

## Student Builders Age Guidelines

We believe it is vitally important for young people of every age to get the experience of contributing to the mission of creating better housing for kids like themselves who may not have a decent place to live. Therefore, we want to do everything we can to engage youth in our movement as deeply as possible.

Due to the inherent danger on worksites as well as state and federal regulations, Covenant Partners should use caution and heed their best judgment with regards to youth activities. In general, Youth 14 and over can participate on the work site to the extent permitted by local or state workplace regulations. All young people under the age of 18 must have a permission and liability release signed by their parent or guardian.

Special care should be given to youth to teach and train them in proper and safe building methods and use of tools, and sometimes we must help them slow down or do things “the long way” in order to do them safely. Therefore, it is often very helpful to establish a ratio of minors per adult that works for you and your staff. Many groups have found that one adult per five or six minors works well.

Less hazardous activities such as painting from ground level or landscaping may be done without age restriction. Children age ten and younger should be required to be accompanied by their parent or guardian and must remain under the direct and constant supervision of a parent or legal guardian during their entire stay.

We like to ask groups of students, “What’s your highest priority today?” The correct answer: “Safety.” Then we ask, “What’s your second highest priority today?” The correct answer: “Safety again, because it’s that important!”

Local Covenant Partners should do their own due diligence to assure they satisfy local law, since some jurisdictions do not discriminate between volunteer and paid labor with regard to OSHA requirements. Any exception dictated by local applicable laws – or even your own liability policies – must take precedence.

As with volunteers of ANY age, we must remember that there are countless ways to contribute, most of which fall outside the worksite. Youth can collect coins, lead walks, ask for a birthday gift to support The Fuller Center, build mailboxes or bird houses, prepare food, get their church or youth group involved, write letters, and much more! Younger youth can work with older youth and together they will find they can accomplish more than by working alone. The best ideas are often the ones they come up with on their own, but if you need more ideas, the Fuller Center Student Builders program would love to help you brainstorm.

We are so grateful and so blessed for all the contributions young people make to this ministry!