

Child labour

You have the right to be protected from doing any work that is dangerous or that interferes with your education or that is harmful to your health. (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 32.)

In Australia, many children and young people do work that is not considered to be child labour. This may include helping with appropriate tasks or chores around the home or farm, and doing part-time paid work after school or on the weekend. Good work can help children to:

- learn new skills
- develop responsibility and money management
- experience the work environment in preparation for future employment and participation in society.

Child labour is any work done by children that is dangerous, keeps them from getting an education, or is harmful to their health or development. Child labour exists to some degree in all countries, and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates 218 million children in the world today are involved in child labour. That is one child out of every six children in the world.

People may employ child labourers for a variety of jobs in factories, farms, mines, homes and shops. Two of the most dangerous forms of child labour include mining and quarrying. Young boys are often told to climb 15 to 30 metres into pits to set explosives and then escape the pits before the explosives have gone off, exposing jewels and gems. Of course, the children are not allowed to keep any of the wealth from the jewels or gems.

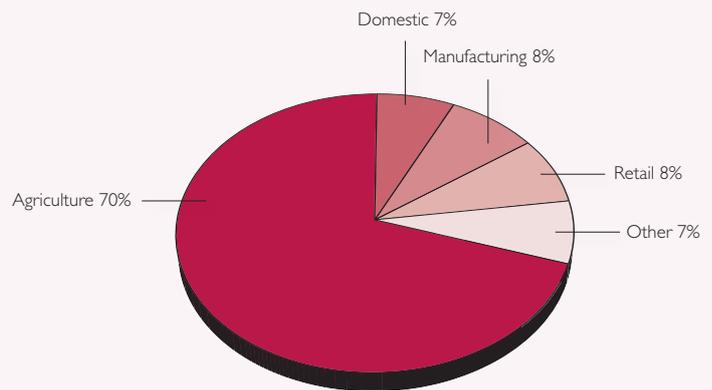
Child labour also exists when children from poor families create their own employment. This may include work like shoe shining, or picking up rubbish to recycle or sell.

Child labour means that children miss out on their right to education (Article 29), their right to play and rest (Article 31), and their right to decent healthcare (Article 24). It is certainly not 'in their best interests' (Article 3).

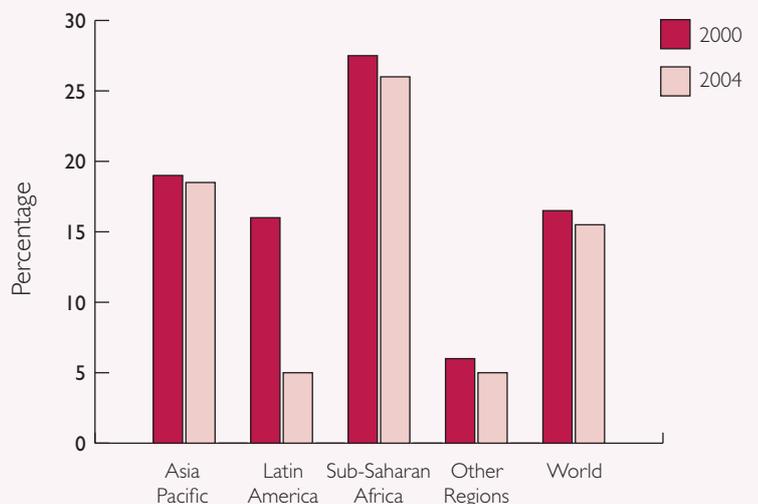


Beading a dress (sari) in India

Percentage of child labourers in different types of work



Percentage of children in the workforce



Source: International Labour Conference 95th Session 2006 Report I (B)
International Labour Office

DID YOU KNOW?

The region with the greatest number of child labourers is Asia, with 122 million.

For You To Do!

1. Child labour can be grouped under the following headings:

1. Domestic labour (work done in a home)	2. Agricultural labour (work done on farms)	3. Factory work (work done in mines or factories)	4. Street work	5. Armed conflict

Look at the photographs of child labour on p. 10-11 and identify which category of work listed above that each activity would come under.



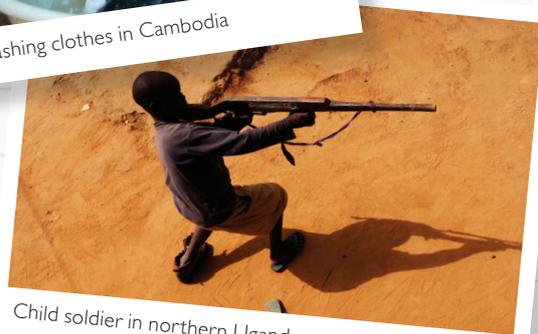
Washing clothes in Cambodia



Picking tealeaves in Rwanda



Selling goods on the street in India



Child soldier in northern Uganda

2. Complete the following.

Around the world, _____ million children are involved in child labour and 70% of all child labourers work in _____. In the Asia-Pacific region, nearly _____ % of all children are in the workforce. This adds up to _____ million children. Since 2000, the region that has made the biggest progress in reducing child labour is _____.