

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



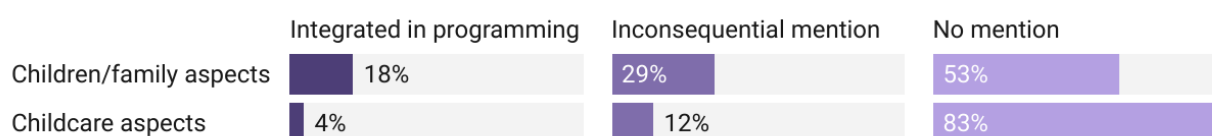
“Linking Childcare to Farm Children Safety” Project: Research Brief #1 February 2023

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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 is largely invisible in the current programming (Figure 1). When childcare or children were mentioned, it often lacked practical guidance that would support farm parents who need help.

Figure 1: Coverage of children/family and childcare aspects in farm programming



Factors that contribute to integration or lack of inclusion of children: The invisibility of children and childcare aspects from most of the farm programs including 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.

Figure 2: Factors that shape the integration of children and childcare topics

FACTORS		
RESOURCES	Member-funding allows response to needs	No grants available to do this work
POPULATION SERVED	Younger farmers	Older farmers
VIEWS OF FARM	Household issues are business issues	Household and business are separate entities
ORGANIZATION'S SCOPE OF WORK	Grassroots nature of the organization	Children/childcare not connected to scope
ORGANIZATION'S STRUCTURE	Space to react and try innovative programs	Limited ability to develop programming
INTERVIEWEES' LIVED EXPERIENCES	First-hand experience raising children	No experience with childcare

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.

This research brief is based on peer-reviewed [journal article](#) and was developed with contributions from Sarah Ruszkowski. Funding: CDC NIOSH grant U54 OH009568-10.

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