

What can employers do to help their youth employees keep their jobs?

Work Schedule:

- Schedule youth for a predictable number of hours each week
- Provide the option of working full time (25 hours or more)
- Ensure that youth who rely on buses to get home are not always working night shifts

Training and Supervision:

- Provide a clear training plan
- Ensure that youth have a regular staff person they can report to and ask questions
- Provide youth access to a supervisor for feedback during training period and afterward
- Plan reasonable training time to learn skills
- Encourage youth to communicate with senior staff and managers
- Provide advance notice of evaluations and/or probationary periods

Support:

Employers could consider providing youth with some extra financial help for the first few weeks to get through until their first pay check such as:

- Meals
- Cash advance on pay
- Clothing allowance or assigned uniform
- Bus tickets

What else can employers do to enhance a supportive work environment for youth?

Financial Incentives:

- Plan built-in wage increases
- Provide medical and dental benefits for part-time staff
- Establish set hours/schedules
- Offer to cover costs of required training such as Squirrel, Foodsafe, WHIMIS, etc.

Clear Communication:

- Provide thorough training by knowledgeable staff or instructors
- Teach youth about accountability while offering feedback to assure them that their contributions matter
- Become aware of housing and transportation issues (e.g. they may not have a phone to call in sick or may not be able to get home safely at night if buses are not running)
- Provide alternative shifts for youth who find it difficult to work late shifts alone
- Consider reevaluating dress codes as piercings and tattoos are not going away
- Offer youth support and encouragement to ask questions
- Establish check-in times to boost communication as they can be shy to ask questions
- Provide clear expectations
- Be aware that some may take longer to grasp specific skills during training
- Find different ways to engage young people through education and training in order to help youth create a commitment to your organization and retain them
- Understand that different generations may see things from another viewpoint when you are trying to communicate with and understand young people