



**Holly Baril:**

As a parent, we are thankful when our child gets their first job. A chance to make their own spending money, learn some responsibilities. However, do we put the same thankful feelings into the health and safety training they will receive at this part-time or summer job? Are we aware of all the hazards lurking in the workplace? Do we assume that their employer would never put their life in danger?

**Announcer:**

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

**Holly Baril:**

Welcome to Teens at Work, Parents On Board. I'm your host, Holly Baril, and in this episode, we will discuss the missing link between your child's first job and the health and safety training that they should be receiving. Have you ever wondered, is my child safe at work? Do I know who they interact with? What they are exposed to? Who will be managing, guiding, supervising them? What questions are you asking about health and safety training? Or are we asking any questions at all? What about the hazards in the workplace? My guests today are two parents of children currently in the workforce. So, welcome Melanie and Angela.

And as you are both aware, I did do a podcast with your child on their experiences with health and safety training in their current and past workplaces. And after doing that, I thought, well, I'd like to do a follow-up podcast with the parents to see exactly what it is that maybe we're missing, and the questions that we should be asking when it comes to health and safety and our kids going off to work every day. So, before we get into the actual questions, I just wanted to ask a few questions to get an idea of your knowledge when it comes to health and safety and what you already know. So, my first question is, as a parent.

And if we think of the health and safety training at your kids' workplace, what comes to mind when you think of health and safety at the kids' workplace? Angela?

**Angela:**

Well, maybe it's not as extensive as it could be. They might know who to talk to in case of an incident, but maybe there wasn't full formal training or option of courses.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Melanie?

**Melanie:**

First thing that comes to mind for me would be WHMIS training. After that, I would hope that they'd get a really in-depth orientation. However, I highly doubt that that's what occurs.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, good. And then you sort of just answered it as well. I was going to ask you what your expectation for safety is when it comes to training. So, Mel, you mentioned, yeah, WHMIS and then hopefully some sort of orientation which might alert them to other hazards in the workplace. So, have either of you received any health and safety training at your current workplaces, Mel?

**Melanie:**

Yeah, we're mandated to take part of the WHMIS course.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay.

**Melanie:**

I mean, I'm administrative clinical, so that's pretty much all we get.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. And what about yourself, Angela?

**Angela:**

We're mandated for WHMIS training. We also get first aid CPR as well as other health and safety courses. I'm a personal support worker, so while supporting people out in the workforce, mostly on falls risks, safe food handling.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, perfect. Now, are either of you familiar with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and the different legislation that's out there to keep your kids safe at work and yourselves?

**Melanie:**

I'm familiar with WSIB, but I'm not familiar with all the different...

**Holly Baril:**

Rules.

Melanie:

...Rules and regulations that are out there.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Angela?

**Angela:**

Yeah, I'm on the same page as Mel.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. So, depending on the sector of work, of course, there's different regulations that need to be followed for safety. And then the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, that applies to everybody in the province of Ontario that works. Your employer and your child's employer, they have legal responsibilities to make sure nobody gets injured at work. And if you're unfamiliar with the stats, one in seven young workers is injured at work. That's pretty high. And what are the reasons for that? So, that's kind of what I was trying to explore with these podcasts is let's talk to some of the students that are working. Let's talk to their parents and see if there's any gaps and how we can fix those gaps.

Having said that, let's get into the questions that I have and let's see if we can maybe dig deep into what's missing and what we can do to change things. Ourselves as IHSA, one of the safe work associations in Ontario, there's Workplace Safety and Prevention Services (WSPS), there's Public Services Health and Safety Association (PSHSA), there's Workplace Safety North (WSN). All of us, we want to help and bridge that gap of what's missing so that our young workers stay safe. Is your child currently working? And if so, what kind of work are they doing? Angela.

**Angela:**

Yeah. My son had a summer part-time job doing a little bit of labour maintenance and grass maintenance, and he also has a small coaching job.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, perfect. Melanie?

**Melanie:**

Yep. My one daughter is currently working in the health field.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Do you feel that your child understands the basic health and safety hazards and risks that are associated with their job, Angela?

**Angela:**

I think he has a small amount of knowledge of health and safety, but I wouldn't say it's vast about all the risks that could be within his job.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Mel?

**Melanie:**

I feel that she definitely has some education behind her, so you'd hope that education helps that part. Also, there are policies and procedures within the health-care field, so I think she's well-informed.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Now, I know your daughter had another job as a teenager in the service industry. And would your answer be the same if I asked you about that job?

**Melanie:**

No, not at all.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. So, then in that job, she probably wouldn't have understood health and safety and hazards and risks and all these things, right?

**Melanie:**

No, probably not. I think maybe she had to do WHMIS, but I mean, it's an online course. You kind of do it on your own time. There's not anybody instructing or any really good quizzes, so no. And I think there was a lot of hazards in that area.

**Holly Baril:**

Yeah. Okay, perfect. So, right now, and this is a question that I'm kind of putting you on the spot, but right now, could you list any of the hazards that your kids are exposed to at work right off the hop, Angela?

**Angela:**

There would definitely be some chemical type hazards with cleaning products. There would be risks with machinery. There's risks with falls and maybe a little bit of working at heights.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. And did he get training to deal with those hazards?

**Melanie:**

Nope.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Mel, any hazards that you can think of right away?

**Melanie:**

Are you talking her current or her past?

**Holly Baril:**

We'll go with current.

**Melanie:**

With her current? Yeah, there is definitely infection risk control. There's falls, more health-related issues than anything.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. So, the one thing too, we don't think about it very often, but don't forget that we're all exposed to violence and harassment, right? Doesn't matter where we're working, especially yourself, Angela, as a PSW, Mel with the health-care job for your daughter, those are also hazards that... Are you confident to say you've been trained on how to deal with? Do you know if they received any formal health and safety training before they actually started the job?

**Melanie:**

I know she definitely attended through the organization an orientation, and I think it was a full-day orientation, so I'd hope that they would touch base on that. I don't know the material that was presented though.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Angela?

**Angela:**

For my son's one job, he did receive a two-day in-person orientation, and through school he received WHMIS training but not necessarily right at his place of employment.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. So, my next question with that is, so yeah, okay. Mel, you said, yeah, she got the training, da, da, da. Angela, sure, some training here and there, a couple of days, but did they really understand what they were getting? Did they have someone they could talk to, ask questions to? Because that's kind of an important part too, right? Were they able to comprehend at all? Angela, what do you think?

**Angela:**

I would say maybe, not necessarily. And the person that trained him is not the person he directly works with.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay.

**Angela:**

So, to go back and ask questions, now he's left with, who do I talk to?

**Holly Baril:**

Melanie?

**Melanie:**

Just because it's a larger organization, the one that she's working with right now, I feel that yes, she probably does. In her previous employment in the retail area, absolutely not.

**Holly Baril:**

Right. So, then you would say that when that training she got, because I remember her telling me, "Well, we sat in front of a computer, there was five or six teenagers. We watched a video and had no one to ask questions to." And then when the video was done, we were told, "Okay, you're good. Let's go to work." Is that effective?

**Melanie:**

Definitely not, especially in the area that she was working because there were a lot of hazards.

**Holly Baril:**

Yeah. And I mean, first of all, as a teenager, you're focused on making money. That's why you're working. And when they start talking about all these hazards and risks, sometimes they don't even know what that even means. So, do you think there was enough emphasis put onto their training, Mel, at that service sector job?

**Melanie:**

No.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Do either of you talk to your child about any safety concerns that they might have in the workplace, Angela?

**Angela:**

We do have regular conversations at home, but sometimes I don't know if we know the right questions to ask or if he has the knowledge to necessarily share.

**Holly Baril:**

Right. So, it's kind of like when your child's at school and they come home, "So, how's your day?" Good?

**Angela:**

Yeah.

**Holly Baril:**

Learn anything new? No.

**Angela:**

Exactly.

**Holly Baril:**

So, we don't want to just say, "How's your day? Safe?" Yeah. Okay. So, trying to find those questions where we can draw out some answers from them and not just a yes or no. What about yourself, Mel?

**Melanie:**

Yeah, we definitely have conversations regarding her work days and there are some times where she's told me some stuff that's kind of raised some red flags to me and then I'll kind of bounce some ideas off of her on how she should move forward with those kind of situations.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, perfect. Have they ever mentioned feeling unsafe or uncomfortable at their workplace, Angela?

**Angela:**

No, we haven't had those kind of conversations, but he's just kind of starting out.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Melanie?

**Melanie:**

Yeah, there have been those conversations.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. And how did you manoeuvre that?

**Melanie:**

I asked questions. I gave her guidance from background information I might have from my past on how she could move forward with that and just voice some concerns and where she should go with it.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. What about personal protective equipment? So, PPE, is the employer providing them with the proper gear to do their job? And if so, the next question is, are they being trained on how to use that PPE properly? Angela?

**Angela:**

The only thing he was required was steel-toed boots. So, obviously we provided for him and I wouldn't say there was a lot of training for necessary steel-toed boots.

**Holly Baril:**

On how they should be worn and...

**Angela:**

Yeah, no, but I think it was self-explanatory.

**Holly Baril:**

Yeah. Oh, you'd be surprised sometimes what I see out there. So, it's important that they learn... because safety boots is one thing. You've got your safety glasses or Mel, what's some of the PPE that maybe your daughter needs?

**Melanie:**

Well, through her education, she's definitely been advised on PPE. And I do know that there is training is available and she has taken part in that. And actually, she's part of hand washing. She's a supervisor for hand washing. She goes around and checks to make sure that that's being done appropriately.

**Holly Baril:**

Right. Again, the reason that we do that and somebody checks is because in the health-care field, and as you know, Angela, we have to make sure certain protocols are followed. And PPE, if you're wearing a mask, are you wearing it properly? Do you have the right glasses on, the gloves? So, very important that they are provided, but also trained on use and care as well. So, just maybe double check on that to make sure that they're getting everything they need. Have they been informed about any emergency procedures? So, if something was to go sideways at their workplace, do they know what to do, Angela?

**Angela:**

Again, I don't think that he's had a lot of training. I know should there be a fire drill or something like that, he knows what to do. But in the case of violence or harassment or a chemical spill, I would say not necessarily.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Does he know where the first aid kit is?

**Angela:**

For a couple of his jobs, yes, but one, no, he works in a few little different locations. Not everywhere.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Melanie?

**Melanie:**

I would hope so, but I'm not a hundred per cent sure.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. And obviously being in a hospital setting, the first aid kit should be everywhere. Yeah. But again, sometimes these are the things that some workplaces take for granted, right? Oh, it's got to be stocked, but no one's checked it. So, just making sure they understand emergency procedures is important because we always think we're prepared until something happens, then we realize, oh, maybe we weren't as prepared as we should be. Now, I asked you earlier if you were familiar with the rules and regulations in the province of Ontario, how do you feel that your child's employer, are they, I should say, aware of those rules and regulations? Angela?

**Angela:**

I would say that they have some understanding, but I can't comment on the full level that they would know.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Mel?

**Melanie:**

In her current position, yes. I do believe that they are well aware. I would hope they're very well aware of it. In her previous job, I would say probably not fully aware.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. So, maybe just not as much education on that employer's part as the employer in the health-care sector.

**Melanie:**

And their willingness to follow through if there is an incident.

**Holly Baril:**

Right. Okay. So, they take that a little bit more seriously when there's an issue or a concern that's brought up. I think your daughter had mentioned that she did have a little bit of an injury at the previous job.

**Melanie:**

Yes. And that's what I was referring to. There wasn't really any follow-up made on that. It was, "Let's get you fixed up. You're good to go. I'll come back with the paperwork that you need to sign," and the paperwork never showed up.

**Holly Baril:**

Right. So, totally dropped the ball on that. And could that injury have come back in a few years to haunt her? There'd be no record of it. Right. And that's the important piece is trying to explain to the young workers that, yeah, that's fine. You might bounce back, but if you do require medical attention, it's important to make sure that that gets done because it's in the years following if that injury comes back, there's nothing for you to follow up on. And you're never going to believe. But I mean, when I'm doing training, sometimes I get young workers and I feel like, I don't know why people tell me stories like this, but I had this one kid say, "Well, you know what happened to me?"

He says, "We were working away." And I guess he was standing where he shouldn't have been, but there were plenty of other workers there that could have directed the young worker out of the way. And I don't know why they didn't. Anyway, a steel beam, he said, fell on his face. And I said, "Did you pass out?" And he says, "I don't know." And I was thinking, "Oh my goodness." And so, whatever, if he came to or whatever, the other workers that were there were saying, "Oh, are you okay?" He's like, "Well, I think it hurts. Okay. Well, you're not cut. You're not bleeding. You're okay. Why don't you go lay down for a little bit and then we'll come and check on you." He was 19 years old.

They let him go lay down because this was a camp job, so he just went to his place and then whatever, they went and checked on him later and there was not one report. They all said, "Okay, don't say anything. We'll just keep an eye on you. Go lay down. We'll just make sure we'll check on you after." And that was very frustrating for me to listen to because man, that poor child, I said, "Oh, if you start getting really bad headaches in the future, what are you going to do? You have nothing to fall back on from that injury." And that's a pretty big injury as far as I'm concerned. So, it's been, I don't know, I think he's 24 now or whatever, but those are the things we don't want to see or hear about.

We want employers and I'll say older workers like ourselves to take those younger workers and teach them properly, the health and safety.

So, have you noticed any signs of stress or fatigue or any mental health issues with your child because of the job that they have, Mel?

**Melanie:**

I would say it's pretty taxing at times on her mental health and stress. Yeah, there are issues there.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Angela?

**Angela:**

I agree too that there could be some taxing times, especially when he is coaching younger children and parents' perspectives and the judgment that comes from parents and, oh, maybe you didn't have enough hands on or other sort of things that might come from...

**Holly Baril:**

Outside that, yeah.

**Angela:**

Yes.

**Holly Baril:**

Yes. You do as good of a job as you can, but to some people, it's never good enough, right?

**Angela:**

Exactly.

**Holly Baril:**

Being able to understand that it's not you, it's someone else, but still could play a part on their mental health a little bit. Do you think that where they're working now, do you feel sometimes maybe there's too much demand on them, too many hours? Is it interfering with their schooling or anything like that, Angela?

**Angela:**

No, I think he has a pretty good balance. We haven't had that issue, but he only works one or two days a week.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, perfect. Melanie?

**Melanie:**

She's got a very, very demanding schedule right now. So, I feel that sometimes yes, but also this is sometimes by her choice. She wants to make her money.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Okay. So, taking on a little bit more, but by choice, not being forced to do it.

**Melanie:**

Exactly.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Now my next question goes back to high schools. And so, in our high schools, we have a couple of different programs for students. One of them is a co-op program, so I'm not sure if you're familiar with that, but your child gets to pick a workplace and then see if that's what they want to do in the future. And then we also have the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) as well. So, outside of those two, do you think that high schools should provide education or workshops on workplace safety for students, specifically that information, Mel?

**Melanie:**

Oh my goodness. Yes, that would be great. It would be fantastic. I think the more you drill the information into them, the more they'll get it and they'll know their rights and they'll know the steps that they need to be taken should something occur in their workplace. I feel that that would be a great stepping stone to entering a workforce.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Is there anything in particular that comes to mind that, "Oh, they need to do this"?

**Melanie:**

Well, so we all know the WHMIS training. We all kind of just breeze through that. We're not really 100 per cent paying attention to it, let's be honest. WHMIS face-to-face and quizzes and something fun and interactive might guide them in a better way instead of sitting in front of a laptop and scrolling through the PowerPoint, knowing your rights a little bit more, the high-risk jobs, especially in construction and in the health field and all that sort of thing, I feel like there could just be a little bit more information out there and it wouldn't hurt to give them that little bit more of information for them before they actually start into the workforce.

**Holly Baril:**

Yeah. So, probably Grade 9 even would be a good time to do that. I like what you're saying because I totally agree with the face-to-face stuff. I don't know that a young person sitting in front of a computer, especially when we talk about health and safety and what could literally kill them should be done like that. So, face-to-face, absolutely knowing their rights and understanding they can exercise those rights. And then you're right, it's the high-risk stuff. I know we think sometimes our child works at the grocery store or they're doing coaching or stuff like that, but man oh man, the harassment from customers and clients is really on the rise. I mean, I don't know, go to the grocery store.

Sometimes, I shake my head like, "Okay, this is just a child working." Angela, what do you think about high schools doing stuff?

**Angela:**

I think I agree it's a good idea to add it in and co-ops are offered in Grade 11, so maybe it could be incorporated into their Grade 10 careers course where they're already looking and exploring at those career options. And now if they're learning about their rights and their safety, it might just make for a more enriching program.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, awesome. Now this is a question specifically for your interest, but would either of you be interested in attending an information session on health and safety for your teens? So, again, their rights, their responsibilities, what's expected of the employer, et cetera. Would you be interested in doing that, Angela?

**Melanie:**

Yes.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Melanie?

**Melanie:**

Yeah, I think the better informed I am, the safer my child might be.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, good. And in your opinion, what do you think is missing between your child's safety at work, yourself with your knowledge, and the employer's enforcement? Mel?

**Melanie:**

I want to say in my experience, it would be the employers following up, doing the steps that they need to take once an incident occurs, because like you said, sometimes they're just like, "Just go lay down, you're okay, you'll be all right." And then nothing is followed up on.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Angela?

**Angela:**

Yes, I think I would agree with Mel that there's not enough follow-up or opportunities for next steps to make sure everything's properly taken care of.

**Melanie:**

And if I can add in, sometimes you can gear your child towards... So, like when the incident happened with Ashley, I said, "You need to follow up and go get those papers signed. You need to get those papers." They're too intimidated to follow up with their employer.

**Holly Baril:**

One hundred per cent, right? They don't want to necessarily come across like they're talking back to another adult because we've taught our kids not to do that. So, yeah, for sure. So, then that question, so that actually brings up another question is you would have done that, Mel. You would've said, "No, take these papers and go follow up." What about the parent that doesn't know that there's papers, that there's WSIB follow up? How do we get that information across to people, Mel?

**Melanie:**

Kind of like, I guess the workshop that you're talking about, providing a little bit more information out there for parents. I think having those kinds of workshops will inform the parents and give them more power to be able to inform their children on what is required.

**Holly Baril:**

What should we cover if we were to provide one of those?

**Melanie:**

Policies and procedures, like what happens when incidents occur, what is the expectation of the employer, what is the expectation of employees, maybe some red flags that parents should be made well aware of when their child enters the workforce, things to keep an eye on.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay, perfect. What about yourself, Angela? What do you think should be covered in those information sessions if we were to start doing that?

**Angela:**

Maybe where courses could be attained or educational opportunities, reminders of who to talk to when an incident happens or how to seek help.

**Holly Baril:**

Yeah, because right away, I mean, they should know that their immediate supervisor would be the person that they can go to. But again, if that person isn't approachable or not there that day, then what do they do? And Angela, I want to ask you as well. I wanted to know what was missing between the three levels. Was there anything that you wanted to add to that?

**Angela:**

No, I think I'm mostly on the same page as Mel, that knowing how to follow up on instances and who to talk to.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. So, having discussed safety in the workplace, what advice would you give to other parents who have teens going in to the workplace for the very first time, Angela?

**Angela:**

Make sure you ask lots of questions, know who to talk to, and always know your rights.

**Holly Baril:**

Okay. Melanie?

**Melanie:**

Definitely listen to your kids when they come home talking about the workplace. Listen for any red flags, and maybe try and inform your child a little bit more about their rights in the workforce.

**Holly Baril:**

Sure. Okay, perfect. Well, does anybody have anything else they want to add? Because that's all I have for questions for today. But Angela, anything else you want to...

**Angela:**

No, I don't think so.

**Holly Baril:**

Melanie?

**Melanie:**

Nope. I just hope our kids stay safe.

**Holly Baril:**

Yes, so do I. I mean, this is why we do these things, right? And this is why we provide the training and we go to schools and we give co-op presentations. And if we see something and then we should say something, that's one of our newest campaigns at IHSA and there's reasons for that, right? We don't want to read things in the newspaper about a young worker that could have been prevented. So, I just want to thank you very much, both of you, for your time today in getting this podcast ready for me. I do appreciate your honesty in all of your answers. With that being said, again, thank you and hope you have a good day.

**Melanie:**

You as well. Thanks.

**Holly Baril:**

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