



Assessing National Action on Child Labor Protections



The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) commits nations to guaranteeing civil, political, social, and economic rights to children. This fact sheet series by the WORLD Policy Analysis Center examines the extent to which countries have enacted and passed laws and policies consistent with CRC commitments.

(Photo by Paul Prescott)

Background

- In Article 32, the CRC recognizes “the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education” and explicitly calls on States Parties to “(a) provide for a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment; [and] (b) provide for appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment.”
- Despite States Parties’ commitment to protect children from labor, there are still around 168 million child laborers worldwide, 85 million of whom are engaged in hazardous work that endangers their health and safety.
- Work often interferes with children’s education. Data from over 60 countries show that when children work long hours, their school attendance decreases.

Findings

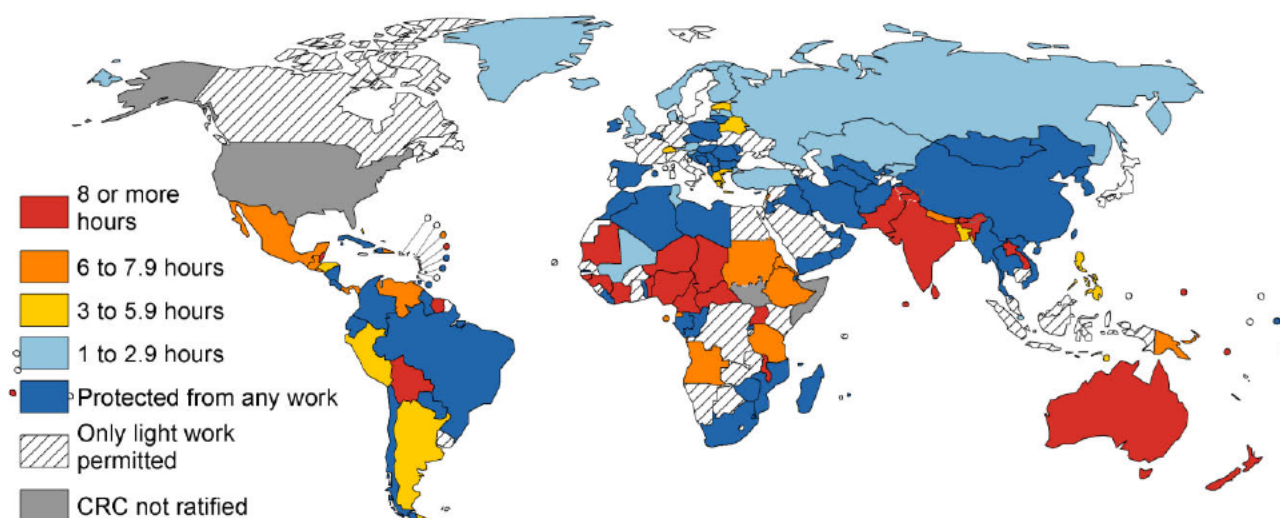
Gaps in protection from hazardous work

- While a majority of States Parties have passed legislation to prevent hazardous child labor, only 53% of States Parties legally protect children from hazardous work in all circumstances.
- Two percent of States Parties have not established a national minimum age for hazardous work, and in 24% of States Parties the minimum age for hazardous work is below 18.
- In an additional 20% of States Parties, the minimum age is set at 18, but the law includes exceptions allowing younger children to do hazardous work, such as for vocational purposes or in the company of family members.

National action to protect children from work likely to interfere with education

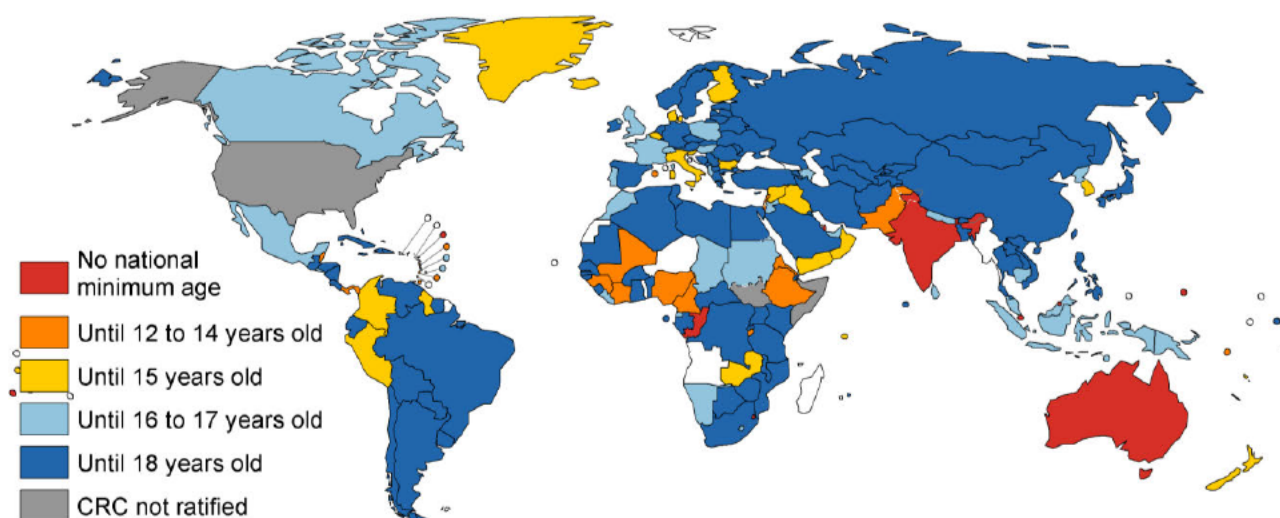
- The majority of States Parties, 94%, do not allow 12-year-old children to work six hours or more on a school day. In 75% of States Parties, children are prohibited from doing any type of work at this age.
- At age 14, three-quarters of States Parties prohibit children from working six hours or more on a school day.
- However, at age 16, protections decline significantly. Only 7% of States Parties protect children from working six hours or more on a school day at this age.

Map 1: How many hours are 14-year-olds legally protected from working on a school day?



Source: WORLD Policy Analysis Center, Child Labor Database, 2014

Map 2: If exceptions are taken into account, how long are children protected from hazardous work?



Source: WORLD Policy Analysis Center, Child Labor Database, 2014

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