



DOMINICA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

Although research found no evidence that child labor exists in Dominica, in 2023, the government made minimal advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. The government released some information related to its labor and criminal law enforcement efforts and continued social programs that help to prevent child labor. However, Dominica’s existing laws do not determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children and the government has not enacted laws explicitly prohibiting the use of children in pornography.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists in Dominica.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

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

Legal Framework

Define the conditions, activities, and number of hours permissible for light work.

Ensure that the minimum age for hazardous work is age 18 for all children.

Determine and codify the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, in consultation with employers’ and workers’ organizations.

Criminally prohibit domestic child trafficking.

Enact legislation to specifically prohibit using, procuring, or offering of a child for prostitution, the production of pornography, and pornographic performances.

Prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.

Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Ensure that laws providing free basic education include all children in Dominica, including non-citizens.

Enforcement

Publish all data on labor law enforcement efforts, including the labor inspectorate’s funding.

Social Programs

Enhance efforts to ensure access to public education for all children, including accommodating children with disabilities, addressing the bullying of LGBTQIA+ students, and by ensuring access to education within the Kalinago Territory.

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.













BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Civil society representatives report that some LGBTQIA+ students are bullied in schools. In addition, children with disabilities can face physical accessibility problems in some schools. Research indicates that during the reporting period, road conditions prevented students living in the Kalinago Territory from attending school on some days, as bus services were limited.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Dominica has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Dominica has not established a sufficient minimum age of 18 for hazardous work nor does it have national laws or regulations that comprehensively define the types of hazardous work prohibited for children.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Articles 2 and 46 of the Education Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 14 Years		Articles 2, 4, and 5 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 2, 4, 5, and 7(1) of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 4 of the Constitution; Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act; Article 18 of the Sexual Offenses Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 16(5) of the Drugs (Prevention of Misuse) Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Articles 2 and 27 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Articles 15 and 16 of the Education Act

† Country has no standing military

Pursuant to Section 7(1) of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act, children under age 18 are prohibited from working at night, unless they are working with family members. However, the law does not otherwise prohibit the employment of children in work that is likely to jeopardize their health, safety, or morals. Specifically, Dominica does not have national laws or regulations that comprehensively define the types of hazardous work prohibited for children nor has it established a sufficient minimum age of 18 for hazardous work. Moreover, Article 46 of the Education Act prohibits the employment of children ages 5 to 16 during the school year, but allows students ages 14 and older to work during school vacations or in school-sponsored employment training programs without defining the conditions, specific activities, or number of hours permissible for light work. In addition, laws related to child trafficking are not sufficient because they are limited to international human trafficking. The law does not sufficiently prohibit commercial sexual exploitation because the use of children in prostitution, pornography, and pornographic performances is not criminally prohibited. Further, the law criminalizing the use of children as carriers for drug trafficking is insufficient because it does not cover the use, procuring, and offering of children for the production and trafficking of drugs. Laws providing for free basic education do not meet international standards because they permit schools to charge tuition fees for some students who reside in Dominica but are not citizens.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, Dominica has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, although research did not find information on the labor inspector's funding.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Labor Division, Ministry of National Security and Legal Affairs: Documents and investigates cases involving child labor and refers violations to the Dominica Police Force and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Refers cases to the Ministry of Health and Social Services and the Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Community Development, which have limited social welfare and outreach programs.

Police Force: Enforces criminal laws, including those related to child labor.

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	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

In 2023, **2** labor inspectors conducted **38** worksite inspections, finding **0** child labor violations. The government also conducted **0** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **0** prosecutions, and convicted **0** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for policies to address child labor.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for programs to address child labor. However, Dominica funded and participated in programs that may contribute to preventing child labor.

Basic Needs Trust Fund: Caribbean Development Bank-implemented program supervised by Dominica’s government that aims to reduce poverty through livelihood services, improved infrastructure, capacity-building projects, and technical services. Activities are undertaken to implement the Basic Needs Trust Fund to address child labor and make information about implementation measures publicly available on an annual basis.

Education Trust Fund:† Government-funded program implemented by the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Planning, Vocational Training and National Excellence to provide financial assistance for textbooks, transportation, registration, and exam fees to students in secondary school who would otherwise be unable to complete their education. The program was active in 2023. In addition, the Ministry of Education implements a Uniform and Textbook Assistance program to provide support to parents of Primary and Secondary School children across the island. Under this program, school shoes, uniforms, and textbooks are provided, benefitting vulnerable students in all communities.

School Feeding Program:‡ Government-funded program implemented by the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Planning, Vocational Training and National Excellence to provide lunch to primary school students in targeted areas. The Ministry of Education provides funding to each Early Childhood Development Center on the island. The program was active in 2023.

† Program is funded by the Government of Dominica.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.

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