

# YOUNG WORKERS

There are a number of risk factors that impact a young worker's ability to stay safe.



## 1 Developing Brain

Young people learn quickly and can adapt to change quite well, but the parts of the brain responsible for assessing risk and controlling impulse are still developing.

## 2 Maturity and Capability

Some young people often look like adults, so it's easy to assume they are capable of tasks that may be beyond them both physically or emotionally. Workplace safety behaviours are learned and if a young person is uncertain about what is unsafe, especially if new to the workplace, they may not speak up.

## 3 Lifestyle Challenges

Young people, especially those new to the workforce, face unfamiliar experiences and responsibilities, combined with balancing work/study/social lives and managing changing sleep patterns. Lack of sleep impacts on mental health as well as the ability to work safely.

Because of the above factors, young people may face specific challenges at work around

Decision making  
and planning



Communication



Taking unnecessary/  
unsafe shortcuts



Managers, supervisors and family members can help young workers stay safe by:

- **Breaking down tasks** into manageable steps; demonstrating tasks and watching them to ensure they understand and are capable.
- **Getting their involvement** in addressing safety to build up their experience and understanding of Work Health and Safety processes.
- **Modeling positive behaviour** when undertaking tasks at work, as well as at home e.g. appropriate footwear when lawn mowing, or using correct lifting techniques.
- **Using proven communication techniques** such as asking open ended questions to allow them to demonstrate understanding, talking at home about what they do in their role day-to-day, then discussing potential risks and what to do about them.