

Perspectives on Child Labour Role Cards

Role A: Parent No. 1

Last year, my child Chris, who is now 13 years old, started picking fruit on a farm for a couple of hours after school each day. This year, Chris left school and began working full time on the farm. Having Chris work full time has made a big difference to our family. There are very few jobs available in our town. I have never been to school or had any special training, so the wages I can earn are always low. We have had trouble earning enough to feed our four children, even with both parents working whenever they can. Now with Chris bringing home some money every day, we can buy a little more food, new clothes, or medicine when one of the children gets sick.

Chris is as strong as any adult, and is perfectly able to work a full day. Besides, I feel that children should help contribute to the support of their families, as they have always done in our society. I am proud of Chris for being so responsible, and I hope all of my children grow up to be just as hard-working and reliable.

Role B: Social worker

I am very concerned about Chris, who at the age of 12 started working part time picking fruit on a farm. Chris has dropped out of school and, at the age of 13, is now working full time. The work is back-breaking. Chris always seems tired and is suffering from pain in one shoulder; I would like Chris to see a doctor who can tell what long-term effect this job might have on Chris's health.

I really feel that this child should be in school with other children of the same age. Chris has no free time to rest, play, join a youth group or take part in the kinds of activities that are available in our town for young people. These types of activities are important if children are to grow up to be healthy and know how to get along with others. No child of Chris's age should be working with adults all day long. Many of the farm-workers smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, and some may even be using drugs — Chris is too young to understand that these types of things are dangerous.



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Role C: Child

I am Chris. I started school when I was 6. When I was 12, I started to work picking fruit on a farm from the time school let out until dusk. I did it because my parents needed more money to buy food for our family.

Now I'm 13, and I have left school. I work full time on the farm. I like working better than going to school. I was bored with school. I never knew why we had to learn the things they taught us. I couldn't see how learning those things would help me get a job. I wanted to get a job and work in the real world, not sit in school all day.

I like the people I work with on the farm, even though they are all older than me. I learn a lot by talking to them. I start work at six in the morning, take a break for lunch and work until dusk. Then I take all the fruit I have picked and have it weighed. I get paid by the kilo, so the more I pick, the more I earn. Then I take my pay home to my parents, and eat dinner. Then I go straight to bed, so that I can be ready for the next day.

Role D: Parent No. 2

Last year, my child Chris, who is now 13 years old, started picking fruit on a farm for a couple of hours after school each day. This year, Chris left school and began working full time on the farm.

I don't want Chris to work full time. It would be better for all of us if Chris got an education. Everyone knows that children who finish school can get better jobs and earn more money. If Chris would finish school and get a good job, we would all be better off from the extra money.

Chris got very good grades in the first few years of school, although they went down last year. But the teachers always said that Chris could be a top student, maybe even to go on to university. I had hoped that Chris would set an example for our younger children by working hard and staying in school. I don't want my younger children to follow Chris's example by dropping out of school to work picking fruit. I love my children; I want Chris, and all of them, to have a good future.

