

What's Appropriate - Farms and Kids

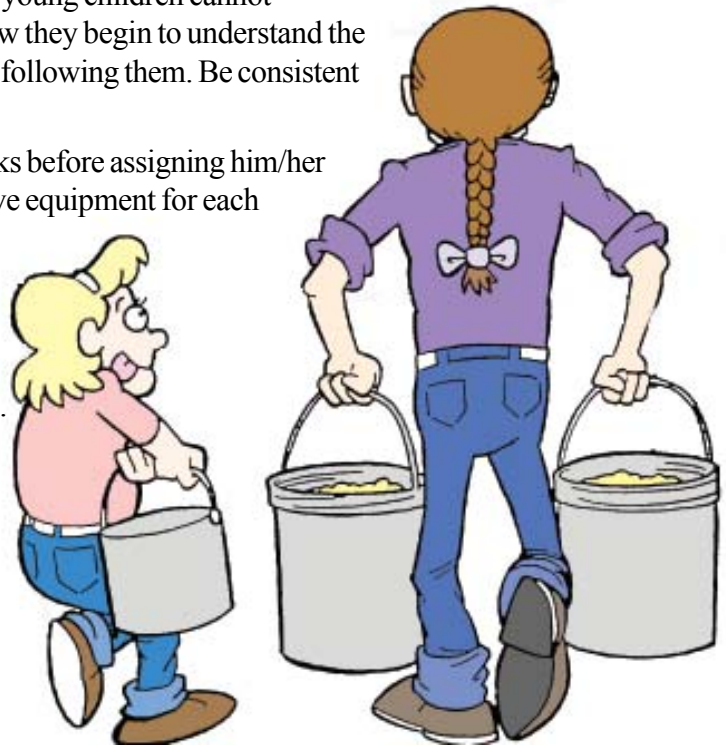
Many children on the farm are hurt each year by doing something that is beyond his or her mental, physical or emotional ability. Based on the amount of time spent in farm-related activities, children are more likely to be injured or killed than adults. Each year, hundreds of these children die and thousands are injured on the farm where they live, work and play.

Children are vulnerable to many of the same hazards as adults who live or work on farms, but they are less capable of understanding those hazards. Although parents cannot completely child-proof a farm or ranch, they need to make it as safe as possible.

Farm-related childhood injuries and deaths may seem unpredictable and random, but there are definite factors that should play a part in prevention efforts. A study by Dr. Frederick Rivara, states that children ages 10-14 are at the greatest risk for farm-related injuries. CDC/NIOSH indicates that farm machinery causes the most fatalities to farm youth. This can most likely be attributed to low levels of experience with farm equipment. If this is the case, one can conclude that farm-related incidents occur when a child is performing tasks that are beyond his or her mental, physical or emotional abilities.

Parents can take these precautions to prevent children from getting hurt on the farm or ranch:

- Find out what the developmental characteristics of children are at specific ages. Child development guidelines are available that give abilities of children at different ages. These characteristics help to identify typical risks at various ages and ways to avoid them.
- Identify the dangerous areas on your farm or ranch. Using your child's characteristics, determine where kids are most likely to get hurt. Determine what draws children to dangerous situations. An example: Toddlers are especially at risk to pesticide poisoning because of their curiosity, tendency to put things into their mouths, inability to read labels and budding independence.
- Set up appropriate rules for children to follow. Very young children cannot understand the concept of rules, but as children grow they begin to understand the reasons for guidelines and the consequences for not following them. Be consistent in enforcement of rules.
- Train youth in proper and safe operation of farm tasks before assigning him/her farm chores. Provide appropriate personal protective equipment for each assigned task.
- Supervise children according to their age. Very young children need constant supervision. Children must prove they are capable of following the farm rules before they are allowed to perform farm tasks.



Farm Safety



Just Kids