



## National Action Plan update

Members of the National Children's Center and key external advisors are leading an update of the 2012 Blueprint for Protecting Children in Agriculture. The team has made significant progress over the past year, hosting a series of five in-person and virtual think tanks, and collecting stakeholder input and priorities on an array of youth agricultural safety and health-related topic areas. Similar to development of the 2012 plan, additional input on drafts of the full document will be sought from stakeholders around the country. The plan is scheduled for publication in late 2024.

[Marshfield Clinic Research Institute - National Action Plans \(marshfieldresearch.org\)](https://marshfieldresearch.org)



National Children's Center  
for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety

"The National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety strives to enhance the health and safety of all children exposed to hazards associated with agricultural work and rural environments."



## Child injuries on farms not 'accidents'

Headlines such as, "Toddler killed in tractor accident," or, "Boy dies in farm accident," grab our attention and sympathy, but they also prevent us from addressing the root causes of those tragedies.

"An 'accident' suggests that the situation could not have been anticipated or prevented," said Barbara Lee, Ph.D., National Children's Center. Using "accident" avoids a serious investigation of the event, and hampers efforts

to alter unsafe environments or conditions in which children are present, wrote Lee in an [open-access commentary](#) published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Agromedicine.

In 2023, Lee and colleagues at the National Farm Medicine Center documented the frequency of the word "accident" using their [Agricultural Injury News database](#) of publicly available news reports.



Analysis of 719 public news reports involving youth ages 0-17 over a seven-year period (2016-2022) revealed that the word "accident" was present in 38% of the headlines, and/or present in 63% of the narrative descriptions of the event. A similar analysis of adult news reports revealed less use of the word "accident," leading to speculation that reporters and editors might choose to use "accident" in child cases hoping to minimize the pain, shame or remorse that parents might feel after losing a child.

But more media professionals might be receptive to using the term "incident" rather than "accident" when covering injury events in agriculture, according to a research project led by Dr. Bryan Weichelt, with assistance from Christopher Benny. Their project identified 31 U.S. news media injury reports in AgInjuryNews.org during an eight-month period that referred to childhood agricultural injuries as "accidents." In follow-ups with authors of the news reports, the majority responded positively to the terminology shift. Lee notes that nearly 30 years ago, the auto safety field stopped using the word "accident" and now refers to events as crashes, collisions or overturns.

Additional information is in the [Media Guidelines](#) developed by the National Children's Center and Childhood Agricultural Safety Network. The guidelines provide recommendations for reporting news events, including appropriate terminology, photos of safe practices and prevention messages.

## Legal response analyzed

A team led by Dr. Barbara Lee analyzed legal cases and news reports involving an adult charged with a criminal offense following the serious injury or death of a child younger than 18 years, whether working or not working, in a family farm setting. [Results and recommendations](#) published in *Frontiers in Public Health* have the potential to inform child safety practices and influence risk-taking practices in agricultural communities. By highlighting the importance of parent/adult accountability for child farm safety and the legal and social welfare consequences of unsafe and/or reckless behaviors, the ultimate goal is for fewer children to suffer serious agriculture-related injuries or deaths.



Jane Allsup, middle, with the Telling the Story Project Team at 2023 Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Conference.

## A mother's promise: Targeting unsafe gasoline containers

Jane Allsup lost her 10-year-old son, Christopher, when a plastic gasoline container exploded. Christopher unknowingly was standing in a cloud of highly flammable vapors escaping from the old, unsafe container, and the vapors ignited when

contacted by an ember. Since that day in September 2013, Jane Allsup and The Legacy of Christopher Allsup Foundation have told Christopher's story, which she has now shared with the National Children's Center's Storytelling Project at <https://tellingthestoryproject.org/christopher/>.



## CASN lawnmower campaign

The Childhood Agricultural Safety Network (CASN) kicked off its lawnmower safety campaign at the International Society for Agricultural Safety and Health (ISASH) meeting in June. Like previous CASN

campaigns, the lawnmower safety campaign includes free distributable materials and action points to raise awareness about the underlying dangers of these activities. If you have safety resources on lawn mowers, all-terrain vehicles/utility task vehicles, tractors or media guidance that you'd like to share, click the submission link on the CASN Campaign page, <https://cultivatesafety.org/campaigns/>

- **In-person meeting:** The annual in-person meeting was held June 19, co-located with the ISASH conference in Portland, Ore.
- **Farmworker children webinar:** CASN will mark National Farmworker Appreciation Day, Aug. 6, 2024, with a webinar simulcast in English and Spanish. CASN Leadership Team member Melanie Forti, Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs, and Reid Maki, Child Labor Coalition will provide information on immigrant/migrant/seasonal working youth, including child labor issues and legislation.



## Agricultural Youth Work Guidelines

The Agricultural Youth Work Guidelines are a tool to assist adults in assigning developmentally appropriate tasks for youth agricultural workers. A team led by Dr. Andrea Swenson has been researching barriers and motivators for use of the guidelines among different groups of adults working with youth and are

currently focused on parents and work supervisors. This research will guide recommendations for improving Agricultural Youth Work Guidelines. If you are a parent or work supervisor, your feedback is valuable. Please consider participating in our survey, and/or sharing this research opportunity with adults you work with. Please email us at: [nccrahs@marshfieldresearch.org](mailto:nccrahs@marshfieldresearch.org).



Marsha Salzwedel, Ed.D.

## Thank you and best wishes, Marsha!

If you are involved with childhood agricultural injury prevention, chances are that you know Marsha Salzwedel, Ed.D. Marsha, who embodies the core values of a child farm safety advocate, wrapped up a 35-year career with Marshfield Clinic Health System effective June 6, 2024.

For the past 12 years, Marsha worked within the National Farm Medicine

Center and the National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety, moving from research specialist to project manager, and after completing her doctorate, to project scientist.

Marsha has played a lead role in all internal aspects of the National Children's Center, as well as in knowledge dissemination and public-facing activities, the growth and leadership of the Childhood Agricultural Safety Network and as the acknowledged national leader in agritourism safety. Marsha's workshops, presentations, interactions with media and involvement with multiple advisory boards elevated childhood agricultural injury prevention to new heights.

Marsha plans to enjoy summer and then pursue her deep enjoyment of teaching students.



Among attendees at the stakeholder meeting were (from left): Athena Ramos, Ph.D., University of Nebraska Medical Center; Marsha Salzwedel, Ed.D., National Children's Center; Jakob Hanschu, M.A., National Children's Center; Andrea Swenson, Ph.D., National Children's Center; and Brian Kuhl, Progressive Agriculture Foundation.

## Stakeholder Advisory Board

The NCCRAHS Stakeholder Advisory Board met May 15 to provide recommendations for the center. The meeting was held in Minneapolis with more than 20 advisors and staff in attendance. Topics included updates on key center priorities.

## Furthermore

**Somi Panday, Ph.D.**, has joined the National Children's Center as part of Dr. Andrea Swenson's research team.

Dr. Panday has a doctorate in nursing science from Florida Atlantic University, and a master's in public health from North South University, Dhaka, Bangladesh. She has completed training programs in mental health, recovery and community inclusion, and is experienced in qualitative and quantitative research methods. ... Dr. Swenson and Marshfield Clinic Health System Director of Federal Government Relations **Brad Wolters** met with several legislative offices in Washington, D.C., during a February visit, sharing research and dissemination activities led by the National Children's Center and National Farm Medicine Center. ... The National Children's Center welcomes back **Christopher Benny** in a part-time capacity. Benny is a medical student at the Medical College of Wisconsin-Central Wisconsin campus ... The 2023 National Farm Medicine Center/National Children's Center Year in Review is available at [https://marshfieldresearch.org/Media/Default/NFMC/Year%20in%20Review/2023\\_YIR.pdf](https://marshfieldresearch.org/Media/Default/NFMC/Year%20in%20Review/2023_YIR.pdf)