

Parents and AAA Name Nine New Vehicles to Annual Best Cars for Families List

9 New Vehicles Named to Annual AAA *Parents* Best Cars for Families List

Safety, value, convenience set these vehicles above all others

Nine new vehicles have been added to the AAA and *Parents* magazine Best Cars for Families list for 2007. The 15-vehicle list, now in its fifth year, appears with detailed reviews of each model in the April issue of *Parents* magazine which hits newsstands today.

By combining the 50-million-member AAA's auto-safety expertise with *Parents*' understanding of what families want and need, the team of reviewers created a list of sedans, economy cars, vans, SUVs, and crossovers perfect for everything from shuttling the kids to doctors' visits and soccer practice, to weekend getaways and longer road trips.

"Safety, convenience, and lasting value are especially important to parents shopping for a family vehicle," said John Nielsen, director, AAA Vehicle Acquisition and Consumer Information. "The vehicles on this year's list provide the whole package – comfort, practicality and performance with options for every family size." "We put the vehicles through real-life road tests that include everything from running errands to carpooling, to taking a family vacation," said Sally Lee, *Parents* editor-in-chief. "With many parents and children spending several hours per week in the car, it's important that it's a safe, happy place for everyone in it."

AAA and *Parents* test drove hundreds of vehicles, considering everything from air bags and fuel economy to cupholders and cargo space. The reviewers also installed a variety of child safety seats into every car, making sure it can be done easily and securely. Of those vehicles that have been tested, the AAA/*Parents* picks are among the top performers in crash tests conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). The AAA/*Parents* 2007 Best Cars for Families are listed below, along with a brief description of why the reviewers chose the vehicle. More complete reviews are available in the April issue of *Parents*. An asterisk denotes a vehicle's first time on the list.

Sedans

Honda Accord -- This sedan does virtually everything right. An incredibly smooth ride ensures that when your kids conk out, they won't be disturbed. The simple dashboard design lets drivers adjust controls quickly which helps keep their eyes on the road.

Mercury Milan* -- This upscale cousin to the Ford Fusion has a quiet steady feel on the road and an impressive package of standard safety and convenience features: antilock brakes, side-curtain air bags, reading lights and cubbyholes for the kids' stuff.

Toyota Camry -- Kids will appreciate the spacious back seat, which has a fold-down center armrest to defuse turf wars. Standard features include advanced frontal, side-impact and side-curtain air bags, as well as a driver's knee air bag.

Crossovers

Dodge Caliber* --The kid-friendly options include stain-resistant upholstery and a refrigerated beverage holder that works nicely for formula. Definitely opt for side-impact air bags.

Ford Edge* -- The Edge has the rugged feel of an SUV but its cushiony seats and responsive ride make it seem more like a sedan. The sizeable cargo area fits all the soccer gear in your kid's carpool.

Toyota RAV4* -- This crossover is quick and nimble like a sedan, yet it's roomier than you'd expect. And the RAV4's standard safety package includes side-curtain air bags and stability control.

SUVs

Chevy Tahoe* -- The supersize Tahoe has room to spare, even if you add the third row of seats. This SUV is maneuverable for its size, and on the highway it's as quiet as a nursery during naptime.

Honda CR-V* -- Honda has managed to make this redesigned SUV even better. The rear seats recline which makes it easier for older kids to nap. The CR-V's crisp handling and super-smooth ride remind you where the engineers focused their attention.

Hyundai Santa Fe* -- The Santa Fe is packed with safety technology to protect your little ones, but the modest price tag leaves something for their college funds. Nice surprises include second-row A/C vents.

Minivans

Honda Odyssey -- Driving is almost effortless with this minivan. You can outfit the second row with posh captain's chairs or choose three seats. The third-row seat folds flat into the floor and on some trim lines the second row does, too.

Hyundai Entourage* -- Three-row, side-curtain air bags, stability control, and antilock brakes are all standard, as are the Entourage's three-zone climate control system and power windows in the sliding doors. Load up on options and you'll still pay less than \$30,000.

Toyota Sienna -- Load the Sienna with eight passengers and there's still room for groceries, baby gear, and lots more. The second-row seats slide forward for quick access to the back row, and three-row, side-curtain airbags are standard.

Economy

Honda Civic -- It's the small things that earn this sedan big points, like a compact emergency brake that creates more space up front, rear heat ducts, and scuff-resistant material behind the front seats -- where the little ones' feet love to rest.

Mazda 3 -- The 3 is simply too much fun to be so practical. The ride screams sports car, yet the big, stable tires and quiet cabin make day trips pleasant too. The hatchback version provides extra storage space for strollers and suitcases.

Volkswagen Rabbit* -- Modern features include advanced frontal, side-impact, and side-curtain air bags standard, along with antilock brakes and stability control. The audio system has a jack for MP3 players and the handy hatchback makes for simpler loading.

Child passenger safety tips from AAA's award-winning Seated, Safe & Secure initiative can be found at www.aaa.com/publicaffairs and at www.Parents.com/April. For car care information, auto buying tips and more, visit www.aaa.com.

As North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA provides more than 50 million members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding in 1902, the not-for-profit, fully tax-paying AAA has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers.

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