

Learner drivers feel safer with Dad riding shotgun

15 March 2017: No one likes a backseat driver and now it seems we don't like our mums teaching us how to drive either.

According to research conducted by online motoring classifieds business carsales.com.au, 38.4 per cent of first-time drivers said they'd prefer their father as a driving instructor when taking the wheel for the first time, compared to just 23.1 per cent preferring their mother.

Rubbing further salt into the wounds of their mother, 27.5 per cent said their preference was to be taught by a professional driving instructor, revealing learner drivers would opt for a third party instead of their own mother.

Conducting the research to determine what parent (or guardian) young drivers prefer to learn from, and accordingly how best to teach them to drive, the most common reasons for choosing mum or dad when first behind the wheel included:

- 1 - 'Less stress' (30.6 per cent)
- 2 - 'Have more trust in father's driving' (15.1 per cent),
- 3 - 'Feel safer' (13.9 per cent) and,
- 4 - 'Mother has no patience' (10.8 per cent).

Alarmingly, a report by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in June 2012 found that between 2003 and 2012, rates of deaths in the 17-25 year old age group is almost twice as high as the total averageⁱ, highlighting the important need for learners to clock up the hours before heading out on the road on their own.

Mike Sinclair, Editor-in-Chief at carsales.com.au and father of a young driver said "given this age group is one of the most susceptible to road trauma, it is essential that they get the most supportive learning experience as possible before facing the roads on their own."

"As learner drivers are now required to clock up to 120 driving hours in some states before getting their license, it's critical that their learning environment is optimum for the safety of all road users. When teaching our children to drive, parents need be patient, calm, and lead by example with their own driving.

In addition, drivers need exposure to different types of passengers as driving conditions are never going to be completely perfect, so exposure to mum and dad's tuition behind the wheel is paramount once a driver has the basics sorted," Sinclair added.

Siblings and friends were the least popular choices for driving instructors, with friends slightly more trusted; 6.9 per cent of learners choosing to be taught by a peer, compared to 4.1 per cent preferring to be taught by a brother or sister.

The survey results also found that less than half of 18 - 24 year old Australians and their parents consider safety features to be very important when buying their first car or their son or daughter's first car.

"These statistics may come down to the fact that Australians are simply unaware of how crucial some safety features can be," says Sinclair.

"The fact that less than half rated any safety feature as 'very important' or 'essential' indicates a clear need for widespread education about car safety,"

"There is twice the chance of being killed or seriously injured in a 3 Star ANCAP safety rated car compared to a 5 star ANCAP safety rated car, making it a priority when purchasing," Sinclair noted.

With school leavers about to embark on the next chapter of their lives, unsurprisingly, almost 80 per cent of 18 – 24 year olds said the main reason they want a car is for independence.

One thousand Australians were surveyed including 500 parents of those aged 18 – 24 years and 500 18 – 24 year olds looking in to buying a first car.

- ENDS -

For further information and survey results, please contact:

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Notes to editor:

Responses from 18 – 24 year old Victorian drivers:

18 - 24 year old VIC data:		#	%
When learning to drive, who did you most prefer to be taught by?	Mother	35	25
	Father	59	42.1
	Sibling	7	5
	Friend	12	8.6
	Instructor	27	19.3
	Total	140	100

What was the reason for choosing above:	Have more trust in mother's driving	12	8.6
	Have more trust in father's driving	24	17.1
	Mother has no patience	16	11.4
	Father has no patience	11	7.9
	Mother generally not available	4	2.9
	Father generally not available	12	8.6
	Feel safer	17	12.1
	Less stress	44	31.4
	Total	140	100

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ⁱ Australian Government. (2012, June). *Department of Infrastructure and Transport*. Retrieved January 12, 2017, from Statistical Report: https://bitre.gov.au/publications/ongoing/files/RDA_Summary_2012_June.pdf