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Eight Ways Businesses Can Stop Child Labor in Their Supply Chains

For the first time since 2000, child labor is on the rise, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). A staggering 160 million children were victims of forced labor in 2020.

Against the backdrop of this distressing child labor trend, COVID-19 arrived on the scene, bringing with it the elements of a tragic perfect storm: a greater supply of susceptible children, greater demand for cheap labor, companies and families financially stretched, businesses shifting resources from business-enhancing to business-sustaining, and diminished protections against child labor due to reduced enforcement and regulatory oversight, such as factory visits. What follows is a brief overview of how this quintet of concerning trends has generated a record number of child laborers.

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