The Dangers of Distracted Driving: External Distractions

1. Distractions, distractions, distractions
Distractions outside the vehicle are another group of risks your teen needs to be aware of, and more importantly, learn how to deal with.

Alongside most roads, advertisers compete for attention by using high-impact graphics or bright lights on billboards and illuminated store signs flash their messages. Additionally, trucks have signs painted on them designed to attract attention and cars have bumper stickers and signs.

Natural elements like the weather or beautiful scenery might attract a driver’s attention, too. So might unexpected events on the side of the road. It is difficult to learn to screen out these distractions.

2. Practice scanning to deal with distractions
The best way is to deal with these distractions is to have teens practice scanning the road. Teens should keep their eyes moving. Are they staying focused on anything for too long? Ask them questions about the environment if they missed something, and use that as an example to remind them to never stop moving their eyes around the road. They should stay focused on what they are about to encounter as they drive—even if they are temporarily distracted by their high school mascot dancing on the side of the road.