



Facts about Child Labor in US Agriculture

Hundreds of thousands of children under the age of 18 work in US agriculture, often under dangerous and grueling conditions. They hoe cotton and sorghum in scorching heat, cut collard greens and kale with sharp knives, hitch and drive tractors, and stoop for hours picking cucumbers.

Child farmworkers often work 12 or more hours a day for as little as \$2 an hour. Human Rights Watch has found children as young as 11 and 12 working 10 or more hours a day in the fields.

Agriculture is one of the country's most dangerous occupations. Child farmworkers risk pesticide poisoning, heat illness, injuries from knives and heavy equipment, and life-long disabilities. They suffer fatalities at four times the rate of children working in other jobs.

Many child farmworkers drop out of school because of long hours in the fields. Nationally, the high school graduation rate for child farmworkers is only 55 percent.

Current US child labor law has a dangerous double standard that allows child farmworkers to work at younger ages, for longer hours, and under more hazardous conditions than other working youths. For example, you have to be at least fourteen to get a job at Burger King, and can only work for three hours on a school day. But in agriculture, children can work at age 12 with no limit on the number of hours that they work, as long as they don't work during school hours.

The Children's Act for Responsible Employment (CARE Act), HR 3564, would protect all working children equally. It would apply the same age and hour requirements to children working in agriculture that already apply to all other working children.

