

**APPENDIX M:
INTERVIEWS QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS OF EMPLOYED TEENS**

Purpose

- To understand the information that parents of employed teens need to better inform the decisions they and their children make regarding their children's job choices.
- To obtain feedback from parents on the usefulness of the YouthRules! web site for providing the needed information and to collect parents' suggestions for improvements to the web site.

Overview

Eastern Research Group, Inc. (ERG), WHD's subcontractor for this project, will conduct a series of interviews during Summer 2009 for parents of employed teens in the Boston, MA area. ERG expects to conduct between 20 and 25 interviews. For purposes of estimating the burden of this data collection, ERG has assumed 25 interviews will be conducted. Participants will each receive a \$50 stipend for participating.

For each participant, ERG will conduct a three-stage interview:

- *Stage 1—Beginning interview.* ERG will conduct a beginning interview to collect information about the types of information that parents need when making decisions related to their children's employment.
- *Stage 2—Observation on web site usage.* ERG will observe the participant's use of the YouthRules! web site and record detailed observations of the participant's reactions to the usability and functionality of the web site. This will allow ERG to assess how well the current web site is meeting the needs of parents in terms of content, layout, and design.
- *Stage 3—Ending interview.* ERG will conduct an ending interview focusing on the participant's experience of using the web site and how well the participant feels the web site meets their requirements, i.e. how satisfied the participant is with the content, functionality and usability of the web site.

Draft interview questions are provided under the "Protocol" section, a draft observation instrument is included in Appendix A.

Recruitment

Recruitment Plan

ERG will recruit up to 25 parents of employed teenagers between the ages of 14 and 18. ERG will recruit participants by placing an advertisement in a local newspaper and by networking among its own employees.¹ ERG will also invite parents of teens recruited for the teen focus groups to participate in the parent interviews while their children are participating in the teen focus group.

¹ ERG will not use any of its own employees or members of its employees' immediate families in the interviews.

Given the small total size (25 participants) for these interviews, the sample of parents is not intended to be representative of all parents of employed teens. For this reason, ERG will not recruit specifically for geography, race, family income, or type of employment held.

Recruitment Materials

ERG will create a flyer to inform parents of employed teens of the opportunity to participate in the interviews, including the stipend amount. ERG will include PDF files of the flyer in the recruiting emails that is sent to potentially interested participants. Additionally, ERG will create a small ad to be placed in a local newspaper.

Logistics

Schedule

The interviews will be held during the Summer 2009. We expect the participants to spend on average one hour and 15 minutes in the interviews.

Location

ERG will hold the parent interviews at its office in Lexington, MA. Free parking, snacks and drinks will be provided to participants.

Protocol

The interview will be conducted in three phases. The interviewer and the observer will remain neutral to comments made by participants and will prompt participants for reactions and clarification as necessary. The interview is expected to last approximately one hour 15 minutes.

Beginning Interview – 20 to 30 minutes

The purpose of the beginning interview is to welcome the participant and set the context for the remainder of the interview. The interview questions are designed to help the participant refresh their memory of when their child was seeking employment and to help ERG understand the types of information that parents need when they are making decisions regarding their child's employment (i.e., their customer requirements).

The interviewer will ask the following questions:

- When your teen started looking for a job, what kinds of questions did you have about the kinds of jobs teens can do or the hours they can work?
- How did you find the answers to these questions (if at all)?
- Did you search for information on line? How? What web sites did you refer to?
- What do you expect from a web site providing information on U.S. child labor laws? What do you expect from a Federal government web site that offers such information?
- What do you know now that you wished you knew before you child began work? What would you tell other parents whose children want to start working?

Following these questions, the interviewer will introduce the participant to an observer who will guide them through the second phase of the interview.

Observation of Web Site Use – 20 to 30 minutes

The purpose of this phase of the interview is to collect detailed observations of the participant's reactions to the web site; as a result the observer will be an ERG staff person with experience evaluating web site usability. The participant will be seated at a computer with a web browser open to the YouthRules! web site and given up to 30 minutes to review the web site. An observer will sit with the participant and record detailed observations about the participant's usage of the web site, such as:

- Pages visited,
- Time spent on each page,
- Perceived usefulness of information presented,
- Satisfaction with page format and content, and
- Participant comments or questions.

The observer will use an observation instrument to record these observations, see Appendix A for a draft version of this instrument.

When the participant has completed their review of the web site the observer will return the participant to the interviewer for the final phase of the interview.

Ending Interview – 20 to 30 minutes

The ending interview is designed to capture the participant's reactions to the experience of using the web site and how well they feel the web site meets their needs as the parent of an employed teen.

The interviewer will ask the following questions:

- How did you feel about the web site overall?
- Could you describe what was positive about the web site? And what was negative?
- Overall, how satisfied were you with:
 - The content of the web site?
 - The organization of the web pages?
 - The format of the web pages?
 - The user friendliness of the web site?
- How well did the web site meet the expectations you have for a web site providing this type of information?
- How well do you think the web site answers the questions or concerns you had about youth employment?
- Do you have any suggestions for improving the web site?

Following the interview the interviewer will thank the parent for participating, arrange the participant stipend, and provide the participant with a selection of YouthRules! materials and contact information should they have additional comments after they leave.

Sample Observation Tool

Observer: _____



Start review	Time: _____
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CONTENT	Time	Perceived Usefulness	Satisfied with Content?	Satisfied with Format?	Comments/Observations
Welcome Page		NU U	Y N	Y N	
Teens		NU U	Y N	Y N	
Parents		NU U	Y N	Y N	
Educators		NU U	Y N	Y N	
Employers		NU U	Y N	Y N	
State Rules		NU U	Y N	Y N	
What hours can youth work?		NU U	Y N	Y N	
What jobs can youth do?		NU U	Y N	Y N	
Prevent workplace injuries		NU U	Y N	Y N	
Poster, Stickers, Bookmarks		NU U	Y N	Y N	
Compliance Assistance		NU U	Y N	Y N	
Additional Resources		NU U	Y N	Y N	
Partnerships		NU U	Y N	Y N	
About YouthRules!		NU U	Y N	Y N	
What's New		NU U	Y N	Y N	
Other?		NU U	Y N	Y N	

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Finish Review	Time: _____
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General Observations:

Summary of Themes and Comments from Interviews with Parents of Employed Teens

Broad themes

- Parents like the site look and organization but see opportunities for improvement.
- Parents don't differentiate between youth employment rules and youth employment opportunities; they expect to see both on the same site.
- Parents play a pivotal role in teen employment by motivating the teens to get a job
- Parents rely primarily on local and familiar sources of information, and find internet resources unreliable so rely heavily on search functions
- The site might be hard for parents to find

Themes from Web site use observation

- *Parents find the site useful.* When asked "On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being amazing, how useful is this site?" interviewee responded between 3 and 8, with an average of about 7 out of 10.
- *Parents approach the site content like it was written for the parent and teen audiences.* Parents approach the site from the "parent" frame of reference and as a result most interviewees didn't understand the purpose of the "Partners" page and some interviewees expected the "Employer" section to have information on available jobs and employers that hire teens. Additionally, nearly all interviewees felt that the "Posters, Bookmarks, and Stickers" link would be more appropriate under "Educators."
- *Parents want to find information quickly.* Most interviewees commented that they would like a search box or FAQ section in order to quickly find the answer to a specific question. Several interviewees noted that they would like to see a one-page summary of the information, ideally printable, or to see a bulleted list of key points preceding detailed text. One interviewee noted that parents often only have time to search for information during a coffee or lunch break and so they need to perform a very focused search and be able to print the information to review later.
- *Parents search for answers to questions about very specific, state and local regulations.* Most interviewees visited the "Parents" page first and then immediately moved to "State Laws" and clicked on the map image to find Massachusetts state laws. Unfortunately the map links directly to the text of the Massachusetts state regulations, which all interviewees found "overwhelming." Many of the interviewees were concerned about finding information about how to obtain a work permit in Massachusetts; one interviewee commented that she would like to see a link for a "printable" work permit. Other interviewees searched for specific regulations such as youth work in construction, minimum wage and overtime, and breaks for longer weekend shifts.
- *Parents that are less "web savvy" have difficulty finding information.* Interviewees that described themselves as less experienced using the internet tended to be less likely to scroll down the screen for more information or click on underlined phrases in text and links to PDFs (such as fact sheets and posters). Additionally, some interviewees reported that it they were unsure how to proceed through the site without some indication of topic priority or page order.

Themes from Interview discussion, by question topic

Interview Topics	Themes
How did your teen start working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In most cases the parent was responsible for encouraging and motivating the teen to seek employment, often driving them to local employers and assisting with the application form. • Interviewees noted that they relied heavily on local word of mouth, networking among friends and relatives, and following up with camps attended by the teen, school guidance counselors and familiar employers for information on job opportunities. • In some cases the teens were intimidated by the length and level of detail in application forms, many of which are now electronic.
When your teen started looking for a job, what kinds of questions did you have about the kinds of jobs teens can do or the hours they can work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewee concerns focused on the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At what age can a child start work and what employers are hiring that age group? ○ What hours, how many hours per week and how late can a child work? ○ What are the rules for safety and security while working – will there be an adult present, what types of tasks can the child do, what is the difficulty level of the tasks? ○ What are the transportation options, how will the child get to work? ○ Will the child find the job to be an interesting and useful experience?
How did you find the answers to these questions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents relied on the same information sources they used to find out about job opportunities. Most parents were content with the information they obtained from the work permit paperwork, a trusted employer, local word of mouth or news. • In some cases the parents performed an online search for information on local town and school web sites, or the Massachusetts state labor department web site. These sources were viewed as incomplete and confusing.
What do you expect from a government web site providing information on U.S. child labor laws?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewee expectations for this type of web site focused on two categories of information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Basic regulatory information on age, hours, work permits, type of job, wages and safety ○ Basic employment resources on how to find a job, available jobs and employers hiring teens, when to apply for summer and how to complete an application, interview tips, how to understand a paycheck, and general job resource links.

Interview Topics	Themes
<p>Could you describe what was positive about the web site?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly all of the interviewees found the web site visually appealing noting that the home page format is attractive and easy to navigate. A few interviewees noted that the YouthRules! name is good, that the format looks appropriate for a government web site and that the photographs display a nice degree of diversity. • Most interviewees found the web site well organized, especially commenting that dividing the site into four separate sections for different audiences is helpful. • Several interviewees commented that the web site would be a good reference for teens to know what an employer can ask them to do at work. • A few interviewees noted that the web site would have saved them a lot of time when their children began their job search because all of the information is in one place.
<p>Could you describe what was negative about the web site?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of the interviewees used the clickable state map to find information on Massachusetts state laws, this map links directly to the text of the state law which many parents found overwhelming and text heavy. • Several interviewees commented that the text was “hard on the eyes” and that a search function would be helpful for quickly finding answers. • Several interviewees noted that the web site should be available in more languages. • Some parents commented that links within the four sections appear to go to the same information. • Interviewees that followed links to external sites commented that the pages were inconsistent or overwhelming. • Many parents visited the “Partners” page and found the purpose of the page confusing because they expected information on how to find teen employment opportunities with these partners.
<p>Overall, how satisfied were you with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The content of the web site? ○ The organization of the web pages? ○ The format of the web pages? ○ The user friendliness of the web site? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content: Interviewees were generally satisfied with the completeness of the information presented on the site. • Organization: Interviewees were moderately satisfied with the organization of the site, finding the four sections for different audiences to be a good approach to organizing the information. • Format: Interviewees were generally satisfied with the format of the site finding it clean and easy to understand. • User-Friendliness: Interviewees found the web site easy to use if somewhat repetitive.
<p>How well did the web site meet the expectations you have for a web site providing this type of information?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When asked directly, most interviewees commented that the site met or exceeded their expectations for a government web site.
<p>How well do you think the web site answers the questions or concerns you had about youth employment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly all interviewees found that the web site answered their questions on youth employment, although nearly half commented that they would like to see additional information on job resources or a search function to find information more quickly. • Interviewees that did not think the web site answered their questions had very specific questions on whether the law required breaks, overtime and wage adjustments for tips.

Interview Topics	Themes
<p>What would you tell other parents whose children want to start working?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many interviewees would encourage parents to guide their children through the job search and application process, make use of networking opportunities, keep logistics of transportation and schedule in mind, and be patient to find the right type of job opportunity for the child. • Interviewees would also encourage parents to be well informed on youth employment rules, the types of employers that will hire teens, and what tasks the employer will expect the teen to perform. • A few interviewees noted trends in youth employment such as the ability to research employers on the internet, electronic applications and local competition between teens and retired people for the same types of jobs.
<p>Do you have any suggestions for improving the web site?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewees would like to see additional teen employment resources including: links to local employers, job search tips and tricks, a practice electronic job application, a checklist of information needed for applications, interview tips and questions to ask the employer, other options such as community service, volunteering and entrepreneurship ideas. • Many interviewees expressed a desire for a teen FAQ section, a place to enter specific questions and guidance to determine if a problem with an employer is a violation and steps to resolve the problem (including a hotline to call for advice). • Several interviewees suggested making the site more interactive and teen friendly by adding testimonials from working teens and incorporation of features such as short videos. • A few interviewees wondered if the web site would show up in an internet search for related terms and noted that it would be easier to find if so.