



## Farm Safety for Children: What Parents and Grandparents Should Know<sup>1</sup>

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**Fact:** Injuries are the leading cause of childhood death in the United States.

**Fact:** Farm machinery causes 85 percent of all machinery-related deaths to children.

**Fact:** The main sources of childhood farm-related injuries and deaths can be prevented.

**Fact:** Nearly all childhood farm-related injuries and deaths can be prevented.

The farm is a dangerous place for children because they live where work is performed. It is difficult for children to separate their play from farm hazards. To a child, a grain bin is a fascinating and adventurous place. However, many of these adventures have tragic endings.

Children on their own cannot recognize farm hazards. They must be taught how to recognize farm dangers and how to avoid them. The following are dangers that should be discussed with children:

1. Animal behavior
2. The weight and force of grain
3. The harmful gases released by manure and silage
4. Electricity
5. Chemicals and pesticides
6. Riding and playing on equipment

The chart in Figure 1 shows how children are injured on a farm. For additional information on the above topics, contact your county office of Ohio State University's Cooperative Extension Service.

Young children learn primarily by touch and sight. Many times these two senses put a child into a dangerous situation. For example, fascination with a quickly moving PTO can result in disaster. However, these senses can also be used to teach children about farm hazards. For example, bright safety emblems can be used as flash cards to teach children farm hazards. Models of farm equipment can also be used to demonstrate and prevent possible accidents.

(For further child development information see fact sheet AEX 991.1, What Job is Right for my Child?)

Parents and grandparents should use precautionary safety measures to prevent accidents. They can set and enforce safe limits and be good role models for children by promoting farm safety.

The following are key steps to farm safety:

1. Children should not be extra riders on equipment.
2. Children should not play with idle machinery.

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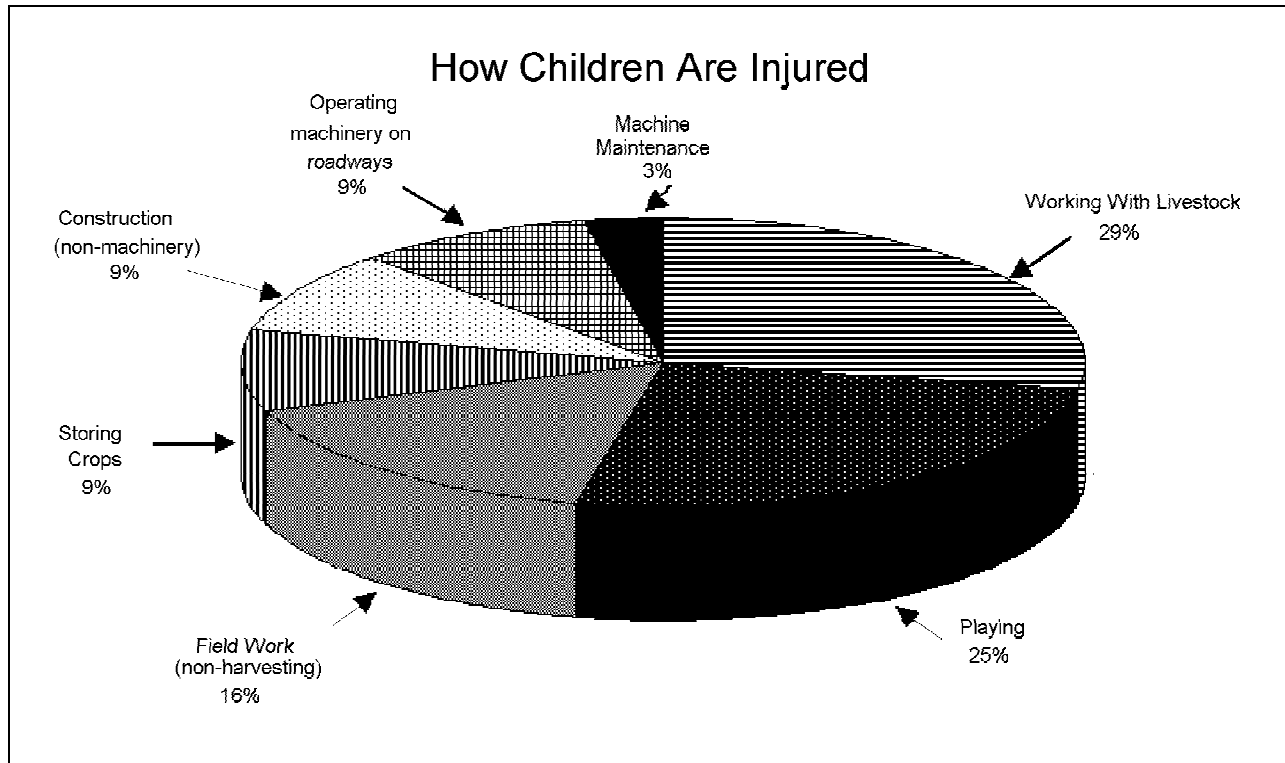


Figure 1. How Children are Injured. (Source: Carolyn S. Kern)

3. Equipment that might fall, such as front-end loaders, should be left in the down position.
4. When parked, self-propelled machinery should be locked and keys removed from the ignition.
5. A tractor PTO should be in neutral when not in use.
6. Know where children are whenever starting machinery, and especially when backing up equipment.
7. Machinery should be kept in good repair, particularly protective shields, ROPS, and seat belts.
8. Children should not operate machinery until they complete safety training.
9. All ATV riders should wear helmets.
10. Farm ponds and manure pits should be fenced.
11. Fixed ladders should be out of reach, or fit with a special barrier.
12. Portable ladders should be kept away from danger areas such as grain wagons and silos.
13. Dangerous machinery components should be kept out of reach of small children.
14. Electrical boxes should be kept locked.
15. Warning decals recognizable to children should be on all grain bins, wagons, silos, barns, and trucks.
16. Chemicals and pesticides should be stored in a locked area.
17. All equipment used on roads should have working lights, reflectors and a slow-moving vehicle emblem.
18. Set regular times for family safety instructions (for example, monthly family safety days).

Farm-related injuries occur while children are both at play and at work. The majority of children over the age of seven are participating in farm labor when injured. Children perform a lot of duties on farms and are a valuable resource, but children working on farms have a high rate of injury. Proper safety training can minimize the risk of injury to your child.

## HOW TO GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL HELP

- **First:** Got to the nearest telephone.
- **Second:** Dial the emergency number.
- **Third:** When someone answers, they will need to know:
  - Where you are — be very specific — give the exact location; give any landmarks, names of streets, intersections or rural route number.
  - Your name
  - How many people are hurt
  - The condition of the people hurt
- **Fourth:** Don't hang up until you ask if you should!

## SOURCES

- Tevis & Finck. We Kill Too Many Farm Kids. *Successful Farming*. 1989.
- Meath, Michael. Farm Safety, What are the Real Losses in Agricultural Accidents. *Agway Cooperator*. March 1991.