

# FLAG

FLAG FOOTBALL UNDER 14



READY FOR IMPACT? 5 WHY AGE 14 MATTERS.



The Flag Football Under 14 campaign was launched in 2018 to educate parents that tackle football is an inappropriate activity for children under age 14. This infographic explains why waiting until age 14 matters.

## HIGH SCHOOL VS. YOUTH

**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 powerful, and more dangerous.

A 14-year-old's head-to-body ratio is similar to that of an adult.



A 5-year-old's head-to-body ratio is equivalent to that of an adult with a head **four times larger** than normal. A 5-year-old is a human bobblehead.

A 4 pound helmet is ~3% of a high school player's weight.



A 4 pound helmet on a child is equivalent to a high school player wearing a 15 pound helmet, which would **never be allowed**.

A **strong neck** acts as a shock absorber, reducing forces that reach the brain.



A child's **thinner, weaker neck** allows impacts to cause more rapid head movement. **Rapid head movement is what causes CTE.**

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



Weight lifting is **not recommended** by USA Football prior to age 13.

## RESOURCES & PROTECTIONS

High schools employ **paid, trained, experienced** coaches.



Only **45%** of youth football coaches have training in football.

**70%** of public high schools have access to an **athletic trainer.**



Youth football programs **rarely** have an athletic trainer.

Most state governing bodies **enforce contact limits.**



Most youth football programs have **no contact limits.**

High schoolers play **1 game per week.**



Youth football players can play **5 games** in a **single weekend**, called a jamboree.

High schoolers wear adult helmets with **industry designed standards.**



There is **no standard** or unique testing for youth helmets.

## BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

The brain goes through incredible changes from ages **8 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 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 children:

**1.** Myelin is a type of cell that grows around and **protects** fragile brain cell projections called **axons**. Peak myelination rates occur at **ages 11 & 12**. Without myelin, axons can be more easily **injured or destroyed.**



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

**3.** Blood flow in the brain peaks between **ages 10 & 12** as the body feeds the **growing brain** with nutrients.



To learn more, visit [FlagFootballu14.org](http://FlagFootballu14.org)