



# The IKEA WAY on Preventing Child Labour and Supporting Young Workers

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**Approved by:**  
IWAY Council

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## 1. Introduction

IKEA does not accept child labour. We work together with our suppliers and partners to actively promote children's rights throughout our value chain. We base our work on the IKEA values, the [Children's Rights and Business Principles](#)<sup>1</sup> and our firm commitment to always act in the best interest of the child.

IKEA is committed to respecting all children's rights.

We believe that children are entitled to a healthy and happy childhood at all times, without being forced to enter employment before they are ready for it.

When children reach the minimum legal working age, IKEA is committed to helping them have access to decent work opportunities by encouraging our suppliers to support their employment. According to the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Conventions on Minimum Age and Worst Forms of Child Labour, young workers are not allowed to perform any type of hazardous work.

IKEA respects different cultures and values in countries where we operate. However, we do not compromise on the requirements regarding the rights of the children.

This document is part of **IWAY** - The IKEA Way on Purchasing Products, Materials and Services, the IKEA Supplier Code of Conduct.

## 2. Child labour

All actions taken in response to suspected and/or identified child labour cases will be in the child's best interest. IKEA requires that all suppliers and service providers comply with IWAY, and that includes complying with all applicable national and international legislation. The supplier shall always comply with the most demanding requirements, whether they are relevant applicable laws or IWAY requirements. Should the IKEA requirement contradict national laws, the law shall always be complied with and prevail, unless the law contradicts basic principles of human rights.

If child labour is found at any location that falls under the scope of IWAY in the IKEA supply chain, IKEA requires the supplier to implement corrective and preventive action plans that are in the best interest of the child.

In very specific circumstances, IKEA may allow *light work* for children, and/or *apprenticeship or vocational training* for students. Work of this type is subject to the approval of IKEA (by the IWAY Council Working Committee, IKEA internal IWAY governance body) prior to starting, and remains under strict supervision for the duration of the activities. Securing the best interest of the child is always the priority, and that the rights of the child and/or student are both protected and actively supported for his/her future. All actions regarding a child are discussed in advance with him/her and his/her parents or legal guardians.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://childrenandbusiness.org/>



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### 3. Young workers

Young workers have greater difficulties in the job market than other types of workers. In many countries, they face high unemployment rates and general lack of opportunities, which makes them vulnerable for abuses and leaves them with reduced opportunities for growth and development.

IKEA recognises that young workers entering the labour market have specific needs. We require that our suppliers ensure adequate protection of young workers from hazardous work and require them to identify positions that are suitable for young workers. Decent employment of young workers is beneficial to everyone:

- to the young worker, who gains valuable experiences and knowledge,
- to the employer, who secures a well-trained future workforce and
- to the wider society, who will have young and healthy people contributing to future growth.

Young workers working in hazardous conditions or in a hazardous type of work is not allowed by IKEA.

### 4. General Principles

IKEA does not accept child labour.

Child labour is prohibited, because it deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and is harmful to their physical, mental or moral development.

IKEA supports decent employment of young workers, but does not accept young workers working in hazardous conditions or in a hazardous type of work.

IKEA supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and is guided by the following articles below in particular:

**Article 3.**

*"All actions concerning the child shall take full account of his or her best interests."*

**Article 32.1.**

*"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, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development".*

Our requirements on the prevention of child labour and prohibition of hazardous work of young workers are based on the International Labour Organization (ILO) Minimum Age Convention No. 138 (1973) and the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 182 (1999).



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### 5. Definitions

**Child:** is every person under the age of 18 years.

**Child labour:** Child labour is work performed by a child which interferes with a child's right to healthy growth and development and denies him/her the right to quality education.

Child labour is work performed by a child below the minimum working age that has not been specifically approved by IKEA as light work or apprenticeship / vocational training.

The minimum working age is defined by the national legislation and is the age, above which a person can be employed on a full time basis. It can be 16 years, 15 years or 14 years in certain developing countries.

**Young worker:** Young workers are persons under 18 years of age, but above the minimum working age, who are engaged in work.

**Minimum working age:** The minimum legal working age is defined by the national legislation and is the age, above which a person can be employed on a full time basis. It can be 16 years, 15 years, or 14 years in certain developing countries.

**Light work:** simple, limited tasks performed under adequate adult supervision, as long as they do not threaten the child's health and safety, her/his right to play or hinder their education or vocational orientation and training. The requirements regarding safety and health for light work are the same as for young workers (no hazardous work). When permitted by national law, 13-14 year olds are allowed to perform light work.

**Apprenticeship/internship/vocational training or orientation:** work that is done by a student of at least 14 years of age and is done as:

- a. a course of education or training, for which a school or training institution is responsible;
- b. and either a programme of training at a company / supplier, which has been approved by the competent authority or a programme of guidance or orientation, designed to facilitate the choice of the student of an occupation or of a line of training.

Every apprenticeship or vocational training of a person under the age of 18 has to be applied for and approved by IKEA prior to the start of apprenticeship or vocational training.