



Ministry of Labour
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MEDIA RELEASE

**The Hon. Stephen Mc Clashie M.P., Minister of Labour says to T&T:
“Do not replace children’s education with work”**

The Minister of Labour, the Honourable Stephen Mc Clashie M.P. wishes to remind the population that with the physical reopening of schools, parents must allow their children to access their basic right to an education and not abandon their education for the purpose of work.

Part XIV of the Children's Act, Chap 46:01, Act 12 of 2012 under Employment of Young Persons, Section 105 states that ***“A child under the age of sixteen years shall not be employed or work in any public or private undertaking or in any branch thereof, other than an undertaking, owned and controlled by members of the same family; and any person who employs any such child, commits an offence”***.

The Ministry of Labour therefore reiterates that there are grave dangers associated with children’s absence from school whether it is part time or full time. This can lead to children experiencing difficulty receiving a valuable education and in some cases students may struggle to ‘catch up’ with their school work, while others may become victim to a cycle of prolonged poverty should they drop out permanently to work. The physical and psychological effects of children working can also be detrimental to their physical and mental health in the short and long term.

The Hon. Stephen Mc Clashie states *“If you do not grant children the opportunity to access their education, this will hamper their ability to choose a career that will afford them financial stability and independence to adequately support their family. Child labour is a cycle and it is important for us as a country to recognize that we are all responsible for the future of children.”*

The Ministry understands the challenging times currently being faced by families especially from the negative fallout brought on by the COVID-19 Pandemic but is encouraging parents to look towards accessing support services from community based and other Government/Non-Government Agencies as opposed to imposing work on children prematurely:

These Services/ Agencies include:

- Welfare Grants and Psychosocial Support Services from the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services: 800-1673.
- Psychological Counseling for children and families at ChildLine: 131 or 800-4321.
- Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago: Hotline: 996 or 800-2014
- Occupational Safety and Health Authority and Agency (OSHA): 623-6742 (For reports on hazardous work performed by children and minors below age 18)
- Counter Trafficking Unit, Ministry of National Security: 800-4288 (For reports on worst forms of child labour)
- Student Support Services, Ministry of Education: 622-2181 ext. 1033, 1034, 1035, 1036.

The Ministry of Labour urges the public to make reports of children below the age of 16 who are observed to be working. Contact the Labour Inspectorate Unit at 299-0300 option 3 or 285-5133 option 4, ChildLine at 131 or The Children's Authority at 996.

Let's all play our part to ensure that our nation's children and their future are protected.

For further information, please contact:

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