve the learning problem, and then do more practice. Will you do it? You will if you really want six months on P plates with zero harm.

1 Proactive tactics

Plan and think through where you’re going and the best route. Unsure? Ask.
Match the route to your ability. Learn difficult skills in easier situations first.
Use navigations technology if you can and only if it helps.
Avoid complex situations or difficult right turns (unless you have someone to coach you).
Have someone in the know go with you; ask a passenger to help you navigate.
Give yourself more time, and go at the safest time. Leave early.
Practice in your mind how you will manage difficult situations before you get into them.
Make sure you have a clean windscreen and that your seat and all your mirrors are perfectly adjusted. Put your headlights on low beam.
Eliminate or at least reduce distractions in the car.
If you make an error, use the reactive tactics described below.

2 Responsive tactics

You get time to be responsive when you get good at looking ahead <i>as far as you can comfortably see</i> while still monitoring the area immediately around your vehicle.
Notice early, situations that look a bit different to what you've done before.
Rehearse in your mind how you will manage the situation. Your actions should look similar to what most other drivers do. If not, you will confuse other road users, e.g. by slowing down when merging.
Nearer the situation, respond earlier than normal – usually this means ease up on the accelerator.
Make yourself breathe slowly and deeply, relax your neck, shoulders and arms; it will help you think more clearly and drive more smoothly as you near the different situation.
Keep more space between you and the car in front.
Stick to your plan; aim to be self-confident. Say, 'I know what to do. I can do this'.
If you begin to feel confused or under a lot of pressure, use the reactive tactics described below.

3 Reactive tactics

Keep driving with the flow of traffic.
Tell passengers to quieten.
Avoid if possible sudden use of the brake, accelerator, or steering.
Ease up a bit on the accelerator if it's OK.
Breathe deeply and slowly if you can remember to.
Look for a safe place to pull over to stop.
Before pulling over look behind, and signal for at least two seconds.
Having stopped and all is safe... breathe deeply and slowly, relax your neck and shoulders, think through what happened and more importantly <i>why it happened</i> . The answer to the last point will help you work out the problem that you have to fix.

Appendix 2: Good driving habits

Opinions differ on what's 'correct' when it comes to good driving habits. The list below conforms to what most professional driving instructors teach. The list only covers a narrow range of elementary good driving habits for general driving situations.

You prepare to drive

- You adjust the seat for effective control and comfort.
- You adjust all three mirrors for the best view.
- You fit and adjust your seat belt and head restraint.
- You check your passengers are safely seated, too.

You tell others what you are going to do

- Your indicator is on for at least five seconds before you pull out from the kerb.
- You indicate for more than two seconds before beginning to turn.
- You indicate for more than two seconds before beginning to change lanes.
- You indicate before you steer off roundabouts.

You drive legally in situations where others often tend to bend the rules

- You come to a complete stop at stop signs just before the stop line.
- Your maximum speed is always slightly under the speed limit that applies to you.
- You stop for green lights when traffic in front of you is not leaving the intersection.
- You stop for amber lights unless it is not safe.

You use mirrors, indicators, and brakes in a useful order

- You look, at least; at the situation up to the fifth vehicle you can see in front of you and slow down if it's difficult to see that far.
- You look into intersections regardless of having right of way.
- Your eyes keep scanning the situation all around you.
- You look over your shoulder (head check) before beginning to change lanes and other situations where vehicles could be in your blind spot.

Driving safely (habits that are a sign of a careful driver)

- You stay at least three seconds travel time behind the vehicle immediately in front of you.
- You regain at least three seconds travel time if another vehicle moves into that space.
- You stop behind a vehicle and leave space to drive around it (if you have to).
- You remain in your lane and change lanes as little as possible.
- You ease up on the accelerator at the approach to green lights when you cannot see vehicles stopped for the red light.

P plate Ready Indicator

