



**Holly Baril:**

Your child's first job is a milestone, but is it also a risk? Every year, thousands of young workers are injured on the job, often because they weren't properly trained or didn't know they had the right to speak up. Whether they're stocking shelves, working construction, or just starting a summer job, these young workers deserve to know the risks and hazards that are present or could become present in their workplace. Because no paycheck is worth an injury and every young worker deserves to come home safe.

**Announcer**

It's time for the *IHSA Safety Podcast*.

**Holly Baril:**

Welcome to Protecting Young Workers on the Job. I'm your host, Holly Baril. My guests today are two young workers with very different experiences regarding their first job and the amount of health and safety training they received.

Welcome everyone. Just a reminder that we will only be using your first names and no actual workplaces will be discussed in the podcast. As mentioned to you previously, we are looking for your experiences as young workers entering the workforce, and curious to know about the amount of and the quality of health and safety training that you have received.

So before we get started, I'd like you just to do a quick introduction. So your name and then maybe the sector of workplaces that you're going to be referencing in our podcast. So we'll start with you, Ashley.

**Ashley:**

Okay. My name's Ashley. I worked in a grocery store, and I'm currently working in health-care sector.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, perfect. Thank you. Will?

**Will:**

Hi, my name's Will and I currently work in the service sector.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, perfect. Thank you. So again, don't hold back. I want to hear your experiences. We want to give our listeners and parents the information that they need to make sure they're asking their own children and young workers about safety, and having those conversations at home. When you come home from work, how was the shift? Did you learn anything new? Was there any hazards? Did anybody talk to you about that? This is very important. Okay?

So, before we get started with my questions though, I'm curious to know if you are aware of your three rights as workers in the province of Ontario. No? This has never come across in any type of orientation or training that we remember?

**Ashley:**

No.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. So your three rights as workers, and this is everybody, not just young workers, this is everybody, right? So you have the right to know. You have the right to participate. And you have the right to refuse unsafe work. Have you heard that before?

**Will:**

Yeah.

**Holly Baril:**

Yeah. Okay. Sometimes we need a little bit of a reminder, right? So, the right to know means you have the right to know about those hazards in the workplace and the things that could hurt you. The right to participate means you have the right to participate in health and safety. So if you want to do inspections or if you want to be a health and safety worker rep, things like this, you have that right to participate. You have the right to participate in training. And then obviously the right to refuse unsafe work.

The right to refuse unsafe work is something that you feel is unsafe. Somebody else can't tell you that it's not. If you don't feel comfortable using a piece of equipment or a tool, then that's up to you to speak up. Okay? So I just want to start with that, make sure we understand what our three rights are.

The next thing is, orientation or orientation programs. Have we ever gotten an orientation at our jobs?

**Will:**

Not for my job, but for school, definitely.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. For school. Okay. Ashley, anything?

**Ashley:**

I have for both jobs, more so my health-care sector job, rather than grocery store.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, perfect. Now, if I ask you a couple of questions about health and safety training. So, can you maybe explain to me what health and safety training that you received when you started working? So I'll start with you, Will.

**Will:**

So, I didn't really get any health and safety training at all. I had some background knowledge just from being around, and my dad taught me some stuff. But I didn't specifically get training from any of my jobs.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay.

**Holly Baril:**

That's good. Yeah. Thank you. Ashley?

**Ashley:**

I got very quick training when I first started working, just your general orientation about just hazards that could happen in the workplace. But it was briefly mentioned at the beginning and not followed through, through the rest of my working years at that establishment.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. And what about in the health care?

**Ashley:**

In the healthcare, we have ongoing learning, so self-learning packages. So, we are always learning something new, and it usually does revolve around health and safety.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, wonderful. So, getting back to you, Ashley, the two places you talked about, did you feel that the training they gave you actually prepared you to work safely?

**Ashley:**

At the hospital, I felt pretty good about the safety talks and training and everything that we received, especially because you're dealing with a very different area than a grocery store per se. But when I did first start working, I was quite young and I didn't exactly realize all the hazards that could happen. So I feel like it was pretty small compared to what I'm receiving now.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. And then again, for you, Ashley, more so, were you able to ask questions during any of the safety training?

**Ashley:**

Yes. Now, at my first job in a grocery store, it was more so that they had a lot of videos of health and safety things and all that. So it wasn't...

**Holly Baril:**

There was no interaction?

**Ashley:**

No. There was a manager, per se, in the room, but they weren't really engaged in the learning.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. So it was here, watch this video. If you have questions, let me know, and you're not going to ask questions.

**Ashley:**

Yeah, pretty much.

**Holly Baril:**

Right. Okay. So once you started these jobs, did that safety training happen within a week, the first day before you did anything, that you can remember?

**Ashley:**

I believe when I first started working, I had orientation prior to starting, but then, because a grocery store has many different departments in it, I was taught my health and safety for my actual department while I was working.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. So doing it while you're learning on the job. Okay, perfect. So let's get into a little bit of hazard awareness. Now, even Will, I'll ask you this question too. If you saw something unsafe at the current workplaces you have now, do you know what to do about that?

**Will:**

I would go to my boss right away or tell someone, like a coworker, "Hey, there's this unsafe object here. What should we do about it?"

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, perfect. Ashley?

**Ashley:**

Yeah, I feel pretty well-supported. We have quite a few management people within our department, so it's pretty easy to go up and talk to them and tell them what's happening.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, good. Now, part of that, actually you kind of answered the next question was, do you know how to report a workplace hazard or injury? So Ashley, the health-care sector, yeah, you know how to report that. Anything about the grocery store?

**Ashley:**

So there were a few times that I probably should have reported something. I did report to management and they said that they would follow up, and then I just never got a follow-up. So it wasn't as easily accessible, especially because at my current job, everything's online, whereas at a grocery store, you're kind of just talking to whoever's above you.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Okay, perfect. And what about yourself, Will? Do you know how to report?

**Will:**

No, I never really got training on how to report. I just kind of went on my instinct. I haven't actually had to report anything, but if I did, I'd probably just go to whoever's above me.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Sounds good. Okay. Now, the next part is on PPE and equipment. So again, you might be thinking to yourself, what kind of PPE, which is personal protective equipment, do I need at my different workplaces? So again, there is PPE for every type of workplace that there is, because, whether it's gloves to protect your hands or glasses, something like that. So let's get into that a little bit.

I'm just curious to know if either of you were trained on how to use the equipment, or any of the tools, if you were trained to use those safely.

**Will:**

I was trained how to use the tools safely. And for PPE, I was told what I had to wear.

**Holly Baril:**

Were you given the PPE, or did you have to go and ask for it?

**Will:**

No. I had to buy it.

**Holly Baril:**

You had to buy it. What did you have to buy?

**Will:**

So, I had to buy work boots. I was given my work shirt, and I had to buy gloves.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Did they specify what type of boots or gloves to buy, or they just said go buy?

**Will:**

So the boots had to be steel toe, and the gloves had to be tear protection, so blades and stuff can't go through them.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, perfect. What about yourself, Ashley? Were you trained on any of the equipment or tools?

**Ashley:**

So in the grocery store, I was kind of given a quick rundown of how to use equipment. I was using a deli slicer for quite a long time, and I wasn't really given proper training on it. It was kind of just like, "Here's a little manual, good luck."

**Holly Baril:**

I got to say, that deli slicer, that thing stresses me out. When I go to the grocery store, I watch and I'm like, "Oh goodness, please." I don't know what it is with that piece of equipment. I don't like it.

**Ashley:**

Yeah. It's pretty scary when you're first starting to use it. As for PPE at my first job, they gave us everything that we could need. So, I also worked in a hot foods area. So we have deep fryers and the ovens and everything like that. So we were given the big oven gloves, like the rubber ones.

We had little glasses for when we were doing the cleaning, just in case anything sprayed up at your eyes. And for the hospital, I was given quite good training on the equipment, and PPE was kind of incorporated within my schooling and also at the hospital.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, perfect. I like that. Now, is there any, currently that you can think of, or in your past workplace, Ashley, is there or was there any tools or equipment that you don't feel comfortable using? Will, anything that you don't feel comfortable or...

**Will:**

Not really. All the power tools that we use, I've used before as one of my side hustles. I like to woodwork. So I've used power tools before, so I didn't really feel uncomfortable with those.

**Holly Baril:**

Now, did they give you training on how to use those power tools?

**Will:**

I didn't get direct training, but I did already know how to use them. And when I went to my interview, I said I had been a woodworker before, so I know how to use them, but I did not get direct training on them.

**Holly Baril:**

And what is your age again?

**Will:**

I'm 15 years old.

**Holly Baril:**

You're 15 years old. Okay. So 15 years old, using power tools at a workplace. Okay. And do you know some of the risks and hazards from using power tools?

**Will:**

I say for saws, you could definitely cut yourself.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay.

**Will:**

Drills, I'd say they're pretty straightforward. You could get a lace or something off your clothes caught in it and it wraps around.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. So there are hazards there.

**Will:**

There are risks with them.

**Holly Baril:**

Yeah. And there's electrical hazards...

**Will:**

Yeah.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Okay. So that's good. Just make sure, both of you, any equipment, tools again, we want to make sure we have the proper training and the proper PPE, so that we come home at the end of the day with all our fingers. Okay?

Okay. So let's talk a little bit about your supervisors, we'll say, or supervision in general. Do you feel comfortable asking your supervisor about safety, in general? Safety in general, do you feel comfortable?

**Will:**

Yes. I feel very comfortable going to my supervisor. She's very helpful and normally provides me with the information I need.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, perfect.

**Will:**

And say, if she can't provide it with me, she follows up and gets back to me, normally within a day or two.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Awesome. Ashley?

**Ashley:**

I feel like when I first started working, I was a little bit intimidated to ask those kinds of questions just because of the training that was given. It wasn't very engaging. So it felt a little bit intimidating, but as I kind of got my footwork into the area, then definitely I would feel comfortable. And I 100 per cent feel comfortable in my job right now.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, good. And I think, Ashley, you had said that when we talked about your initial safety training, that nobody really followed up with you at the grocery store, right? It's like, "Here, watch the video. If you have questions, ask me." But other than that, that was it?

**Holly Baril:**

Yeah, pretty much.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Are you guys regularly reminded about safety procedures on the job? Do you know what a procedure is? Do you know what a safety procedure is?

**Will:**

If something happens, what to do.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, sure. That's a procedure, maybe for reporting. So a procedure on the step-by-step on how to get the job accomplished would be a procedure. So are you reminded about safety in the workplace?

**Will:**

I'm not really reminded. If I ask, then I get an answer, but I don't normally get reminded, no.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Ashley?

**Ashley:**

Yeah, I'm fairly reminded, especially because we have a part of management staff within our unit that is kind of the person that's mandated from the ministry to kind of give us our education, and it's usually a different thing every month. So we're constantly reminded of different safety avenues.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, perfect. Sounds good. Now, I'd like to talk a little bit about the culture, so the safety culture in the workplace. And, I think we've kind of been talking a little bit about this, your confidence, right? So do you feel confident speaking up if something seems unsafe? So I believe, Will, you said you do. So are we okay with that comment? Do you feel comfortable?

**Will:**

Yeah, I do feel comfortable. I don't feel like I'll ever get knocked down, like say it's a bad question or anything.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay.

**Will:**

I mean, I do feel very comfortable going to my co-workers and my supervisor.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Do you think your safety is taken seriously by your employer, Will?

**Will:**

Yeah. I feel like, even though I didn't get training, I feel like my safety is still important. If I did get hurt, I feel like they'd do something. We'd have to fill out the safety report and get it taken care of right away.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. What about yourself, Ashley? Do you feel like your safety is taken seriously by either one of your employers?

**Ashley:**

Yeah, absolutely. For my current employer, I have had to fill out a couple incidents, or workplace incidents, I would say, and I was followed up with each time and they never second-guessed what I was saying.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Now, I think you had mentioned at one time that you had an injury at the grocery store. How did that play out?

**Ashley:**

Yeah, so I had two major ones. Both were reported to upper management, I would say. They kind of said that they would follow up to fill out the workplace incident, and I never got somebody to follow up with me. So two of my injuries went undocumented.

**Holly Baril:**

So were these injuries, did you have to seek medical attention for these injuries?

**Ashley:**

No. I was told that I should have maybe, at one point, but I continued to stay at work.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. So definitely moving forward, when we have injuries at work, then we must ensure that the proper forms are filled out in case we do need to seek medical attention, right? Then we've got to get WSIB involved.

And it's very important that we do this, because if the injury re-occurs later on in life, then we have that report filled out within WSIB, right? So those are very important things. Making sure that our employer doesn't say things like, "Don't tell anyone, I'll just pay you. Don't worry about the forms." Those conversations shouldn't be happening. We want to make sure that everything is done properly and documented, for your safety.

So Ashley, the safety training that you did receive, what did you find was most helpful for you?

**Ashley:**

In my current or the previous?

**Holly Baril:**

**Either or.**

**Ashley:**

I can't even remember which one would be the most important. Probably for my current, how to do the workplace injury form, just because that was something that was lacking at my previous job.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. That makes sense. And then Ashley, what do you wish had been covered more in the training at the grocery store?

**Ashley:**

How to properly fill out a workplace incident.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, good. Okay. Now, for both of you, is there anything you'd change about the way safety training is delivered? So I'll start with you, Will.

**Will:**

I would like it in person. I find it hard to follow things online, because maybe the area has changed where you're working and online it looks different than in person. So I feel like in-person is more meaningful and helps get the point across a little bit better.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. I like that. Good. Ashley?

**Ashley:**

In my current employment, I don't think I would change anything. I thought my training was pretty well done, but in my previous, as I mentioned before, it was kind of just like, "Here's this video." So, I guess something a little bit more engaging, especially because the audience, like I was looking around the table and it was all kids around my age, like 14, like young, not really wanting to watch these videos that were older too, so it wasn't very engaging.

**Holly Baril:**

Right. So videos were old, nobody was really checking to make sure you understood the information that was being relayed. Nobody really followed up. So yeah, and you're right. So, it's coming from you

and saying in person is better, maybe more engaging, then I can ask questions. That's perfect. I think that's great.

Now, last question I have, and you'll both answer it for me if you don't mind, is, thinking again about your workplaces and the fact that you are considered young workers in the province of Ontario, do you have any suggestions to make workplaces safer?

**Will:**

For me especially, because I know I didn't get very much training. I feel like training itself would make jobs safer if the training actually happened, instead of expecting them to come in and know what they're doing. And I feel like less injuries would happen too.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, good point. Ashley?

**Ashley:**

I feel like, when I first started working, I was so young, I was 14 and I was kind of just really looking forward to that paycheck. So, anything that was kind of like a hazard or anything like that, I didn't really bother with, and especially because I was intimidated because it is my first job. So, I feel like having more open conversations, especially when you're working with such a young population, that you should be able to freely talk so that they feel more comfortable.

**Holly Baril:**

So do you think that safety should be just as important as every other conversation in the workplace?

Ashley:

**Yeah, absolutely.**

**Holly Baril:**

Right? Should this be something that... Ashley, you're saying you talk about it every day in your health-care job. It should be something that we are discussing on a daily basis. It should be just as important as wearing your PPE, as, what time is lunch, those things, right?

So keep in mind when you're going back into your workplace, always be vigilant about the hazards that are there or could show up. That's important as well. You may not see it immediately. It could happen. And don't be afraid to speak up and don't be afraid to ask those questions. The only stupid question is the one you didn't ask, and the one that's going to get you injured. Okay? So just make sure that you're looking out for yourself.

All right. Do you have anything else to add? Because we're pretty much done here.

**Will:**

I don't think I have anything else to really add.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Ashley?

**Ashley:**

Yeah. I don't really have anything else either.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, perfect. Then if that's all we've got then, thank you very much for your time. I really appreciated doing this. This is really great. I hope our listeners got a little bit of information on young workers, and they have some questions to ask their own children when they're done watching this podcast.

Thank you for listening to our podcast on protecting the health and safety of our young workers. Be sure to subscribe and “like” us on your podcast channel and visit us at [ihsa.ca](http://ihsa.ca) for a wealth of health and safety resources and information.

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