



# Kids Speaking Up for Road Safety

Facilitator's Guide: Distracted Driving Lesson Plans for Grades 2-6

**End Distracted Driving (EndDD.org) and Safe Roads Alliance (SRA)** have developed three separate 30–45-minute lessons—for grades 2–3, 4–5, and 6—on the topic of distracted driving. The lessons introduce students to the concept of how being distracted affects us in our daily lives and how students can apply that knowledge to situations when they or others are distracted. The lessons also impart communication skills to help students speak up effectively and respectfully when their adult driver is distracted.

**Why is this program necessary?** In the United States, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of unintentional death for people ages four to twenty-four. Driving distractions are serious and have become an increasingly problematic issue, particularly with our addictive use of smartphones. A recent study indicates that parents are regularly driving in a distracted state with their children in the car. As described in a 2018 article in *The Journal of Pediatrics* (McDonald, et al, 2018), researchers found that among a group of 760 parents/caregivers of 4-10 year olds, in the 3 months prior to the study 47% talked on a hand-held phone, 52.2% talked on a hands-free phone, 33.7% read texts, 26.7% sent texts, and 13.7% used social media *while driving with their child in the vehicle*. Children are being exposed to heightened crash risks by their parents and others, and the goal of this program is to help them recognize distracted driving and to give them tools to effectively speak up when it occurs. As our children will be the next generation of drivers, it is critical to teach them early about the importance of focused driving. The sad reality is this: among drivers ages 16–19, the frequency of crashes caused by distracted driving skyrockets to nearly 60% (AAA,

Each lesson suite is comprised of a teacher lesson plan and ancillary materials, including:

1. this guide
2. short videos presented during the lesson
3. a letter home to parents/guardians advising them of the content of the lesson
4. pre- and post-lesson surveys for students, teachers, and parents
5. suggestions for cross-curricular activities related to the topic
6. a safe driving pledge for students and their parents/guardians
7. a printable, non-confrontational language reference for students in the form of a card that they can keep in their backpacks or the car





*SRA and EndDD believe that driver education should start early on, long before potential drivers get behind the wheel. Not only are children at risk in cars operated by distracted drivers, children themselves can be sources of distraction.*

## Teacher Lesson Plans

These lessons were developed to help children understand the dangers of distracted driving, to recognize and address distracted driving when they see it, and to recognize and curb their own behaviors as riders that could distract a driver. The goal is to create a generation for whom distracted driving is unacceptable—as socially unacceptable as drunk driving is today.

The teacher lesson plans are comprised of everything the teacher will need to present the lesson to students in the classroom, including a procedural outline with scripting and other teacher supports. Lesson content was developed in consultation with a Social Emotional Learning specialist and a child psychologist to assure that the student experience is positive and empowering. It draws on the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) Core SEL Competencies framework and addresses the following competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making.

The lessons' primary goals are to promote awareness of distracted driving and to give students effective tools to protect their own safety as passengers in cars, while fostering skills they need to manage interactions with others, including parents, caregivers, and older siblings. Note that for grades 2–3, the primary objective of the lesson is to help students understand what it means to *be distracted*, and distracted driving

is touched on in this broader context. For students at all grade levels, the lessons introduce a communication strategy that facilitates speaking up when they find themselves in distracted driving or other unsafe situations. The lesson plans are supported by short videos that help define key ideas and provide models for behaviors.





## Cross-Curricular Activities

The lesson suites include extension activities designed to reinforce lesson content that can be taught in classes such as health or gym, and in disciplines such as math, English Language Arts, music, art, and Social Emotional Learning. Extension activities can help students comprehend concepts (*What does it mean to be distracted?*) and relate them to their own lives through direct engagement.



## Letter Home to Parents/Guardians

The lessons avoid information about car crashes, but the topic of distracted driving may nonetheless be distressing to some students, for example, students who have lost a loved one in a car crash, been in a crash themselves or witnessed a bad collision. The Letter Home describes the lesson content and gives parents or guardians the discretion to opt their child out.



## Safe Driving Pledge

Students in grades 4–6 will be encouraged to go home and talk to their parents/guardians about what they learned about distracted driving. They will be given some suggestions about how to initiate these discussions. Students will also receive a Safe Driving Pledge form that they and their parents/guardians may choose to sign. This is a promise from drivers to refrain from distracting behaviors and a pledge from riders to refrain from behaviors that might distract the driver in a moving car. Suggest to students that, after signing the pledge at home, they post it somewhere—for example, on the refrigerator—where everyone can see the reminder.



## “I” Statement Reference Card

In the course of the lesson, students are introduced to a behavioral framework and a non-confrontational sentence construction for dealing with uncomfortable situations, including distracted driving situations. The “I” Statement Reference Card sets out the framework with sample statements and is intended to be printed out and laminated and kept on hand, either in a student’s backpack or somewhere in the car.

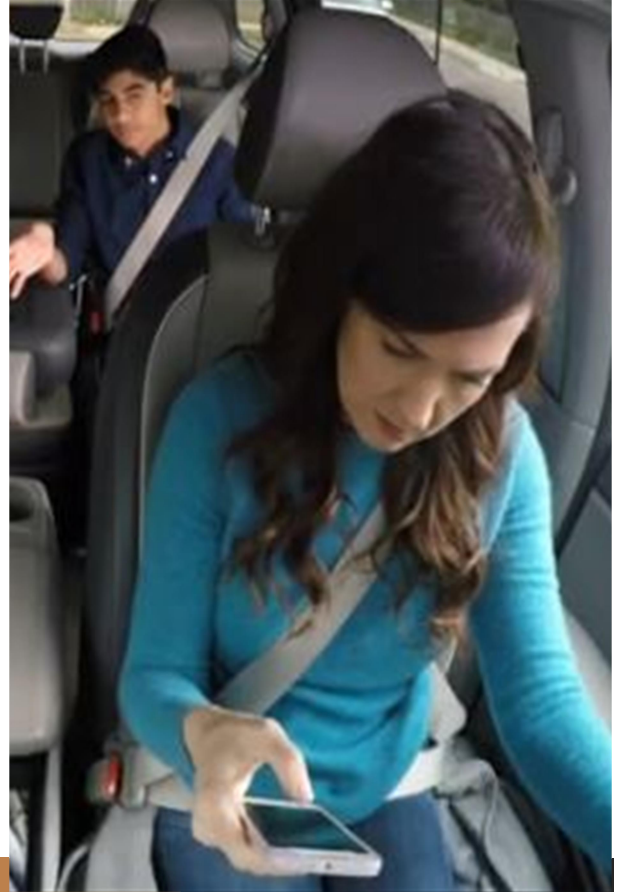
## Pre- and Post-lesson Surveys (grades 4–6)

The Pre- and Post-lesson Surveys are designed to provide a scientific measure of the effectiveness of the lessons.

The Pre-Lesson Survey gauges students' familiarity with the ideas of being distracted and distracted driving, their awareness of distracted driving situations, and their attitudes toward distracted driving behaviors.

The Post-lesson Survey gauges how much students took away from the lesson and whether their attitudes and behavior were impacted by the lesson.

Before conducting the Pre-lesson Survey, let students know that soon they will have a lesson about distracted driving, and that the surveys will give an idea about how much they know about this topic now. Stress that the surveys are anonymous—no one will know who filled out the forms—and that there are no right or wrong answers, but that being honest will help make better lessons. Students in grades 4–6 should complete the survey independently. For students in grades 2–3, we suggest that the teacher read the questions aloud and help clarify their meaning as necessary.



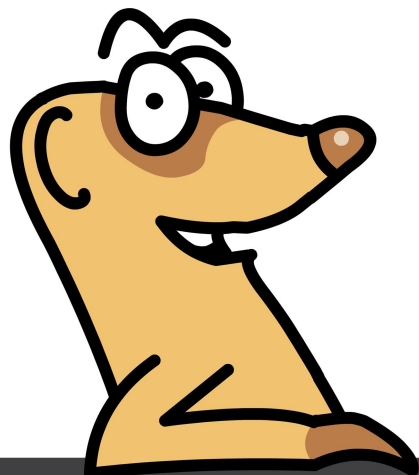
*EndDD and SRA are excited to be working with researchers from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), who have selected this program to evaluate the effectiveness of this type of distracted driving intervention. It is a great opportunity for schools to be a part of the evaluative process as we all strive to make our children and others safer on our roads. There is also an opportunity for some schools to receive compensation for their participation in the program evaluation.*

# Procedural Outline

1. Approximately one week before the lesson will be presented
  - send the Letter Home to Parents/Guardians.
  - conduct the Pre-lesson Student Survey (grades 4–6). Alternatively, teachers may conduct the pre-lesson survey right before the lesson.
2. A few days after the lesson presentation, have a check-in discussion with your students. Give them an opportunity to ask any questions they may have carried away from the lesson. Ask volunteers to share their experiences with family discussions and taking the safe driving pledge. You might also ask students if they have had occasion to use “I” statements. What were the circumstances? Was using the “I” statement effective?
3. Approximately three weeks after the lesson presentation, conduct the Post-Lesson Student Survey to help measure the efficacy of the lesson.

EndDD.org and SRA want to gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following educators who have provided thoughtful insights and feedback since the beginning of the project:

- Danielle Gibson, Philadelphia, PA
- Fred Gluck, Boulder, CO
- Katie Whitehurst, Springfield, IL



Letter Home to Parents/Guardians

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child's class will be receiving a lesson on distracted driving developed by the Safe Roads Alliance and End Distracted Driving as part of their *Kids Speaking Up for Road Safety* program. This program is intended to reverse the trend of teens and adults who drive while distracted, and to help change the culture in our country around distracted driving—a change that begins with our children. This was created in consultation with a Social Emotional Learning specialist and child psychologist. Its purpose is to help students:

- understand what it means to be distracted.
- understand how passengers' actions can distract drivers.
- give passengers tools to respectfully point out when distracted driving is occurring and bring their families together to come up with ways to avoid distractions while driving (grades 4–6).
- understand the dangers of distracted driving so that when they become drivers, they will be less likely to drive distracted.

Students at all grade levels will learn to identify when they and others are distracted, including instances of distracted driving. Students in grades 4–6 will be encouraged to address distracted driving when they see it happening.

Following their participation in the lesson, students in grades 4–6 will bring home a pledge for both drivers and passengers to behave safely and to make safe decisions in the car. Your child will have received suggestions for conducting a family conversation about distracted driving. During the discussion, you may wish to establish a "safe word" that family members can use to remind each other not to be distracted or distracting while in a moving vehicle.

While the lessons were developed to mitigate anxiety for students, we know this could be a sensitive and difficult topic for some students. The lesson will be presented on \_\_\_\_\_. If you do NOT wish your child to participate, please sign and return this letter by \_\_\_\_\_.

If you have any questions about the program, or would like to review the materials in advance, please call \_\_\_\_\_ or email \_\_\_\_\_.

EndDD and SRA are also conducting pre- and post-lesson surveys to help measure the effectiveness of their efforts. They would be very grateful if you take 2 minutes to fill out this pre-lesson survey.

**To be completed by parent or guardian**

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ will opt out of participation in the distracted driving lesson.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## OUR PLEDGE TO BE SAFE ON THE ROAD

As drivers, we pledge to do our best to:

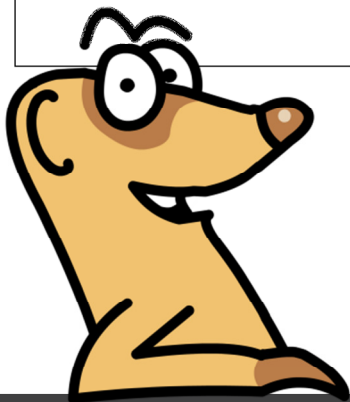
- avoid driving while distracted.
- model safe driving behaviors for our children

As passengers, we pledge to do our best to:

- avoid distracting the driver.

- respectfully point out distracted driving if it happens.
- work together to put a family plan into action to address distracted driving if it happens.
- be safe drivers and avoid distracted driving when we become drivers in the future.

Drivers' Signatures	Passengers' Signatures



Signed on this date: \_\_\_\_\_

"I" Statement Reference Card

**SAM** with "I" statements

**See** a problem.

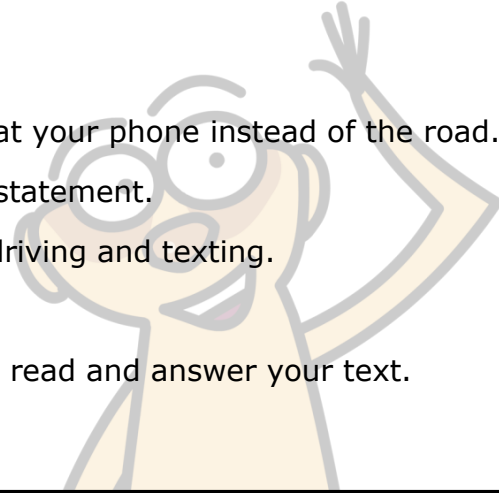
- I see that you are looking at your phone instead of the road.

**Address** the problem with an "I" statement.

- I feel scared when you're driving and texting.

**Make** an action plan together.

- Let's pull over and you can read and answer your text.



<b>EXAMPLES</b>	<b>See</b> a problem.	<b>Address</b> the problem with an "I" statement.	<b>Make</b> an action plan together.
The driver is not focusing on the job of driving.	Mom, the car is swerving!	I feel scared when you look at the phone when you're driving.	I can read that text to you.
A passenger is behaving in a way that distracts the driver.	Joey, when you ask Dad to find your spinner it distracts him.	I get nervous when we cause Dad to look away from the road when he's driving.	Dad, can we pull over so we can find Joey's spinner?