Unmet childcare needs are pervasive issue on family farms but guidance largely absent from farm programming

“Linking Childcare to Farm Children Safety” Project: Research Brief #1 February 2023
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Study purpose and approach: We reviewed 92 outreach materials like websites and pamphlets and interviewed 36 farm service providers and farm organization representatives in Ohio, Vermont, and Wisconsin to understand how they incorporate children and childcare aspects into their work.

Limited coverage of children and childcare in farm programming: Interviewees, who all played a role in developing and deploying farm programming, demonstrated an understanding that raising children on farms can be challenging and has direct implications on farm safety and farm business. Yet children and childcare aspects are largely invisible in the current programming (Figure 1). When childcare or children were mentioned, materials often lacked practical guidance that would support farm parents who need help.

Factors that contribute to integration or lack of inclusion of children: The invisibility of children and childcare aspects from most of the farm programs included in our study is largely explained by the factors listed in Figure 2. For example, service providers are more likely to include information about children and childcare if farm household issues are viewed as farm business issues, rather than two separate entities.

Need for more programming and support: Interviewees across the range of organizations expressed a need for more programming and support to help farmers raising children. Recommendations based on the findings include:

- **Legislators:**
  - Make children and childcare priority areas in USDA and NIOSH funding RFPs to ease access to funding to develop farm business and farm safety programs that incorporate the topics of children and childcare;
  - Address the challenges around rural childcare including affordability, availability and quality.

- **Farm service providers and farm organizations:**
  - Develop resources to share information to help farm families find and pay for childcare and to help farm families plan for the impact of children on the farm business and on farm safety.
  - Provide discussion spaces (with available childcare) for farm families to learn from one another about solutions.

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