

## National Action Plan 2025 update

The 2025 National Action Plan for Childhood Agricultural Injury Prevention is in the formative stages, with a series of think tanks/listening sessions scheduled for Summer 2023. A draft outline of the plan is due in early 2024, with publication in December 2024. The original 1996 Action Plan has been updated twice (2001, 2012) through a consensus-driven process. Over the years, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) requests for applications on childhood agricultural safety have encouraged researchers to address priorities noted in the action plans.

## National Children's Center guest edits *Frontiers in Public Health*

*Frontiers in Public Health*, a multidisciplinary open-access journal, has published "[Safeguarding Youth from Agricultural Injury and Illness: International Perspectives](#)." Barbara Lee, Ph.D., served as lead guest editor, assisted by Christopher Benny, issue coordinator. The project includes 29 manuscripts from Argentina, Australia, Burkina Faso, Canada, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, Nigeria, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States. Lee relied on other Marshfield-based colleagues as editors along with two international editors, Peter Lundqvist, Ph.D., Sweden; and Richard Franklin, Ph.D., Australia. Marshfield editors included Drs. Casper Bendixsen, Bryan Weichelt, Florence Becot and Andrea Swenson. The issue's content will also be offered as an e-book.

## Research helps make child care a Farm Bill priority



The nation's two largest farmer advocacy groups, American Farm Bureau Federation and National Farmers Union, have voted to include child care/early childhood education in their Farm Bill policy priorities. That's gratifying news for Florence Becot, Ph.D., and her colleagues, whose research is being used to develop solutions to support the health, safety and economic viability of the farm population. Congress will debate the Farm Bill in the coming months.

"As rural researchers, our conversations with policymakers suggest that there may be bipartisan support to help increase access to affordable quality rural child care as lawmakers hear from families," said Becot, an investigator with the National Children's Center.

Becot and Shoshana Inwood, Ph.D., co-investigator on the project and an associate professor at The Ohio State University, recently shared findings from a national survey of farm families conducted earlier this year. More than 860 families in 47 states responded. Their answers highlighted the child care struggles that farm families face.

Nationally, three-quarters (77%) of farm families with children under 18 report difficulties securing child care because of lack of affordability, availability or quality. Nearly half (48%) report that having access to affordable child care is important for maintaining and growing their farm business. "Our research has consistently found child care is an issue that affects all of agriculture regardless of farm size, production system or location," Becot said.

Becot and Inwood authored an article in [The Conversation](#) that they hope informs conversations around rural child care, farm business viability, and the upcoming Farm Bill. In the article, they use findings from their research to debunk three common myths they have heard over the years.

**Myth 1** – Child care is not a problem in the farm sector. It is, according to farm parents.

**Myth 2** – Farmers don't want or need help with child care because they have family help. According to Becot and Inwood's research, almost half of respondents said their own parents were too busy to help with child care, in declining health or deceased.

**Myth 3** – Children can just tag along when doing farm work. Agricultural worksites are hazardous. The research found that 97 percent of farm parents have worried that their children could get hurt on the farm.



"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."

## National Children's Center director testifies before Congress

In perhaps the National Children's Center's deepest push into public policy, center director Barbara Lee, Ph.D., testified before Congress on Sept. 7, 2022, as one of three invited witnesses in support of the Children's Act for Responsible Employment and Farm Safety of 2022, or CARE Act. The fully remote hearing covered the current state of federal child labor laws and protections and policy proposals to improve them.



## Congratulations, Dr. Swenson



Andrea Swenson, Ph.D.

Andrea Swenson, Ph.D., has accepted the position of associate research scientist in Farm Medicine and will assume the role of associate director for the National Children's Center.

Swenson, who grew up on a dairy farm in central Wisconsin, joined Farm Medicine in 2019 as a project scientist-program evaluator.

## Agritourism guidelines

Agritourism operations are in full-swing nationwide, and [Integrating Safety into Agritourism](#) stands ready with interactive walkthroughs, checklists and other resources to keep visitors and workers safe. Marsha Salzwedel spoke with Michigan State University's Capital News Service about agritourism safety, and the article was carried across multiple [Michigan media outlets](#). Earlier this year, Dr. Salzwedel represented the Children's Center at the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA) Agritourism Convention & Expo where she participated in the Service Providers' Roundtable.

## National Children's Center Advisory Board meets

The National Children's Center Stakeholder Advisory Board met May 17 in Minneapolis with National Children's Center principal investigators. The agenda included an assessment of progress on center-wide goals and recommendations for increasing the center's impact. Board members are Dee Jepsen, Ph.D., Ohio State University; Athena Ramos, Ph.D., University of Nebraska Medical Center; Suzanne Wright, M.D., Marshfield Clinic Pediatrics; David Schwebel, Ph.D., University of Alabama at Birmingham; Brian Kuhl, Progressive Agriculture Foundation; Matthew Keifer, M.D., University of Washington; Joseph Grzywacz, Ph.D., Florida State University; and Jennifer Leonardo, Ph.D., Children's Safety Network.



## Remembering Dr. Gunderson



Paul Gunderson, Ph.D., a champion of the National Children's Center when it launched with funding from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in 1997, died in December 2022 while clearing snow at his farm in Harvey, N.D. He was 82.

Gunderson served as director of the National Farm Medicine Center (1992-96) and Marshfield Clinic Research Institute (1994-2000). "He was such an accomplished scientist and advocate for the health and safety of American farmers and the value of farm medicine research," said John Howard, M.D., director, NIOSH. "He will be greatly missed."

## 'Tools of the Trade' featured at Emergency Responder conference

A collection of hands-on agricultural safety resources, known as "Tools of the Trade," occupied attendees



at this year's Wisconsin Emergency Medical Services Association (WEMSA) conference. Rather than a "keynote" session, WEMSA offered a multi-hour "key-NOT" event, allowing participants to visit 19 interactive stations related to agricultural and rural safety and health during the Feb. 2-3 conference in Green Bay. "They loved the demos," said WEMSA Executive Director Alan DeYoung. "Even the rural providers who respond to ag calls found there were new techniques they could use, new resources they could bring back to their community." The ["Tools of the Trade" are available to anyone through the Cultivate Safety website](#). Each topic features a video demonstrating an interactive safety tool and handouts that describe the tool, how to get the tool (access, build, rent, buy) and activity sheets for practicing with the tool. There are 25 TOTs available, with more under development, said Marsha Salzwedel, Ed.D..

## Furthermore

The Children's Center welcomes three newcomers: Stephanie Lull, an experienced administrative assistant; Jakob Hanschu, M.A., a socio-cultural anthropologist who is working on the Farm Kid Paradox study; and Juan Saucedo, a Doctor of Medicine graduate pursuing a career in research and public health. Saucedo is assisting with AgInjuryNews and Agricultural Youth Work Guidelines. ... "Going Full Circle" is the theme of the National Farm Medicine Center/National Children's Center [2022 Year in Review](#), reflecting Farm Medicine's approach to improving the lives of the agricultural populations we serve. Year in Review Editor Melissa Ploeckelman has packaged our best of 2022 into stories, highlights and infographics. ... Several members of the Children's Center consulted on a [recent article](#) by ProPublica, which details the preventable death of an 8-year-old Nicaraguan boy on a dairy farm, and quotes Barbara Lee.