

Vickie George "We Kan Drive" Testimony

I fostered for 6 or 7 years starting in July 2009. I took a break for a few years due to a family situation but got relicensed in March of 2019. The first time I fostered, I only took 17 – 19-year-old. I had two kids that came into custody at age 17 that came to me with a license and a car. Both kids kept their cars while placed with me. This time I started out fostering 16 and up then moved down to 14 years to take a kid. I had a list of all kids and times with me but that was lost on a computer about a year ago. I tried to reconstruct the list and best I can tell, I have had about 50 kids this time and about the same number the first time. Until COVID, I took a lot of overnights and respites, but I have probably had about 50+ permanent kids. Before I go into this, it is very important to state the end result first, of all the kids that aged out of foster care from my house and there have been many, only 1 obtained her license before aging out and none have had a car (except the two that came with cars).

Most of my kids did not have parents they could rely on, so that left me and any guy they could find to take care of them. I keep in contact with a good number of my kids. Most of them got their license around 20 or 21. Some do have cars some still do not. KVC use to pay for driver's education. I was told in December that KVC no longer absorbs these expenses. Driver education is free through the school but is a summer session of 4 – 6 weeks (I cannot remember the exact duration). It is only a few hours during a day and not a schedule that working parents can accommodate. Private driver's education is \$385 - \$450 depending on the company. Currently, a child needs 50 hours of driving experience in order to get a license before turning 18. After 18, they can get their license upon completing and passing drivers education with no additional hours of experience. A person who only gets 6 hours of drive time in driver's ed, in my opinion, is not appropriately prepared to drive alone.

Kids under 18 – once a child finishes drivers ed, they need 44 additional hours of drive time before qualifying for a driver's license. Kids need a vehicle to practice in. For me, having a kid with 6 hours of driving experience does not provide enough experience for me to allow them to drive my car on the road. I have one car and cannot afford to have that car wrecked NOR is it a good 'beginner' car. Ideally, these kids need their own cars that they can practice in and be familiar with. I will take my kids to parking lots and empty spaces to try to get driving hours, but it takes a very long time and does not provide the needed experience. For this age group, the biggest barriers are the high cost of driver's education, the high cost of additional drive hours with a certified drive instructor (\$100 an hour) and no vehicle available to get additional required hours.

Kids over 18 – once a kid turns 18, they can get their own insurance policy but given that they have no experience, the cost is high. Only liability on a small sedan is about \$250-\$600 a month with full coverage \$75 - \$100 a month more. (The low end does not include any medical coverage and the limits are low). I have checked with about 15 companies. I can add them to my policy for much cheaper, annually, but it could get complicated if there is a wreck. That would cause the insurance on my car to go up, unless I moved the child to their own insurance policy at that time but insurance would be extremely high with a wreck on her record, if she was even insurable (according to my agent). Hopefully we would not have to face a wreck, but it needs to be taken into consideration when attempting to identify the best approach.

For a kid in school, insurance maintenance, gas, registration, etc. is a LOT of money. Plus, they will still have had to save up enough money for a car or someone else will have to buy one for them, which would have to be the foster parent in my case. For this age group, the biggest barriers are taking drivers education before turning 18 and being able to log 50 hours of drive time before getting a license to be adequately prepared to have a license, obtaining a car – one that is affordable yet dependable, obtaining insurance - joining foster family policy for cheaper insurance but risking not being able to get

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insurance in the event of a wreck. Youth getting own policy is very expensive for a youth to try to cover while going to school, expenses - cost of the car, sales tax, property tax, registration, insurance, gas, maintenance (oil changes, brakes, windshield wipers, etc.), repairs (heater goes out, a belt breaks). Most of my kids are excited to pursue getting a license until they find out that they will not be able to log drive hours, are intimidated about getting a license and driving with so little experience and all of the expenses they will be facing.