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This year's teen vehicle list offers safety for every budget

ARLINGTON, Va., and YONKERS, N.Y. — Families with newly licensed teens have a wide range of options this year when it comes to safe vehicles for their novice driver. An updated list of suggested vehicles for teens from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) and Consumer Reports (CR) includes 74 used vehicles priced at \$10,000 or less. Another 48 models that come with automatic emergency braking and highly rated headlights can be found for under \$20,000.

“Given consumers’ economic anxiety and the uncertainty around future vehicle prices, the availability of a wide range of safe, affordable used options is welcome news,” said Jessica Jermakian, IIHS senior vice president for vehicle research. “Helping your kid achieve a milestone of independence shouldn’t require compromising on safety.”

“This list is designed to help buyers narrow their search to vehicles that can help drivers avoid crashes and also protect vehicle occupants in the event that a crash does occur,” said Jennifer Stockburger, director of operations at Consumer Reports Auto Test Center. “That combination increases the odds of keeping new drivers safe as they gain experience.”

For those who are ready to spend more, a separate list of recommended new vehicles names 22 model year 2025 vehicles equipped with the latest in crash protection and safety technology. For the first time, the criteria include a good rating in the seat belt reminder evaluation that IIHS launched in 2022.

“Vehicles with good belt reminder ratings have loud, persistent prompts that are difficult to ignore,” Jermakian said. “This is a great feature for everyone, but especially young people, who are less likely to buckle up than other adults.”

The annual list of teen vehicles, which CR and IIHS have produced jointly since 2020, is intended to help families prioritize safety without busting their budgets. It can be tempting to give a young driver a very old and inexpensive car, but there’s a good chance the beater rusting in your driveway lacks key safety features and the highest levels of crash protection.

Teen drivers are already at heightened risk because of inexperience and immaturity, so vehicle choice is particularly important for this demographic. Fortunately, as this year’s list shows, there are many reasonably priced options with a high level of safety. Parents of younger children might also consider using the list to find a family car that could be passed along to a teenager later.

As in past years, the list doesn’t include anything with excessive horsepower relative to weight or anything marketed for performance. Such vehicles can entice young drivers to take risks or lead them to speed unintentionally.

The list also doesn’t have any minicars or anything that weighs less than 2,750 pounds. Although many smaller models are popular with young drivers, they can’t protect their occupants as well in crashes with other vehicles.

On the flip side, large SUVs and large pickups may offer greater crash protection in some configurations, but they aren’t suitable for teens because they can be hard to handle and take longer to stop. They also pose more risk to others on the road, including pedestrians, bicyclists and people in smaller vehicles.

Cars with shorter stopping distances and more composed handling are a significant boon to inexperienced drivers, easing their ability to operate the vehicle safely in all situations. That’s why both used and new vehicles on the list have

average or better scores (3 out of 5) from CR for braking and for emergency and routine handling. They also have usability scores for controls and displays of at least 2 out of 5, meaning the vehicles with the most confusing and distracting setups are excluded. All have standard electronic stability control — even the 2011 Mini Countryman, the one vehicle on the list from before the 2012 model year, when the technology became mandatory.

When it comes to protection in crashes, all recommended used vehicles have good ratings in five IIHS tests: original moderate overlap front, original side, driver-side small overlap front, roof strength and head restraints.

Models in the top tier of used vehicles, designated as Best Choices, come with headlights that earn a good or acceptable rating from IIHS across all trim levels. They also have standard automatic emergency braking (AEB) that performs well in IIHS track tests. AEB, which can help drivers avoid rear-ending another vehicle — and in many cases striking a pedestrian — is an important technology for all drivers. It's particularly relevant for teens, who are more apt to lose focus or make mistakes.

In addition to having good-rated seat belt reminders, the recommended new vehicles are winners of the 2025 IIHS *TOP SAFETY PICK* or *TOP SAFETY PICK+* award, which means they excel in the Institute's newer, more challenging crash tests. They also have standard good or acceptable headlights and standard, high-performing AEB.

Of course, safety and price are not the only factors that go into choosing a vehicle. Consumers should also consider the cost of insurance and the reliability of a given vehicle. The IIHS-affiliated Highway Loss Data Institute publishes [insurance losses by make and model](#), which can provide a sense of which vehicles could cost more to insure. You can get a specific quote from your insurance company before buying. When it comes to vehicle reliability, CR maintains ratings for its members.

Despite the lack of high-horsepower models in the recommendations, many listed vehicles have performance variants or can be configured with more powerful engines. Teen drivers should steer clear of those and instead stick to the base engine.

In addition, extra caution is warranted when it comes to electric vehicles. Although EVs are fundamentally just as safe as gas-powered vehicles — and there are several on the list — rapid acceleration can be a concern. Unlike gas engines, electric motors give drivers immediate access to all of the vehicle's power. Parents should keep that in mind if they are considering an EV for a teen driver.

See the complete list of vehicles on the following pages.

For more information, go to [iihs.org](https://www.iihs.org)

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) is an independent, nonprofit scientific and educational organization dedicated to reducing deaths, injuries and property damage from motor vehicle crashes through research and evaluation and through education of consumers, policymakers and safety professionals. IIHS is wholly supported by auto insurers.

For more information from CR, go to [consumerreports.org](https://www.consumerreports.org)

Consumer Reports is a nonprofit membership organization that works side by side with consumers to create a fairer, safer and healthier world. For more than 80 years, CR has provided evidence-based product testing and ratings, rigorous research, hard-hitting investigative journalism, public education and steadfast policy action on behalf of consumers' interests.

USED VEHICLES FOR TEENS

All listed vehicles have a curb weight greater than 2,750 pounds and earn good ratings from IIHS in the original moderate overlap front, driver-side small overlap front, original side, roof strength and head restraint tests. They also have average or better scores from CR for braking and for emergency and routine handling (scoring at least 3 out of 5) and CR usability scores for controls and displays of at least 2 out of 5.

Prices, provided by Kelley Blue Book and rounded to the nearest \$100, are average U.S. values from March 27, 2025, for the lowest trim level and earliest applicable model year. The estimates are based on the following criteria: vehicle in good condition, typical mileage and private party purchase.

Some models have exceptions for vehicles produced in a certain time period or before a certain date. Information about when a specific vehicle was built can be found on the certification label typically affixed to the driver door or near it.

Best Choices — starting under \$20,000

In addition to the criteria above, Best Choices have standard automatic emergency braking systems that earn an advanced or superior rating from IIHS in the original vehicle-to-vehicle front crash prevention test or the daytime pedestrian front crash prevention test. They also have headlights that earn a good or acceptable rating from IIHS.

SMALL CARS

Toyota Corolla sedan (2017-19; 2023 or newer)	\$9,500
Honda Insight (2019-22)	\$11,600
Mazda 3 hatchback (2019 or newer)	\$12,100
Toyota Prius (2017 or newer; only vehicles built after August 2016)	\$12,600
Mazda 3 sedan (2020 or newer)	\$13,000
Toyota Prius Prime (2017 or newer)	\$16,200
Honda Civic hatchback (2022 or newer)	\$19,200
Honda Civic sedan (2022 or newer)	\$19,200
Subaru Crosstrek Hybrid (2019)	\$19,300

MIDSIZE CARS

Toyota Camry (2018 or newer)	\$13,100
Mazda 6 (2019-21; only vehicles built after June 2019)	\$14,000
Subaru Legacy (2020 or newer)	\$15,700
Nissan Maxima (2020 or newer)	\$16,900
Kia K5 (2021 or newer; only vehicles built after November 2020)	\$17,000
Lexus IS (2017 or newer; only vehicles built after June 2017)	\$17,000
Subaru Outback (2020; only vehicles built after October 2019)	\$17,400
Volvo S60 (2021-22)	\$17,500
Hyundai Sonata (2023 or newer; only vehicles built after December 2022)	\$18,100
Mercedes-Benz C-Class (2019 or newer; except 2021 models built before February 2021)	\$19,100
Honda Accord (2021 or newer)	\$19,800

LARGE CARS

Genesis G80 (2017-20)	\$12,200
Genesis G90 (2017-22)	\$12,400
Acura RLX (2018-20)	\$16,700

SMALL SUVS

BMW X2 (2019-or newer)	\$12,200
Mazda CX-3 (2020-21)	\$12,900
Subaru Forester (2019 or newer)	\$13,000
Mazda CX-5 (2020 or newer)	\$15,400
Chevrolet Trailblazer (2021 or newer)	\$17,300
Ford Bronco Sport (2021 or newer)	\$17,500
Nissan Rogue (2021 or newer)	\$17,500
Hyundai Tucson (2022 or newer)	\$17,600
Mazda CX-30 (2022 or newer)	\$18,000
Kia EV6 (2022 or newer; only vehicles built after August 2022)	\$19,800
Mitsubishi Outlander (2022 or newer; only vehicles built after June 2021)	\$19,800
Toyota Corolla Cross (2022 or newer)	\$19,800

MIDSIZE SUVS

Acura MDX (2017-20)	\$13,100
Volvo XC90 (2018 or newer; only vehicles built after March 2018)	\$14,600
Lexus NX (2018 or newer)	\$14,900
Honda Pilot (2019 or newer)	\$16,000
Ford Explorer (2020 or newer; only vehicles built after May 2020)	\$16,600
Volkswagen Tiguan (2022 or newer)	\$16,600
Toyota Highlander (2017 or newer)	\$17,000
Honda Passport (2019-21; only vehicles built after June 2019)	\$18,100
Nissan Murano (2021 or newer)	\$18,400
Mazda CX-9 (2021 or newer)	\$18,500
Audi Q4 e-tron (2022 or newer)	\$18,600
Acura RDX (2019 or newer)	\$19,400
Subaru Ascent (2021 or newer)	\$19,900

Good Choices — starting at \$10,000 or less**SMALL CARS**

Nissan Sentra (2015 or newer)	\$4,400
Mini Countryman (2011 or newer)	\$4,600
Mazda 3 sedan (2014-19; only vehicles built after October 2013)	\$5,000
Kia Soul (2015 or newer)	\$5,100
Mazda 3 hatchback (2014-19; only vehicles built after October 2013)	\$5,400
Subaru Impreza wagon (2014 or newer)	\$5,700
Subaru Impreza sedan (2014 or newer)	\$5,800
Volkswagen Golf (2015-21)	\$6,300
Kia Niro Hybrid (2017-22)	\$6,600
Honda Civic sedan (2014-21)	\$6,800
Volkswagen Golf SportWagen (2015-19)	\$6,900
Subaru Crosstrek (2014 or newer)	\$7,300
Honda Civic coupe (2014-21)	\$7,900
Volkswagen Golf Alltrack (2017-19)	\$8,000

Chevrolet Volt (2016-19)	\$9,500
Chevrolet Bolt (2017-21)	\$9,800
Acura ILX (2016-22)	\$10,000

MIDSIZE CARS

Volvo S60 (2012-20)	\$4,900
Volkswagen Jetta (2015 or newer)	\$5,300
Hyundai Sonata (2016-22; only vehicles built after October 2015)	\$5,900
Mercedes-Benz C-Class (2015-18)	\$6,500
Chrysler 200 (2015-17)	\$6,700
Volkswagen Passat (2016-22)	\$7,100
Subaru Legacy (2015-19)	\$7,200
Mazda 6 (2016-18)	\$7,300
Volvo V60 (2015-20)	\$7,300
Acura TL (2012-14; only vehicles built after April 2012)	\$7,500
Audi A3 (2015 or newer)	\$7,500
Ford Fusion (2017-19)	\$7,500
Subaru Outback (2015-19)	\$7,600
Honda Accord sedan (2013-20)	\$8,200
BMW 2 series (2014-21)	\$8,400
Nissan Maxima (2016-19)	\$8,600
Toyota Camry (2015-17)	\$8,800
Lincoln MKZ (2017-19)	\$8,900
Honda Accord coupe (2015-17)	\$9,200
Toyota Prius v (2015-17)	\$9,300

LARGE CARS

Volvo S80 (2012; 2015-16)	\$4,800
Hyundai Genesis (2015-16)	\$8,400
Kia Cadenza (2017-20)	\$8,500
Mercedes-Benz E-Class (2014-19; only vehicles built after January 2014)	\$8,800
Audi A6 (2016 or newer; only vehicles built after January 2015)	\$9,300

SMALL SUVS

Buick Encore (2015-22)	\$5,100
Fiat 500X (2016-18; only vehicles built after July 2015)	\$5,300
Nissan Rogue (2014-20)	\$5,300
Subaru Forester (2014-18)	\$6,000
Mitsubishi Outlander (2014-21)	\$6,100
Jeep Compass (2017 or newer; only vehicles built after December 2016)	\$6,700
Mazda CX-3 (2016-2019)	\$6,800
Mazda CX-5 (2014-2019; only vehicles built after October 2013)	\$7,200
Hyundai Tucson (2016-21)	\$7,700
Kia Sportage (2017 or newer)	\$7,700
BMW X1 (2016 or newer)	\$8,900
Audi Q3 (2015 or newer)	\$9,100

Hyundai Kona (2018 or newer)	\$9,600
Honda CR-V (2015 or newer)	\$9,800

MIDSIZE SUVS

GMC Terrain (2014 or newer)	\$5,200
Volvo XC60 (2013-21)	\$5,200
Chevrolet Equinox (2014 or newer)	\$5,300
Volvo XC90 (2013-17)	\$6,000
Nissan Murano (2015-20)	\$7,100
Kia Sorento (2016 or newer)	\$7,500
Hyundai Santa Fe Sport (2017-18)	\$8,300
Chevrolet Traverse (2018 or newer)	\$8,500
Hyundai Santa Fe (2017 or newer; only vehicles built after March 2016)	\$8,500
Audi Q5 (2015 or newer; only vehicles built after January 2015)	\$8,700
Lincoln MKX (2016-18)	\$9,200
Mercedes-Benz M-Class (2014-15; only vehicles built after August 2013)	\$9,200
Acura MDX (2014-16)	\$9,300
Volkswagen Tiguan (2018-21)	\$9,700
Mazda CX-9 (2017-20; only vehicles built after November 2016)	\$9,800

MINIVANS

Kia Sedona (2015-21)	\$5,400
Honda Odyssey (2014 or newer)	\$7,300
Chrysler Pacifica (2017 or newer; only vehicles built after August 2016)	\$9,100

NEW VEHICLES FOR TEENS (2025 MODELS)

Listed vehicles are winners of the 2025 IIHS *TOP SAFETY PICK* or *TOP SAFETY PICK+* award and come with standard automatic emergency braking and good seat belt reminder ratings from IIHS. They have average or better scores from CR for braking and for emergency and routine handling (scoring at least 3 out of 5) and CR usability scores for controls and displays of at least 2 out of 5. All were priced under \$45,000 as of April 2025, according to Kelley Blue Book.

SMALL CARS

Honda Civic sedan
Mazda 3 hatchback
Mazda 3 sedan

MIDSIZE CARS

Honda Accord
Hyundai Ioniq 6
Toyota Camry

SMALL SUVS

Honda HR-V
Hyundai Ioniq 5
Hyundai Kona
Hyundai Tucson
Mazda CX-30
Mazda CX-50
Subaru Forester (excludes Wilderness trim)
Subaru Solterra

MIDSIZE SUVS

GMC Acadia (built after January 2025)
Honda Pilot
Hyundai Santa Fe (built after November 2024)
Kia Telluride
Lexus NX
Mazda CX-70
Mazda CX-90
Subaru Ascent