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## Adolescent and Child Workers

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# Think Back



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# Objectives

- To describe the demographic characteristics of working youth
- To discuss safety and health hazards for young workers
- To review the age-related determinants of state and federal child labor laws
- To identify the role of the employer, parents, the school, and the adolescent in protecting safety and health



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## Section A

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Why Focus on Working Teens?

# Definitions

- Youth—individuals between the ages of 16 and 24
- Problems—no official statistics collected on children under 15 (Bureau of Labor Statistics)

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- Youth—individuals between the ages of 16 and 24
- Problems—no official statistics collected on children under 15 (Bureau of Labor Statistics)
- In 2008, 21 million 16- to 24-year-olds employed in the U.S.
  - Men: 11 million
  - Women: 10 million
  - White: 17 million
  - Black: 2 million
  - Hispanic: 3 million
  - Asian: Less than 1 million

# Youth Employment in the U.S.

- 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY97): 14-17-year-olds reported whether they were employed at some time during the past year (1996)
- National sample of 9,000 young men and women—annual interview
- Employed positions with a boss/freelance (babysitting, mowing lawns)
- Age 14-15
  - 57% held a job at 14, the majority were freelance jobs
  - Females were more likely to hold freelance jobs than males

# Why Focus on Working Teens?

- Majority are employed at part-time, temporary, low-paying jobs
- Retail trades; service sector
- Child labor laws are not current and are often unenforced
- As new workers, they are inexperienced, unfamiliar with tasks, lack knowledge of workplace hazards, and are unaware of their rights as workers

# Why Focus on Working Teens?

- Improve information—employers, parents, and school personnel
- Consider early exposures—diseases with long latency
- Traumatic injuries—research focus
- Health risks—exposure to chemicals, noise, extreme temperatures, and infectious agents; work-related musculoskeletal disorders

# Why Focus on Working Teens?

- Inadequate occupational health or safety training for teens either in school or on the job
- Training materials not geared for youth
- APHA, NIOSH have recommended better training and education on issues related to health and safety of teen workers
- OSHA teen worker site

# Physical Characteristics of Teens

- Growth spurts occur between 14 and 17—implications for tasks, especially for boys
- Risk of back injuries
- Large boys given adult tasks without regard to experience or maturity

# Psychosocial Characteristics

- Sense of invulnerability
- Enthusiasm
- Undeveloped communication skills—social competency

# Benefits of Adolescent Labor

- Self-reliance, self-esteem, self-discipline
- Knowledge—organizational skills, communication skills
- Responsibility, teamwork, exposure to occupational choices

# Risks of Adolescent Labor

- Threats to completion of developmental tasks and education—identity development, striving for autonomy and achievement

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- Threats to completion of developmental tasks and education—identity development, striving for autonomy and achievement
- Working more than 20 hours per week is associated with negative behaviors and decreases in mental health
  - Lack of participation in afterschool activities and interaction with peers and family activities
  - Fatigue/inadequate time to complete homework
  - Elect less rigorous school subjects/absenteeism
  - ETOH/drug use/cigarettes

# Summary

- Demographics of working adolescents
  - Age
  - Race
  - Gender
  
- Youth employment—risks and benefits



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## Section B

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### Trends in Youth Employment

# Trends in Youth Employment (NLSY97)

- 57 percent of all youths engage in employment at ages 14 and 15
- Employment greater among whites (64 percent) than among blacks (43 percent) or Hispanics (41 percent)
- Youths in households with low income were less likely to work (reduced economic opportunity/transportation)
- One-parent household—reduced opportunity
- Freelance jobs—babysitting and yard work
- Summer employment—highest frequency

# Projected Labor Force, 2050 (BLS)

- 16 to 19 years
  - 53.7 percent in 1990
  - 52.0 percent in 2000
  - 43.7 percent in 2005
  - 34.5 percent in 2050
- 20 to 24 years
  - 77.8 percent in 1990, 2000
  - 74.6 percent in 2005
  - 73.1 percent in 2050
- School attendance in a major contributor to decline

# The Fair Labor Standards Act (1938)

- Labor laws are age specific and employers must maintain proof of age for minor employees
- Young workers provide state-issued age documentation—work permits from school/state DOL certificate
- U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division enforce FLSA
  - Enforcement declined—working adolescents are illegally employed and exposed to safety risks

# Work Permit

- Varies by state
- Employment certification is age related—in Maryland (under 18) issued by DOL or school
- Age certification is issued by school

# Minimum Wage

- \$6.55 per hour effective July 24, 2008
- \$7.25 per hour effective July 24, 2009
- Overtime pay—not less than 1.5 times the regular rate of pay after 40 hours of work in a workweek

# FLSA: 14 to 15 Years

- School hours: no
- Before 7 a.m. or after 7 p.m.
- $\leq 3$  hours per day (school days)
- $< 18$  hours per week
- $\leq 8$  hours per day on nonschool days
- $\leq 40$  hours per week (nonschool weeks)
- Retail service: food, gasoline
- Exceptions: machine maintenance repair, ladders/scaffolds; cooking/baking; electric machines—grinders, choppers, cutter, freezers/meat coolers; loading/unloading in warehouses

# FLSA: 16 to 17 Years

- Basic minimum age for employment
- Any nonhazardous occupation

# FLSA: 18 Years

- Minimum age for employment in hazardous occupations
- Any hazardous/nonhazardous occupation

# Hazardous Occupations (DOL 1990)

- Manufacturing and storage of explosives
- Motor vehicle driving
- Mining, logging, sawmilling
- Power-driven machines
- Exposure to radioactive substances
- Slaughtering/meatpacking, processing, rendering
- Manufacturing brick, tile, or kindred products
- Wrecking, demolition
- Roofing, excavation

Approximately 70 adolescents die as a result of injuries

# Exception to FLSA

- Children/adolescents on family farms
  - Sources of injury
    - ▶ Animals
    - ▶ Pesticides
    - ▶ Heavy equipment

# Common Injury Situations

- Operating a motor vehicle
- Working late at night or alone
- Operating tractors
- Handling hot liquids and grease
- Using cutting tools
- Using nonpowered hand tools
- Lifting heavy objects

# Additional Concerns for Working Adolescents

- Emotional labor
- Job stress
- Violence

# Emotional Labor

- Origins—decline in manufacturing jobs and increase in service sector/retail jobs
- Emotional labor—the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display (Hochschild, 1983)
- Direct contact with customers requires effort, and the management of emotion may be detrimental to the employee

# Emotional Labor

- Face-to-face or voice-to-voice contact with public
- Requirement to produce an emotional state in another person (e.g., customer/client)
- Allow employer, through training and supervision, to exercise control over workers' emotional activities

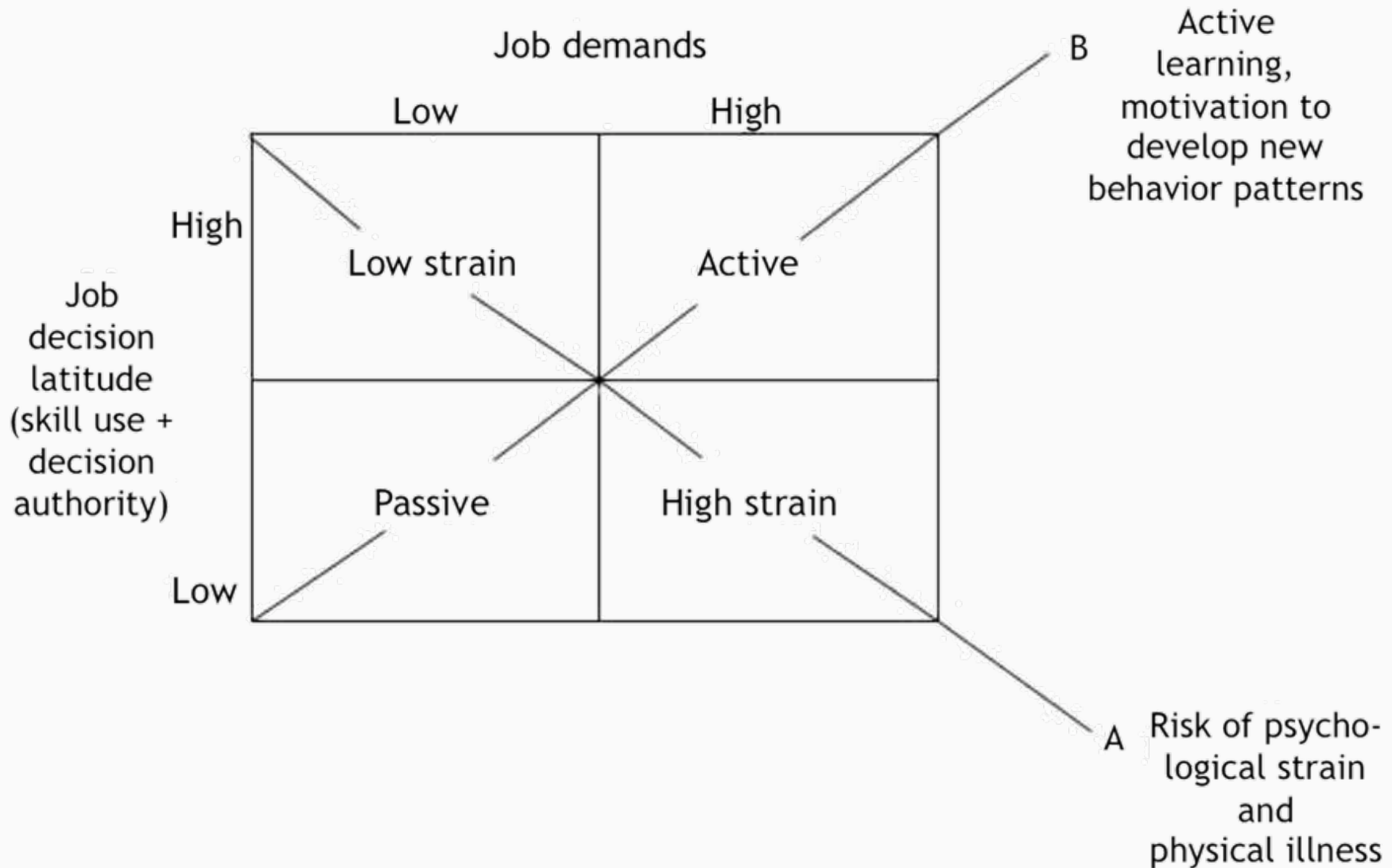
# Emotional Labor

- Performed through
  - “Surface acting”
    - ▶ Pretending or regulating one’s emotional expressions
  - “Deep acting”
    - ▶ Consciously modifying one’s emotions to express a desired emotion

# Why Is Emotional Labor “Harmful”?

- Occupational demand, source of job stress
- Interactions with customers can be hostile
- Create sense of “inauthenticity”
- Management of emotions are “commoditized”

# Karasek Job Strain Model



# Workplace Violence

- Growing problem in the U.S.—most research on adults
- Retail trade—risky industry—cash, working alone, interacting with customers
- Anecdotal evidence—high levels of customer aggression
- Bullying—depression, decreased self-esteem, anxiety

# Cross-sectional Survey

- Lowell High School, Lowell, Mass. (Rauscher, 2008)
  - 1,430 9th-11th graders—formally employed
  - Self-administered questionnaire
  - Physical attacks (10 percent); more in males\*
  - Verbal threats (25 percent)
  - Sexual harassment (10 percent); more in females\*
  - Whites report more verbal threats\*

\* $p < .001$

# Perpetrator

- Customer and co-workers—physical attacks
- Customers—verbal attacks
- Co-workers, including supervisors—sexual harassment

Non-significant

# Significance

- Adolescence—highly formative and precarious period of psychological development
- Consider potential for injury and psychological trauma (e.g., depression, anxiety, stress)
- Prevention strategies/training/research

# Resources for Teen Worker Safety

- <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/talkingsafety/video.html>
- <http://www.youngworkers.org/teens/index.html>
- <http://osha.gov/SLTC/youth/summerjobs/index.html>



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## Section C

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### U.S. Child Labor Violations

# U.S. Child Labor Violations: Retail and Service Sectors

- U.S. child labor violations in the retail and service sectors (Runyon, 2008)
  - National cross-sectional representative telephone survey—ages 14-18
  - 858 adolescents—retail (68 percent), service (32 percent)
  - 87 percent worked during school year
  - Categories of violations
    - ▶ Hazardous orders violations—use of prohibited equipment (MV, forklifts), food slicers, dough mixing
    - ▶ Work permit violations
    - ▶ Hour violations

# Reported Violations

- 1.3 percent reported violation of hour limits during school year
- 11 percent worked beyond the latest hour allowed on a school night
- 15 percent reported working off the clock (unrecorded or uncompensated)—retail industry
- 33 percent reported no work permit

# Reported Violations

- 33 percent reported at least one hazardous orders violation
  - Power-driven equipment or motor vehicles—most common
  - Adolescent boys
    - ▶ Report all three categories of violations
    - ▶ Multiple hazardous violations

# Study Findings

- Low-income teens were less likely to be employed than higher-income teens—less economic opportunity; lack of transportation
- Lack of permits of concern—previous research shows less training in workplace safety and greater injury
- Self-report a limitation

# Exposures and PPE (Runyan, 2008)

- More exposures among males than females
- Exposure increases with age
- Common sources—cleaning compounds, paints, solvents and glues, caustics, alkaline corrosives, hydrocarbons, acids, bleaches

# Exposures and PPE (Runyan, 2008)

- Inhalation, skin absorption, ocular splashes
- Acute exposures limited, chronic exposure?
- Retail settings—more cuts than burns (hot grease, slipping on floor, cleaning grill, splashes)

# Exposures and PPE (Runyan, 2008)

- Cross-sectional telephone survey—nationally representative sample of working teens ages 14 to 17
- Males (438)
- Females (428)
- Hazardous exposures—chemical, noise, biologic, thermal

# Exposures and PPE (Runyan, 2008)

- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
  - Yes/no
  - Type
- Safety training on use of PPE

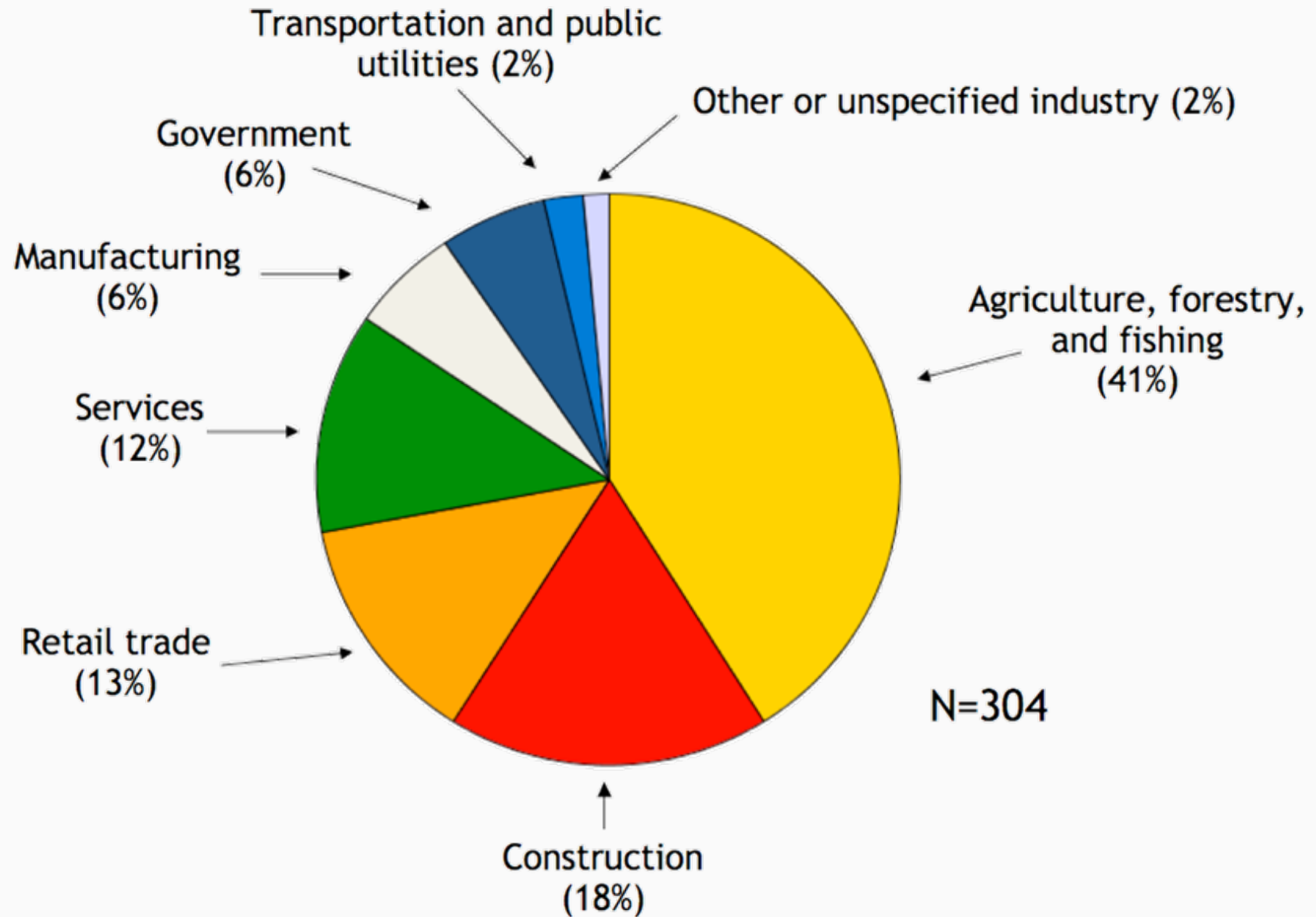
# Results

- 67 percent reported noise exposure
- 55 percent—thermal
- 54 percent—chemical
- 8 percent—biologic

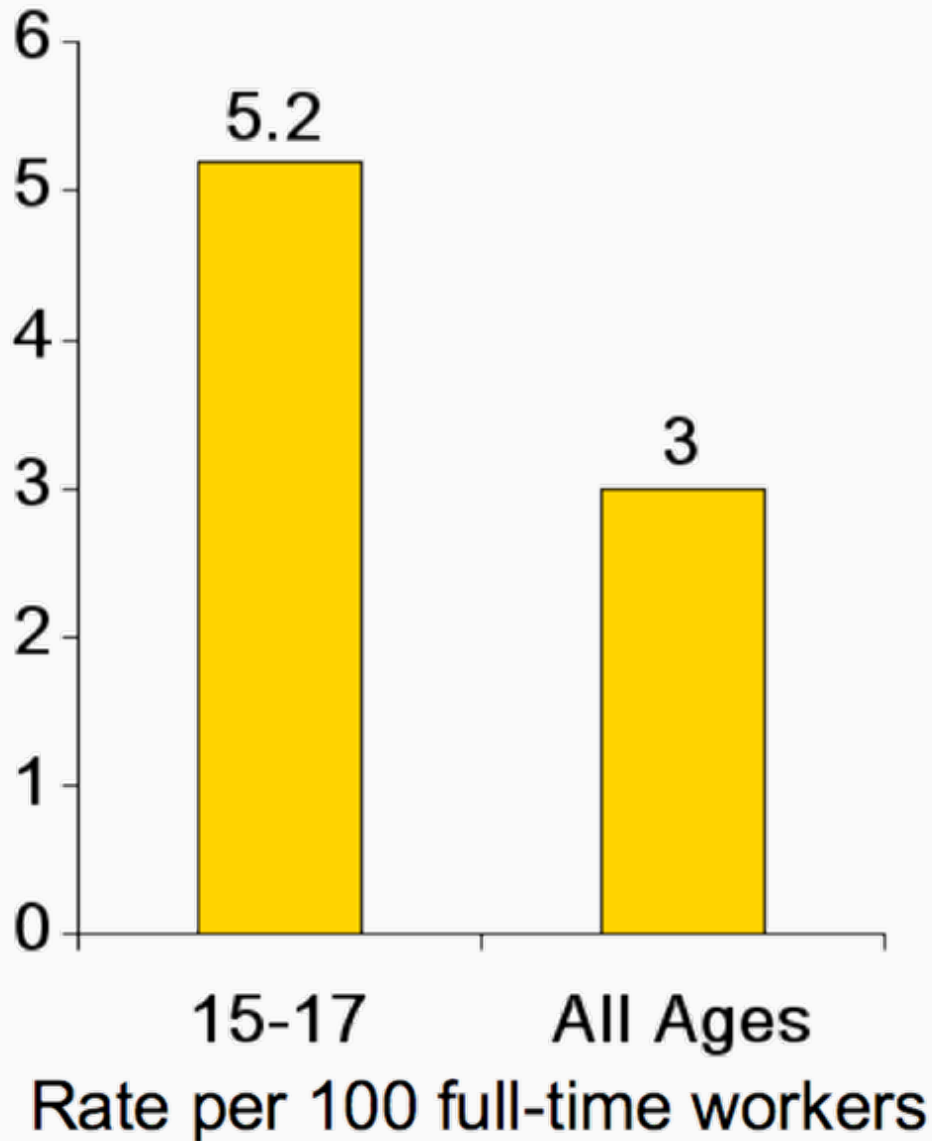
# Results

- 0.5 to 42.2 percent reported use of PPE after training
- Older and male are more likely to report exposure
- Use of PPE reduces injury and illness
  - What is missing—availability of PPE
  - Supervision and training (need both)

# Young Worker Fatalities by Industry, U.S. (1998-2002)



# Non-fatal Injuries to Young Workers, U.S.



- Estimated 77,000 teens treated in emergency departments per year
- Rates 70 percent higher than rates for all workers
- Job-specific comparisons not available

# Strategies to Protect Adolescent Workers

- Parent involvement
  - Know the federal and state child labor laws
  - Realize that teens are entitled to safe and healthful work environments (OSHA)

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- Parent involvement
  - Know the federal and state child labor laws
  - Realize that teens are entitled to safe and healthful work environments (OSHA)
  - Take an active role and discuss work
  - Watch for warning signs—mental/physical toll, loss of interest in school, fatigue, depression, use of alcohol or drugs
  - Support teen to report hazards

# The Role of School/Educators

- Know federal and state child labor laws—work permits
- Keep record of jobs—limits teen from working multiple jobs
- Teaching teens their rights and safety information
  - Integrate work safety into curriculum
- OSHA.gov

# Employers Role

- Post-FLSA requirements
- OSH Act
  - Assess hazards, appropriate PPE
- Provide training—safe work practices
- Assign supervisors
- Stress safety
- Implement a mentoring or buddy system
- Encourage questions

# Summary

- Characteristics of young workers
- Fair Labor Standards Act
- Shared research