

Child employment

Children may work¹ for a variety of reasons: to earn extra money; to improve their future career prospects; or for the social contact that work provides. While work may have many positive effects for children, there is international concern that some children may be exploited. In recent years a number of Australian states have introduced legislation designed to ensure that work does not interfere with children's schooling, endanger their health, or impede their development.

Data about the employment details of children aged 5–14 years was collected in the Child Employment Survey, conducted throughout Australia in June 2006 as a supplement to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS). The survey collected details about whether children had worked, when they worked, their reasons for working, and their working arrangements over the 12 months prior to the survey. This is the first time the Child Employment Survey has been conducted.

Overview

In June 2006 there were 175,100 children aged 5–14 years who had worked at some time during the previous 12 months (e.g. by delivering leaflets for an employer or cleaning or gardening for non-household members for payment), which represented 6.6% of all children in this age group. There were 101,000 boys who had worked (7.4% of all boys) and 74,100 girls (5.7% of all girls). Children aged 10–14 years were more likely to work than those aged 5–9 years (11% of children aged 10–14 years worked, compared with 1.8% of those aged 5–9 years).

The Northern Territory and Western Australia had the highest proportions of children who worked during the 12 months to June 2006 (11.6% and 9.5% respectively), while New South Wales and Victoria had the lowest (both 5.8%). Across Australia, children living outside state capital cities were more likely to have worked in the 12-month period (8%) than children living in the state capitals (5%).

Who children worked for

Of the 175,100 children who had worked at some time during the 12 months to June 2006, 54% had

worked for an employer, 33% had worked in a family business or farm and 16% had worked for themselves (children may have worked in more than one type of job). Overall, the proportions were similar for boys and girls, and for children aged 10–14 years. However, the profile for younger children (aged 5–9 years) was slightly different. Younger children were more likely to have worked in a family business or farm (56%) than for an employer (31%).

Why children worked

There are a number of reasons why children work, however, the most common reason given was to get 'money for spending'. This was the main reason for 59% of girls and 46% of boys. The next most common reason for working was to get 'money for saving'. This was the main reason for 29% of boys and 16% of girls who worked (graph 8.33).

Work and school balance

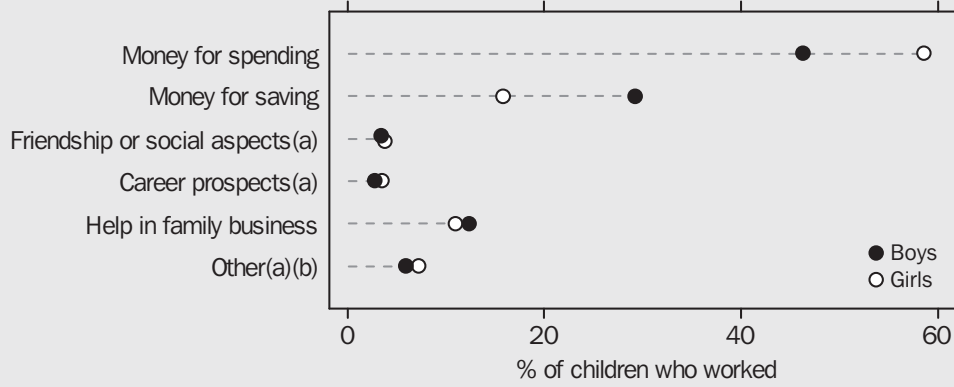
More than half (53%) of children who worked in the 12 months to June 2006 did so during both school holidays and school terms, while 31% worked only in school terms and 17% worked only in school holidays. The most common number of hours worked by children was between one and two hours per week in both school terms (45%) and school holidays (34%).

Younger children (those aged 5–9 years) tended to work relatively few hours. During school term, for instance, 47% of children aged 5–9 years who had worked usually did so for one to two hours per week, while 35% worked three to five hours. About a fifth (18%) of children aged 5–9 years worked for more than six or more hours per week during school terms (graph 8.34).

Older children were more likely to work longer hours, with 27% of children aged 10–14 years working six or more hours per week in school terms. However, working between one and two hours per week was by far the most common category (45%) for those aged 10–14 years, just as it was for children aged 5–9 years.

Children were more likely to work longer hours in school holidays than in school terms, with 43% of children aged 10–14 years usually working six

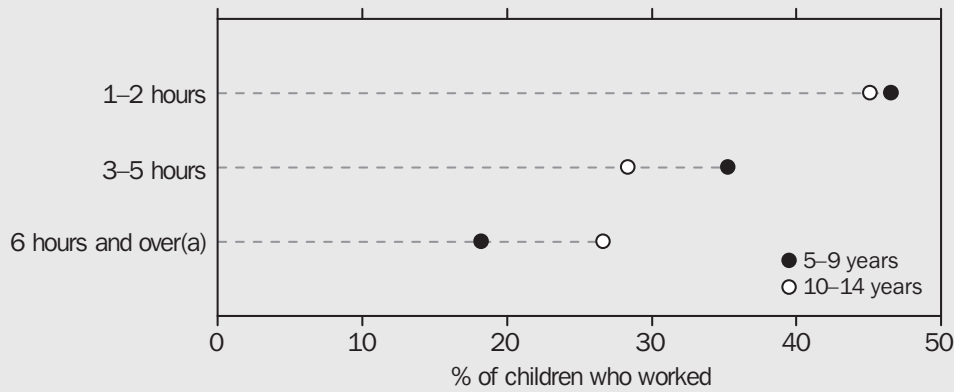
8.33 MAIN REASON CHILD WORKED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



(a) Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.
 (b) Includes the category 'Supplement family income'.

Source: *Child Employment, Australia (6211.0)*.

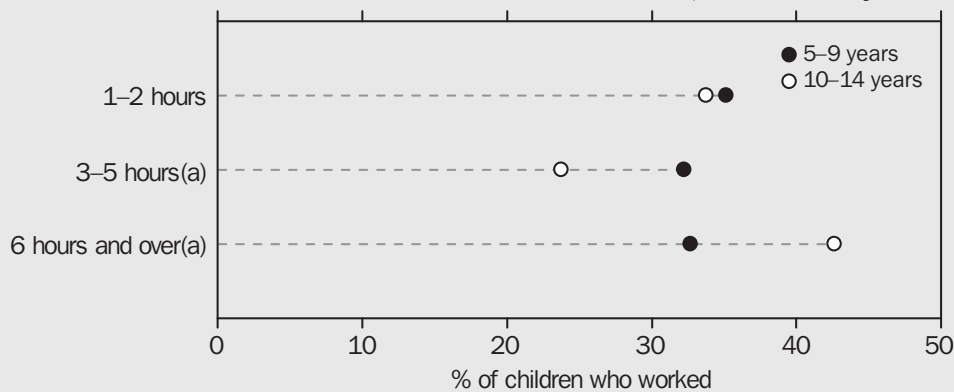
8.34 USUAL HOURS WORKED PER WEEK IN ALL JOBS, School terms



(a) Estimate for children aged 5-9 years has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

Source: *Child Employment, Australia (6211.0)*.

8.35 USUAL HOURS WORKED PER WEEK IN ALL JOBS, School holidays



(a) Estimate for children aged 5-9 years has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

Source: *Child Employment, Australia (6211.0)*.

or more hours per week in school holidays. For younger children (aged 5–9 years), the most common number of hours usually worked per week during school holidays was between one and two hours (35%), closely followed by six hours or more (33%) and three to five hours per week (32%) (graph 8.35).

Almost three-fifths (58%) of children who had worked did so for less than 13 weeks of the year to June 2006. Of the 146,000 children who worked during school terms, the most common times of day usually worked were between 3.00 pm and 5.00 pm on Monday to Fridays (40%) and between 9.00 am and noon on Saturdays and Sundays (34%). Of the 121,400 children who worked during school holidays, the most

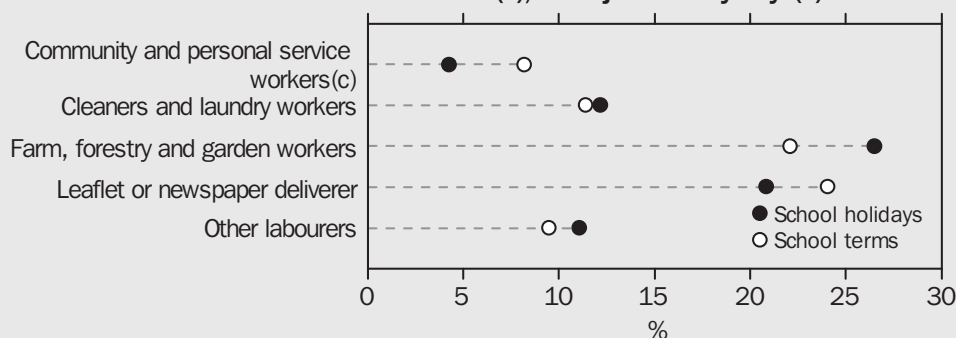
common times of day worked were between 9.00 am and noon (50%) and between 3.00 pm and 5.00 pm (48%).

Occupation of main job

The most common occupation for boys in their main job during school terms was Leaflet or newspaper deliverer (24%), while Farm, forestry and garden workers was the most common occupation for boys in their main job during school holidays (26%) (graph 8.36).

The most common occupation for girls in their main job during both school holidays and school terms was Sales workers (17% and 20% of girls who had worked respectively) (graph 8.37).

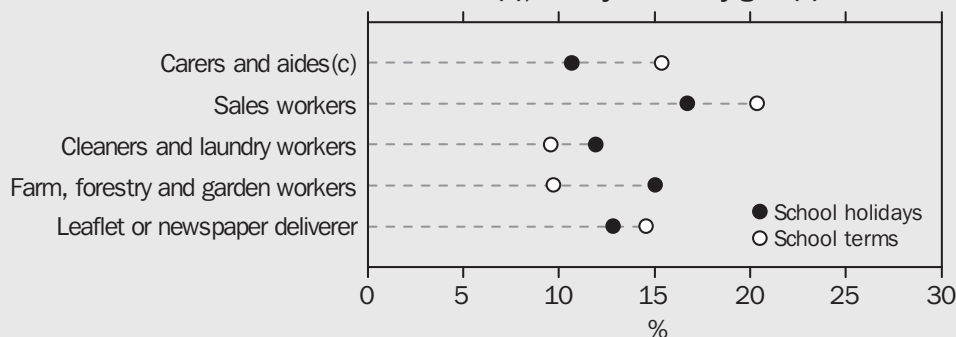
8.36 SELECTED OCCUPATIONS(a), Main job held by boys(b)



(a) Classified according to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO), First Edition, 2006. (b) Some boys worked during school holidays and school terms and appear in both. (c) Estimate for school holidays has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

Source: *Child Employment, Australia (6211.0)*.

8.37 SELECTED OCCUPATIONS(a), Main job held by girls(b)



(a) Classified according to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO), First Edition, 2006. (b) Some girls worked during school holidays and school terms and appear in both. (c) Estimate for school holidays has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

Source: *Child Employment, Australia (6211.0)*.

Travel to work

The most common way for children to travel to and from work was by private motor vehicle with parents (45% of boys and 57% of girls), followed by walking (25% of boys and 21% of girls). About a fifth of children (18% of boys and 21% of girls) worked from home or did not need to travel to and from work. In the age group 5–9 years, 81% travelled in a private motor vehicle with parents or did not need to travel to work.

End note

1. Work includes activities undertaken for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind in a job, business or on a farm, or work without pay in a family business or farm. Some examples of children's work include carrying out work for non-household members for payment (e.g. lawn mowing), busking or delivering leaflets. Chores undertaken for the child's household are excluded.