Young worker? Know your rights and the law

WHAT rights do working youngsters have? Assistant Professor Michael Ewing-Chow, from the National University of Singapore's law faculty, lists some key points.

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What is the difference between a child and a young person?
"Child" refers to a person below 15. A "young person" refers to a person between the ages of 15 and 16. The main difference between the two is that a young person is allowed to perform industrial work, whereas a child is permitted only to perform light duties. No child under the age of 13 may be employed under any conditions.

How many hours a day am I allowed to work?
A child may work six hours a day, and go for no more than three hours without a 30-minute break. There are no limitations on how long a young person may work in a non-industrial environment.

In an industrial environment, seven hours a day is the limit. They are not permitted to work more than four hours without a 30-minute rest period.

What time am I allowed to work until?
Children and young persons are not allowed to work beyond 11pm.

The Commissioner of Labour's approval is required if they are required to work on a rest day. All employees are entitled to at least one rest day a week.

Is there a minimum wage I must be paid? Singapore does not have a minimum wage law, but this also means that children and young people are able to bargain with the employers for their salaries.

If I suspect my employer is mistreating me, where can I seek advice or make a complaint? You can lodge a complaint with the Commissioner for Labour at the Labour Relations Department, Ministry of Manpower, provided it is done within a year of the matter, and no more than six months after you leave the job. A fee of $3 is required to lodge a complaint.