



Children in the Fields Campaign Fact Sheet

Our Mission

The Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs' (AFOP) *Children in the Fields Campaign* strives to improve the quality of life of migrant and seasonal farmworker children by advocating for enhanced educational opportunities and the elimination of discriminatory federal child labor laws in agriculture.

Current Child Labor Laws in the U.S.

Based on federal data, AFOP estimates as many as 500,000 children work in U.S. fields.

Age	AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS			NON-AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS		
	Allowable Occupations	Allowable Hours	Other Conditions	Allowable Occupations	Allowable Hours	Other Conditions
16-17	All	All	None	Non-hazardous	All	None
14-15	Non-hazardous	Unlimited hours outside of school	None	Non-hazardous explicitly permitted by DOL	Up to 40 hours in non-school week; up to 8 on non-school day; up to 3 on school day; between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. (9 p.m. summer)	None
12-13	Non-hazardous	Unlimited hours outside of school	Written consent of parent or work on farm where parent employed	None	None	N/A
Under 12	Non-hazardous	Unlimited hours outside of school	On small farm with written consent of parent	None	None	N/A
10-11	Hand harvest short season crops (non-hazardous)	Up to 5 hours a day and 30 hours a week outside of school	Under forms of waiver issued by DOL, which includes various protections including parental consent	None	None	N/A

General Accounting Office, *Child Labor in Agriculture: Changes Needed to Better Protect Health and Educational Opportunities (GAS-HEHS-98-193)* Washington: General Accounting Office, 1998) p. 31

Under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the legal age to perform most farm work is only 12 if a parent accompanies the working child. Children who are 12 or older can work unlimited hours in the fields before or after school hours. U.S. law also allows children working in agriculture to perform hazardous work at 16 - other workers must wait until they are 18.

Impact on Farmworker Children

Farmworker children are dropping out of school at an alarming rate. Studies suggest that half the youth who regularly perform farm work never graduate from high school¹. AFOP believes that the non-completion rate is much higher. [¹Department of Education, *Office of Migrant Education*]

Children working in agriculture face serious health threats. Children account for about 20 percent of all farm fatalities. More than 10,000 youth between the ages of 10 and 15 years were injured on farms in 2006. Farmworkers regularly work in fields treated with pesticides - some of them are known carcinogens. [*National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Injuries to Youth on Farms and Safety Recommendations, U.S. 2006*]

Farmworker children are living in poverty. Most of the estimated 3 million people that work in agriculture in the U.S. earn minimum wage or less and have incomes averaging \$14,500 per year¹. Child farmworkers risk their health, education and future to earn on average less than \$1,000 per year². [¹National Agricultural Workers Survey 2001-2002, p. xi] [²Department of Labor 2000, p. 56]

Our Campaign Goals

- Document the level of child labor in agriculture in California, Ohio, North Carolina, Michigan and Texas
- Educate the public and leaders at the local and national level about the conditions under which these children labor
- Build grassroots and national support for policies and programs that help keep underage farmworker children out of the fields and in school

Children in the Fields Campaign Launch States



What You Can Do

We must act now to ensure farmworker children are being afforded the same protection as other children.

- Learn about where your food comes from and educate others about the plight of farmworker children
- Support educational programs for farmworker children
- Advocate for more protections for children who work in agriculture
- Support fair food and fair living wages for all farmworkers

For more information, contact:

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About the Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs

The Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs (AFOP) is the national federation of non-profit and public agencies that provide job training and services for America's farmworkers in 49 states and Puerto Rico.

AFOP's mission is to improve the quality of life for migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families by providing advocacy for the member organizations that serve them.

