

# Child Safety – Farm Workplace & Home

Working children should be actively supervised while performing farm work.

You should first determine if the task is a good match for your child's abilities and maturity level, and then use these categories to select the level of supervision needed.

Levels of supervision include:

- Constant – an adult is always within sight, sound and reach of a working child
- Intermittent – an adult is out of sight and sound for up to 15 minutes
- Periodic – an adult observes the working child at least every 15-30 minutes

The level of supervision will also very dependent on the complexity of the task.

## “Just because they can doesn't mean they should”

Children growing up on farms are often eager to start helping out at an early age. Whilst parents will often allocate tasks, or 'chores', children may at times be overly enthusiastic in their desire to help because they might perceive the tasks to be fun or exciting. Little kids like to play on tractors, or to go for a ride with mum or dad, and when they grow older they no longer want to just play, they want to drive the tractor on their own.

Enthusiasm, or willingness, to help should not be a determining factor in whether they should be permitted to undertake a task on the farm.

Just because they can drive a tractor does not mean that they should.

## Why children are at a higher risk

A child's age and development characteristics can increase their risk of injury

When there are working children on farms, it's important to remember that they:

- Have less strength, co-ordination and understanding of situations than adults
- Can get distracted easily
- May want to explore, try new things or push boundaries
- May be impulsive and take risks beyond their capabilities
- May be overwhelmed and slow to respond in unexpected situations

You should consider a child's age, physical development and maturity when deciding what is appropriate work. You should also think about the workplace environment and where working children are undertaking work.

## What to remember when working with children on the farm

When working with and supervising working children, it's important to remember they:

- Do not possess experience, knowledge or judgment about workplace hazards and safe work practices
- Are unlikely to know if they are being exposed to health and safety risks and may find it hard to speak up even if they do
- May be energetic and enthusiastic but unsure about asking questions or making demands of adults
- Are often keen to please so they might try to imitate what they see adults doing
- Can be inquisitive and adventurous and their natural curiosity may lead them into dangerous situations in workplaces
- Do not have the experience and maturity to respond appropriately in unexpected, dangerous or stressful situations
- May be vulnerable to bullying and harassment from other farm workers

## Keeping working children safe on family farms

Working children must always be provided with adequate supervision by a parent or guardian.

For parents whose children are working on farms, it's important to encourage children to be responsible and cautious. Some ways to do this include:

- Teaching safety rules that apply to the different areas of the farm
- Making sure your child understands that certain areas are out of bounds for them, for example silos, grain loading areas, hay stacks, chemical store, farm machinery and animal pens
- Reinforcing expectations constantly by explaining the hazards and consequences of

## GET HELP

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