



Child Safety on the Farm

Parents need to take precautions with children to prevent injuries on the farm.

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This summer, parents should supervise their children's farm activities and teach them farm safety in order to prevent injuries.

The summer season has officially set in, and for farm families across the U.S., this is a busy time of the year. Parents should take precautions to prevent their children from getting farm-related injuries.

Each year on the nation's farms, approximately 300 people under the age of 19 die and approximately 24,000 people are seriously injured, according to the National Safety Council.

While parents can teach children about farm safety, they also need to provide a safe environment for them, says Debbie Richardson, assistant specialist of parenting at the Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension.

"Parents are anxious for their children to start helping around the farm," Richardson says. "Young children's ability to reason and use logic is immature, and they can't apply what is learned in one situation to another situation. They are often overconfident and will do things beyond their abilities to imitate or please adults."

Although it's not possible to child-proof a farm completely, parents should strive to make the farm as safe as possible.

Richardson says the key to a child's health and well-being on the farm is for parents to provide appropriate supervision.

"Toddlers should never be left alone and must be supervised at all times," she says. "Even 6-year-old children should be monitored from a close distance and checked on every 10 to 15 minutes."

The NSC's Agricultural Division encourages parents to not allow children to roam freely on the farm and to design a safe play area near the house and away from work activities.

They also recommend the following tips to prevent injuries on the farm: Inspect your farm on a regular basis for hazards that can injure children wandering the farm. Correct these hazards immediately.

Children who are physically able to be involved in farm work should be assigned age-appropriate tasks and continually trained to perform them. They should also be constantly supervised.

Equip all barns, farm shops, chemical storage areas and livestock pens with latches that can be locked or secured so children can't enter.

Always turn off farm equipment, lower hydraulics and remove the key before leaving farm equipment unattended.

Don't expose children to hazards. Never carry them on tractors and equipment or invite them into the farm shop, livestock barns, grain bins, et cetera.

"It's also important to remember prevention includes preparation. Let your children know what to do in case of an emergency," Richardson says. "The best safeguard against farm injuries is for parents to understand their children's development and provide a safe place for them."

[Click here for safe summer farm activities for children.](#)