These questions are based on the article entitled: Child Safety: Get Used to the Back Seat
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Published in New York Times: June 7, 2005

Car manufacturers are required to **warn** drivers not to place children 12 and younger in a front passenger seat with an air bag because the bags can cause serious harm and even death if they **inflate** against a child. But a study published yesterday in the journal Pediatrics argued that the age limit should be increased to 14. "The results presented here suggest that there may be a significant proportion of at-risk children being missed by the current recommendations," wrote the authors, Dr. Craig D. Newgard of Oregon Health and Science University and Dr. Roger J. Lewis of the University of California, Los Angeles.

These conclusions are based on a study of 3,790 car crashes over an eight-year period in which children ages 1 month to 18 years were seated in the front with air bags. The researchers found that up until 14, children were "at risk for serious preventable injury" when they rode in the front seat of a car with air bags. Children ages 15 to 18, however, benefited from air bags, the study found.

When Washington set the age at 12 for cars made in 1997 and later, it acted based on the information available, the researchers said. The new data, they said, show that it is time to reconsider the rules. The researchers also suggested that it was unwise to try to decide when a child was ready to sit in seats with air bags based on height and weight. Age, the researchers said, may be more important because of changes in puberty in the muscles and bones.