

Illinois Department of Labor

Child Labor Law

820 ILCS 206/1-115

FY 2025 Annual Report

Administration and
Enforcement Activities

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Illinois Child Labor Law regulates the employment of workers under the age of 16 and prohibits most work by children under the age of 14. The Child Labor Law seeks to ensure that child workers are working in non-hazardous conditions, receiving required meal breaks and working during appropriate times as defined by the law.

The Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) through its Fair Labor Standards Division (FLSD) administers and enforces the Child Labor Law. In accordance with 820 ILCS 206/85c, the Department is required to file a report with the General Assembly by January 1 each year summarizing its activities regarding administration and enforcement of this law for the preceding fiscal year.

II. ADMINISTRATION

The Department maintains a toll-free hotline (1-800-645-5784) which is used primarily by the Issuing Officers in schools to obtain assistance when issuing employment certificates, as well as to receive complaints and provide information to the general public. The hotline number is prominently displayed on the Department's Labor Law Poster, which employers all throughout the State of Illinois are required to post. In addition to the hotline, the Department maintains the following e-mail addresses to receive inquiries and complaints regarding child labor. This includes:

- dol.childlaborquestions@illinois.gov handles general questions about child employment
- dol.childlaborcomplaints@illinois.gov handles violation of child labor law reports
- dol.childlaborlaw@illinois.gov handles the receipt of approved child work certificates

This information can also be found on the Department's website located at <https://labor.illinois.gov/laws-rules/fls/child-labor-law.html>. The website also contains FAQ's, updates, and pertinent forms.

Updates to Child Labor Law Public Act 103-721

The Department continues to prioritize protections for working minors. This year, IDOL has focused on implementing the changes set forth in Public Act 103-721, while also responding to other specific statutory changes. The recent updates to the law seek to revise the prohibition on employment at gun ranges to permit limited exceptions under specific circumstances, particularly at the U.S. Open and Grand American World Trapshooting Championships held at the World Shooting and Recreational Complex in Sparta, where youth are traditionally employed to keep score.

Additionally, Public Act 104-0035 went into effect August 1, 2025. It allows minors who are 12 or 13 years of age to work as officiants or assistant instructors for youth sports activities operated by township parks and recreation departments. This change aligns township provisions with existing allowances for city park departments and modifies the adult supervision requirements for minors engaged with youth sports.

III. ENFORCEMENT

The Department recognizes the importance of purposeful laws that protect young workers from exploitation and unsafe working conditions, as well as the critical role of enforcement in ensuring compliance. In 2025, IDOL investigated multiple child labor law complaints.

IDOL received information through national media reports and local community groups regarding children working in unsafe conditions at Hearthside Food Solutions. In partnership with the

Office of the Attorney General (OAG), IDOL conducted a joint investigation into allegations that minors under the age of 16 were working in hazardous conditions. This investigation resulted in Hearthside entering into a \$4.5 million settlement agreement, which included assurances that the company would implement corrective measures to ensure compliance with the Child Labor Law. These measures included establishing a complaint hotline and a dedicated complaint email for employees to report alleged violations at Hearthside facilities in Illinois, along with additional corrective actions.

Additionally, in Fiscal Year 2025, the Department continued to receive and investigate other complaints of child labor violations. Many of the identified violations derived from the restaurant and food retail industry. Penalties collected under this Act are deposited into the Child Labor and Day and Temporary Labor Enforcement Fund to support future enforcement activities. Settlement amounts are determined based on the size of the business and the severity of the violation. In Fiscal Year 2025, the Department collected a total of \$4,522, 150 in penalties for child labor violations.

IV. OUTREACH EFFORTS

During Fiscal Year 2025 the Department participated in 28 in-person and virtual outreach events related to child labor across the state of Illinois. Events FLSD participated in include the ISBE Bilingual Parents Summit, Face to Face Virtual Presentation, A Q & A with ISBE and Back to School Bashes & Family Resource Fairs. Department staff delivered formal presentations, engaged in question-and-answer sessions, and distributed informational materials to enhance public awareness and understanding of the Child Labor Law and complaint process. Event attendees represented a diverse audience, including school administrators, school staff, youth, parents and guardians, and other community stakeholders. These outreach efforts were designed to strengthen community engagement, educate the

public on youth workplace rights, and support the prevention of the exploitation of minors in the workplace.

V. CONCLUSION

In the coming year, IDOL FLSD will continue to increase and strengthen compliance investigation efforts and education initiatives. We remain focused on educating parents, schools, and children to ensure that child workers are safe and free from unsafe conditions and exploitation.