

Kids in the Front Seat? Not So Fast

My ten year old son has been pestering me to sit in the front passenger seat of my car for some time now. His argument is that “all of my friends are allowed to”. My response is, “you’re too young, it’s against the law.”

Of course, being a lawyer’s son he demands “proof” and wants to see the “law”. So on Monday while I’m in my office I proceed to look up the law to prove to my son that he cannot legally sit in the front seat. However, to my surprise, there is no law that requires children to be of a certain age to sit in the front seat. Now what do I tell my son? I know it’s safer for him to be in the back seat, but how do I prove this to him?

While researching the law, I find New

York State’s official Seat Belt Law Brochure on line. The first goodie I find in the brochure, I show to my 7 year old daughter, who is adamant that she no longer needs a booster seat. It states that all children over 4 must use a booster seat “until their 8th birthday.” OK, one down one to go.

Then I find the gem I’m looking for. “**FOR MAXIMUM PROTECTION, CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 12 SHOULD SIT IN THE REAR SEAT OF THE VEHICLE.**” I immediately underline it in red and bring it home to show my son. While he reads it I explain to him that it’s my job to keep him safe and because airbags deploy at 240 mph they can be fatal or cause

serious injuries to a child under 12. He thinks about this for a minute, reads the official brochure again and looks at me and says “OK dad”. See, 10 year olds do have common sense, sometimes they just need a little push in the right direction.

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