

Media Release

For immediate release

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Coalition Launches Website to Gather Support for Tougher Child Labour Standards in BC www.nochildlabour.org

(Vancouver, BC) First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition today announced the launch of a website [nochildlabour.org](http://www.nochildlabour.org) to draw attention to the BC government's unacceptable child labour laws.

A First Call report published last fall found a startling increase in the number of child work-place injury claims accepted by WorkSafeBC since the general work-start age was lowered to 12-years-old in late 2003.

"The shift of responsibility for determining work-place safety for 12 to 14 year olds onto parents has proven to be unrealistic and dangerous for children," commented Adrienne Montani, First Call's Provincial Coordinator. "Parents have a right to expect that BC's employment standards adequately regulate and monitor the safety of their children on work sites."

After the report was published First Call representatives met with Minister of Labour Murray Coell to discuss its recommendations. While he seemed responsive, in a subsequent letter the Minister indicated he would not be taking further action.

"As more youth and children head into summer jobs, we invite organizations and individuals to go to the website and endorse the call for legislation to protect children from work-related injuries and economic exploitation," added Ms. Montani. "This means bringing BC's legislative and regulatory framework into compliance with the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the *International Labour Organization's* convention on child labour."

Specifically, the ILO convention states: "Any work which is likely to jeopardize children's physical, mental or moral health, safety or morals should not be done by anyone under the age of 18 and the minimum age for work should not be below the age for finishing compulsory schooling, which is generally 15. Children between the ages of 13 and 15 years old may do light work, as long as it does not threaten their health and safety, or hinder their education or vocational orientation and training."

Currently in BC, children can begin work at 12 years of age and there are no restrictions on the type of tasks or hours of employment. For more information about BC's child labour laws visit: http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/facshts/youth_general.htm

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What's Happening to Our Children? A Look at Child Work-Related Injury Claims in BC Over the Past 10 Years is available at www.firstcallbc.org