

Summer jobs for kids and five important things to know

Summer is here. Four of my kids are hitting the pavement looking for summer jobs.

It is estimated that 80 percent of all teens are employed at some point while in high school. As parents, we see the valuable lessons that come out of summer employment, like money management skills and a sense of responsibility.

For teens, summer jobs may be more about socialization and earning spending cash. Either way, here are five important things to know about summer employment for teens in Connecticut.

Your Age Limits Your Options: If you are 14 or 15 years old, your options for summer jobs are limited. You can work in agriculture, as a caddie, delivering newspapers, or at licensed summer camps. Recently, the law in Connecticut has changed to allow 15 year olds to work as baggers and stock clerks in retail stores. However, 15 year olds cannot work in a restaurant or in fast food stops like McDonalds. For 16 and 17 year olds it is more about what you cannot do than what you can do. You cannot take a job driving or where you are using power tools, such as in the construction field. However, you can perform light landscaping and general yard work.

Minimum Wage – Not Always: The minimum wage in Connecticut is \$8.00 per hour. However, for minors who may only be working for the summer,



Tony Sheffy Off The Record

the minimum wage may be reduced to \$6.80. The law allows this lower rate for minors who work less than 200 hours or less than 90 days. The law also allows this lower rate for minors who work in agriculture.

Limited Hours: During the summer months, the maximum amount of hours that teens can work is determined by the type of job they hold. For example, restaurants, retail, and amusement parks allow teens over 16 years of age to work 8 hours per day, six days per week. However, if you are a 14 or 15 year old, you are limited to 40 hours per week, and cannot work after 7 pm except between July 1 and Labor Day, when the time is extended until 9 pm. Hours are restricted for all teens when school is back in session in the fall.

Sexual Harassment: In a recent article by E.J.Graff, it was reported that over 52 percent of working teen girls were subject to some form of sexual harassment while on the job. In fact, reports suggest that teen girls may be more subject to sexual predators at work than on the Internet. Look for a PBS special on teen

sexual harassment in the work place, or for more information on what steps both kids and parents can take to keep the workplace safe, log on to the EECO website *Youth at Work*.

Stay Safe: Teens in the work place are often subject to the same work hazards as adults. A study reports that between 1997 and 2001 there were over 1400 claims for work related accidents to teens between the ages of 14-17. Eating and drinking establishments account for almost a quarter of all injuries, with injuries to teens working in general merchandising not far behind. Teens should not be hesitant to talk with their employers about potential work hazards. Teens should also know that they have rights in the work place, including the right to refuse unsafe tasks. Because teens may be working for the first time, parents can help keep kids safe by taking an active role in their employment by asking questions about their job duties.

Summer jobs provide teens with lessons in money management and

responsibility, as well as with spending cash. Working during the summer is an important gateway into the real world of employment after high

school. Teens and parents should know their basic rights so that the summer job experience is rewarding and safe.

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in Southington who focuses on childhood personal injuries. For more information, please contact the Observer or Tony directly at tsheffy@smddl.com.

A day at the capital



SUBMITTED

Edward Kalat, Southington Tool & Manufacturing in Southington, shakes hands with Lt. Gov. Michael Fedele, at CBI's Manufacturing & Technology Day. Southington Tool showcased the company's products at the May 13 event at the state Capitol. The event gives manufacturers a chance to showcase their products and speak with legislators about the issues of importance to their business.

Standing behind Fedele is Joe Brennan, CBI senior vice president of public policy.

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