

In 2012, Saint Kitts and Nevis made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government implemented the Child Protection Protocol and established a Special Victims Unit to assist children involved in the worst forms of child labor. All labor inspectors also received child labor training to better identify, protect, and assist children found in such conditions. However, there are some legislative gaps in protecting children ages 16 and 17 from employment in hazardous conditions. While there is no evidence to suggest it is a widespread problem, children in Saint Kitts and Nevis may be engaged in the worst forms of child labor, particularly in domestic service.



Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate		92.9

Sources:

Primary completion rate: Data from 2011, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013.(1)

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2013.(2)

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

While there is no evidence to suggest it is a widespread problem, children in Saint Kitts and Nevis may be engaged in the worst forms of child labor, particularly in domestic service.(3) Child domestic labor may involve long hours of work, performing strenuous tasks, without sufficient food or shelter. These children may be isolated in private homes and are susceptible to physical and sexual abuse.(4)

Limited evidence suggests that there have been isolated occurrences of child prostitution.(5)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children (EWYPC) Act and the Employment of Children (Restriction) Ordinance set the minimum age for work at 16, including

International Conventions and Selected Laws on Child Labor and Education

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	No
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	No
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	16
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	16
	Compulsory Education Age	16
	Free Public Education	Yes

employment that is likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of the employed children. Carrying heavy loads, working on ships, or in industrial undertakings fall into this category.(6) Work that constitutes industrial undertakings is defined in the Employment of Children (Restriction) Ordinance and includes mining, construction, and manufacturing. However,

Saint Kitts and Nevis

these prohibitions do not apply to family businesses, and children ages 16 and 17 appear to lack legal protections from employment in dangerous conditions.(6, 7) Moreover, a hazardous list, delineating the occupations and activities that children should be prohibited from engaging in, has not been established.(6, 8)

The Constitution explicitly prohibits forced or slave labor.(9) The Trafficking in Persons Act of 2008 prohibits and criminalizes human trafficking.(10, 11) The Act prohibits the exploitation of all persons, including children, for prostitution and commercial sexual use. Procuring, offering, engaging, pandering, or profiting from prostitution or child pornography is illegal.(8) However, there are currently no legal frameworks prohibiting the use, procurement, or offering of a child for the production and trafficking of drugs.(8)

The Probation and Child Welfare Board Act prohibits the infliction of non-accidental injuries on a child, especially by a caretaker. These injuries include sexual abuse or engaging the child in activities that they cannot give consent to, such as engaging the child in prostitution, photographing, or depicting the child in an indecent manner, and conducting oneself in a sexual manner that causes harm to the child's welfare.(12)

The Government's military force is jointly patrolled with the police under the Police Act of 2003. The minimum age for recruitment to the Government's security force is 18, and there is no compulsory service.(13, 14)

The Education Act of 2005 makes schooling free and compulsory until the age of 16, and attendance is strictly enforced by school truancy officers.(3, 6, 15)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The Ministry of Labor (MOL) is responsible for enforcing child labor laws and works closely with the Ministry of Social Development to refer working children for services. In 2012, the MOL employed six labor officers who also served as labor inspectors.(16) The labor officers are responsible for investigating all labor violations, including those related to children. This reporting period, the inspectors received training on child labor and carried out over 70 inspections.(16)

The police force leads all criminal investigations. They work closely with the Department of Gender Affairs and Child Welfare services to assist child victims.(16) A Special Victims Unit has been created by the police and the Child Protections Services agency to carry out investigations on the worst forms

of child labor. The Department of Gender Affairs has signed a Child Protection Protocol with the police force to ensure that identified victims receive the appropriate services.(16) There were no child labor violations reported.(16)

The Government continued the National Advisory Board for the Elimination of Hazardous Child Labor (NABEHCL), which implements legislation that would eradicate Hazardous Child Labor (HCL). The Labor Commissioner chairs the NABEHCL, which comprises members from other government agencies, as well as representatives from workers' groups, employers' groups, and other civil society stakeholders.(5, 16) To ensure that the proposed legislation for the hazardous list is enforceable; the NABEHCL is first tasked with developing a National Consensus Policy and then revising current laws to reflect the desired changes. Ultimately, the purpose of the legislation will be to ensure that no child under the age of 16 is employed and to legally protect those children between the ages of 16 and 18 who are able to work, from being able to do so in hazardous occupations.(15) The Government is working on developing draft legislation that will also establish a list of hazardous occupations.(16)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government's White Paper on Education Development and Policy (2009-2019) outlines the Ministry of Education's goals and objectives for the education system. These goals include, but are not limited to, improving the access and quality of education for all children.(17) An official at the Ministry of Education reports that working children are not a problem and school dropout rates are negligible in Saint Kitts and Nevis; therefore, working children are not a major concern for the Government.(18) There is no recent data, however, on the actual number of children who are engaged in economic activities. A National Census was conducted in 2011, and it is expected to contain such information.(7) Results from the Census are not available, and it is unknown when they will be published. Research was unable to discover any additional policies addressing the worst forms of child labor.

Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Since 2009, the Government has operated the Support Services for Families of Children at Imminent Risk Program in an effort to prevent engagement in child labor activities, as well as child abuse or neglect.(13) They have also continued to support several social assistance programs that enable children to

remain in school. These programs include provisions for food vouchers, school supplies, uniforms, textbooks, and a school meal program.(13) The Government continues to run Project Viola, a monetary assistance program for teenage mothers to pursue higher education.(13, 16)

The Ministry of Education offers vocational educational opportunities to at-risk children who are not doing well academically. These programs are geared at preventing child labor by providing children with alternatives.(19) However, the actual impact these programs have on child labor, especially on those engaged as domestic workers, is unknown.

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Saint Kitts and Nevis:

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Amend current laws to increase the minimum age for hazardous employment to age 18.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Extend labor provisions to cover children working in family businesses.	2011, 2012
	Adopt a list that would define work that is hazardous for children.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Draft and adopt legislation to prohibit the use, procuring, or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs.	2012
Policies	Publish the results for the 2011 National Census to assess the prevalence of child labor and its worst forms.	2012
Social Programs	Assess the impact that existing policies and programs may have on addressing the worst forms of child labor, especially in domestic service.	2010, 2011, 2012

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Saint Kitts and Nevis

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