

Fact-sheet – How to prevent child labor



What is the objective?

Understanding the factors which contribute to child labour and how the facility can prevent this practice.

Child labor: the employment or use of persons who are under the legal minimum age to work in that country.

The main objective is to understand risks associated with child labour and how to prevent it in your facility.



How to achieve the objective?

What are the risks associated with child labor?

- 1- **Interfering with childhood education and perpetuating poverty** – while a child may need to earn money to help his/her family, employing a worker under the legal working age may mean that he/she cannot attend school and learn basic skills such as reading and writing. While the child may earn income in the short term, long-term he/she may be able to earn less money due to a lack of skills. Additionally, working as a child could be harmful to his/her physical and mental development.
- 2- **Higher risk of injury** – because machinery, tools and personal protective equipment (PPE) are designed for an adult, a child worker is at a higher risk of injury. The PPE may not fit him/her properly and his/her understanding of health and safety trainings could be different from an adult.
- 3- **Violation of international conventions, local laws and ICS Code of Conduct** – according to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 138*, it is prohibited to employ a child under the age of 15 (14 when it is approved by local law). The ICS Code of conduct refers to ILO conventions and ICS members prohibit the employment of children that may interfere with their education or cause harm.
- 4- **Risk of lower productivity** – machinery and tools for production are designed to be used by adults. Since children tend to be smaller and have less strength, it's likely a child won't be as productive as an adult worker due to height mismatch or muscle mass.



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How to prevent child labor?

1 – Implement a formal policy prohibiting child labor – the facility needs to have a formal, written policy that is agreed upon by management to strictly prohibit child labor. The policy should also include remedial actions, such as supporting the child to go back to school, if a child is found working in the factory.

2 – Establish an age verification process – in order to ensure the policy is carried out, the facility needs to not only ask new recruits for their identification card, showing their age, but also needs to assess those documents for validity.

3 – Train all employees – all employees should be trained when they join the facility on the company’s anti-child labor policy.

4– Pay workers a fair or livable wage – the primary reason a child will seek employment is because his/her family does not have enough money to sustain themselves. Therefore, the factory can help prevent child labor by evaluating the cost of living, food, education, transportation and other necessities and ensuring that each worker is able to support his/her family without working excessive hours.

*http://ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C138



Common non-compliances

- Lack of policy to prohibit child labor;
- Lack of age verification process;
- Workers or management are unaware of the anti-child labor policy.



Good practices

- Establishing an action plan for working towards a fair/livable wage for workers;
- Paying a living or fair wage to workers;
- Providing extra benefits to workers such as educational subsidies or programs for their children.