



# ARGENTINA

## SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Argentina made significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The province of Misiones approved a bill to create a certification program for agricultural producers to prevent child labor and increase traceability. In addition, the Government of Argentina; the International Labor Organization; and representatives from unions, employers, and civil society developed and started implementation of the 2023–2025 National Roadmap to achieve the 8.7 Alliance goals toward the eradication of child labor. Furthermore, in partnership with local unions, the province of Chubut launched a mobile application and distributed tablets to inspectors to better detect and record child labor incidences. The government also approved the Fourth National Plan for Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Labor, which includes efforts to strengthen the labor inspectorate. Finally, the Good Harvest Program, providing childcare services to rural and migrant families, was expanded into three additional provinces. Despite these efforts, Argentina’s legal minimum age for work of 16 years is lower than the compulsory education age of 18 years, which may encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. Lastly, Argentina lacks social programs that address child labor in street work and begging.



## PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

### Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	5.3% (371,771)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	98.9%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	6.2%

Children in Argentina are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking. Children also engage in dangerous tasks in agriculture.

### Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



#### Agriculture

Harvesting† cotton, grapes, olives, strawberries, tomatoes, tobacco, *yerba mate* (stimulant plant), harvesting† and shelling garlic, and fishing.



#### Industry

Production of garments and bricks; construction.†



#### Services

Street begging.† Refuse collection, recycling, and garbage scavenging.† Domestic work, including cleaning, doing laundry, and ironing. Selling produce in grocery stores.



#### Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in agriculture, domestic work, and street vending and in the production of garments. Use in illicit activities, including trafficking drugs.

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor per se under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.



## SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Argentina's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

### Legal Framework

Raise the minimum age for work from 16 to 18 years to align with the compulsory education age.

### Enforcement

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 368 to about 921 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 13.8 million workers.

Publish information on the labor inspectorate budget.

Enhance coordination and information-sharing with provincial governments in order to publish information on the number of child labor penalties that were imposed and collected.

Provide law enforcement bodies with adequate funding and resources to carry out their operations.

Ensure the number of labor inspections conducted is commensurate to the size of the labor inspectorate to maintain adequate quality and scope of inspections.

### Social Programs

Develop programs to address sectors in which child labor is prevalent, including street work and begging.



## CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children from the northern provinces, as well as Bolivia, Paraguay, and Peru, are at risk of forced labor in numerous sectors, including garment production, agriculture, street vending, domestic work, and in small businesses. Girls from Argentina's northern provinces are also victims of sex trafficking.



## BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although the school attendance rate is high in Argentina nationally, it is lower in northern provinces for secondary education. In addition, migrant children attend school at lower rates than other students.



## LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Argentina has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Argentina's laws do not meet international standards, including a gap between the minimum age for work and the compulsory education age.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, <b>16 Years</b>		Articles 2, 7, and 17 of the Prohibition of Child Labor and Protection of Adolescent Work Law; Article 9 of the Special Code on Contracting Domestic Workers; Article 25 of the Child and Adolescent Rights Protection Law; Articles 54 and 55 of the Law on Agrarian Work; Article 189 of the Employment Contract Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, <b>18 Years</b>		Article 10 of the Prohibition of Child Labor and Protection of Adolescent Work Law; Articles 176, 189, and 191 of the Law on Labor Contracts; Article 62 of the Law on Agrarian Work
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Article 1 of Executive Decree 1117/2016 on Dangerous Work
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 15 of the Constitution; Article 1 of the Modifications to the Prevention of and Sanction Against Trafficking in Persons and Assistance to Victims Law; Articles 140, 145 bis, and 145 ter of the Penal Code; Article 9 of the Child and Adolescent Rights Protection Law
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 1 of the Modifications to the Prevention of and Sanction Against Trafficking in Persons and Assistance to Victims Law; Articles 145 bis and 145 ter of the Penal Code; Article 9 of the Child and Adolescent Rights Protection Law
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Article 1 of the Modifications to the Prevention of and Sanction Against Trafficking in Persons and Assistance to Victims Law; Articles 125–128 of the Penal Code; Aisemberg, Aaron s/ recurso de casación (2018)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 11 of the Possession and Trafficking of Drugs Law
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, <b>18 Years</b>		Article 8 of the Voluntary Military Service Law
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	 *	Article 19 of the Voluntary Military Service Law
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 10 of Law No. 26.200
Compulsory Education Age, <b>18 Years</b>		Articles 16 and 29 of the National Education Law; Article 2 of the Law on Early Education
Free Public Education		Articles 15 and 16 of the Child and Adolescent Rights Protection Law

\* Country has no conscription

As Argentina's minimum age for work of 16 years is lower than the compulsory education age of 18 years, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.



## ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Argentina took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human resources hindered enforcement efforts.

### Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

**Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security:** Conducts labor law enforcement efforts in cooperation with labor officials and authorities at the provincial level and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, and operates a national hotline to receive reports of labor violations. Through its Inspection Directorate of Child Labor, the Protection of Adolescent Work, and Indicators of Labor Exploitation, it enforces child labor laws and collaborates with the National Registry of Rural Workers and Employers to enforce child labor laws in the agricultural sector. Formerly known as the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security, but it was incorporated into the new Ministry of Human Capital as a secretariat on December 10, 2023.

**Public Prosecutor’s Office:** Detects, investigates, and prosecutes cases of human trafficking and labor exploitation through its Special Prosecutor’s Office for Human Trafficking and Exploitation. Receives public reports of suspected human trafficking cases through an anonymous national hotline, Line 145. In 2023, the Trafficking in Persons Executive Committee, the Argentine Football Association (AFA) and NGO *Red Solidaria* promoted Argentina’s Trafficking in Persons hotline in a campaign that reached over 12 million people.

### Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **368** labor inspectors conducted **125,025** worksite inspections, finding **26** child labor violations. There were also **9** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes with **28** prosecutions initiated and **4** perpetrators convicted.



## COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

### Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Argentina established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

**National Commission for the Eradication of Child Labor (CONAETI):** Coordinates federal efforts to prevent and eradicate child labor. Led by the Labor Ministry’s Under Secretariat of Policies of Inclusion in the Labor World and includes representatives from 25 government agencies, workers’ representatives from unions, and business representatives, in addition to benefiting from the advice of the ILO and UNICEF. There are also 24 Provincial Committees for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor (COPRETI), which coordinate activities at the provincial level between government, business, unions, and civil society stakeholders. During the reporting period, CONAETI started the third phase of the Federal Strengthening Program for the Eradication of Child Labor that trained 308 individuals as “promoters of childhoods free of child labor” and kicked off the 2023 Action Plan of the Network of Companies against Child Labor. Held four plenary sessions during 2023 and approved the Fourth National Plan for Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Labor (2024–2028), which it implements.

**Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)**

<p><b>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</b></p> <p>Argentina established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p>	<p><b>Fourth National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Regulation of Adolescent Work (2024–2028):</b><sup>†</sup> Aims to prevent and eliminate child labor, including its worst forms, and to regulate adolescent work. Promotes the dissemination of information on child labor, efforts to strengthen the labor inspectorate, civil society engagement on child labor issues, inclusive education, and institutional and legislative reform. Fourth iteration approved during the reporting period.</p> <p><b>Federal Strengthening Program for the Eradication of Child Labor:</b> Supports leaders at the sub-national level to improve strategies to prevent and detect child labor and irregular adolescent work. Aims to coordinate efforts among COPRETI, civil society organizations, labor unions, and companies in common geographic areas and sectors that show high risks of child labor. In 2023, the Program launched the Third Cohort to train 500 people across the country.</p> <p><b>National Plan Against Human Trafficking and Exploitation, and for Protection and Assistance of Victims (TIP Action Plan 2022–2024):</b> Managed by the Federal Council to Fight Human Trafficking and to Protect and Assist Victims, this program focuses on the prevention, assistance, prosecution, and institutional strengthening. The plan sets forth 19 measures and 68 actions that seek to further public policies to fight human trafficking and to secure victims’ full enjoyment of rights and guarantees. By October 2023, 82 percent of the actions had been implemented. Under the plan, the Ministry of Health implemented specific policies to strengthen victims’ access to therapeutic care, expanded its policy on housing assistance for victims and their families, and outlined stages of development for building new shelters in the northwest, northeast, central, and southern regions of the country.</p>
<p><b>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</b></p> <p>Argentina funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs do not address the problem in all sectors.</p> <p><sup>†</sup> Program is funded by the Government of Argentina.  <sup>‡</sup> The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</p>	<p><b>Universal Child Allowance Program (Asignación Universal Por Hijo):</b><sup>†</sup> Government program funded in part by the World Bank that provides a conditional cash transfer to unemployed parents and workers in the informal economy, contingent upon parents’ fulfillment of health and education requirements for their children. In April 2023, the government announced an increase in the amount, impacting 4 million children.</p> <p><b>National Registry of Rural Workers and Employers Awareness-Raising Campaigns:</b><sup>†</sup> During the reporting period, continued implementing awareness-raising campaigns and the CRECER (Grow) Program to provide care and services for children during the harvest season.</p> <p><b>Good Harvest Program:</b> Provides childcare facilities and services for migrant and rural families involved in seasonal harvests. Around 148 centers provide services to more than 6,600 children. In 2023, extended to the provinces of Misiones, Catamarca, and Cordoba, totaling 13 of the 24 Argentine provinces. Along with national and provincial cooperation to fund and staff the childcare centers under this program, this initiative also promoted public-private partnerships with the Argentine Chamber of Tobacco in Salta province and the Argentine Blueberry Chamber in Tucuman province.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit [dol.gov/ILABprojects](https://dol.gov/ILABprojects)  
For references, please visit [dol.gov/ChildLaborReports](https://dol.gov/ChildLaborReports)