READY FOR IMPACT? Why Age 14 Matters.

HIGH SCHOOL VERSUS YOUTH

The Flag Football Under 14 campaign was launched in 2010 to educate parents that tackle football is an inappropriate activity for children under age 14. This infographic explains why waiting until age 14 matters.

A child's body is not designed for tackle football. Because the head grows faster than the body, a child's large head makes head impacts inevitable, more painful, and more dangerous.

A 16-year-old's head-to-body ratio is similar to that of an adult.

A 15-year-old's head-to-body ratio is equivalent to that of an adult with a head four times larger than normal. A 14-year-old's head is even larger.

A 14-year-old child is equivalent to a high school player wearing a 15-pound helmet, which should never be allowed.

A child's brain, under expert care, should never exceed 11 pounds. Rough football movement is what causes CTE.

Upper body strength allows football players to block with their arms, and protect their heads.

Wearing a helmet is not recommended by USA football prior to age 13.

RESOURCES & PROTECTIONS

High schools employ paid, licensed, experienced coaches.

Enroll 45% of youth football coaches have been training in football.

Youth football programs rarely have athletic trainers.

Most state governing bodies enforce contact limits.

Most youth football programs have no contact limits.

Youth football leagues can play 5 games in a season without a concussion, called a concussion.

There is no standard or unique yard line for youth football.

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

The brain goes through incredible changes from age 6 to 13, as it physically changes from the brain of a child to the brain of an adolescent. It is a risky time to expose the brain to hundreds of repetitive head impacts in a year. Head impacts have the potential to change the course of a child's emotional and cognitive development.

Examples of the remarkable brain development in childhood:

1. Myelin is a type of cell that grows around and protects fragile brain cells. Proliferation continues up to ages 17 & 18. Without myelin, axons can be more easily injured or destroyed.

2. Important brain regions peak in size between ages 8 & 12 as they build billions of fragile connections to improve performance.

3. Blood flow in the brain peaks between ages 12 & 18 as the body feeds the growing brain with nutrients.

To learn more, visit FlagFootball14.org