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Departments of Workforce Development, Public Instruction Offer Parents, Employers, School Officials New Guide to Wisconsin’s Child Labor Laws

Comprehensive handbook to help protect children, foster rewarding work experience

MADISON – With school starting soon, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson and State Superintendent Tony Evers today announced a new comprehensive, child labor law guide to help parents, employers and school officials ensure a safe, rewarding experience for students balancing work and school.

“Working just a few hours a week offers students many valuable lessons that complement what they learn in school,” Secretary Newson said. “It helps them develop basic soft skills critical to success in the world of work, such as being punctual, dressing appropriately, communicating and working well with others. Plus, they get a paycheck and learn to manage money. When it’s done right, an after-school job for students can be a great learning experience. That’s why this new guide is so important for parents, employers and school officials.”

The DWD Equal Rights Division (ERD) enforces Wisconsin child labor laws. In 2012, ERD issued more than 66,000 work permits to minors. ERD developed the new guide with the Department of Public Instruction as well as with the Cooperative Educational Service Agency 6, headquartered in Oshkosh.

“Work-based learning in Wisconsin is an important component to every child graduating from high school ready for college and career,” State Superintendent Evers said. “Students should have quality opportunities to experience possible careers first-hand. Children’s safety must also be a top priority on the job, and this guide provides information that will ensure that all student-minors who work while in high school have the best and safest experience possible.”

[The Guide to Wisconsin’s Child Labor Laws](#) includes key definitions, such the difference between an intern or trainee and an employee entitled to wages; states when a work permit is required and when it is not; covers liability and insurance questions, and lists employment and equipment restrictions. The 64-page document is available only online in a PDF format that allows viewers to print their own copy. The website includes links to additional information, such as the statutes and administrative code.

A work permit is required before anyone under the age of 18 is allowed to work in any job with the exception of agriculture or domestic service work. Employers must have work permits on file before minors start work. Permits are available at schools or local Job Centers. To secure a permit, a minor must provide proof of age, Social Security card, letter from the employer stating the minor’s job duties and hours of work, and the parents’ written consent. The permit fee is \$10, which the employer is required to reimburse by the first paycheck.

Minors under 18 may not be employed during the hours they are required to attend school. Minors under 16 years of age can work no more than three hours per day on school days and no more than eight hours per day on other days. Since 2008, ERD has used a computerized work permit system to ensure permits are issued consistent with the law and to provide an effective means of denying permits to minors who are truant.

[For more work permit information.](#)