

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

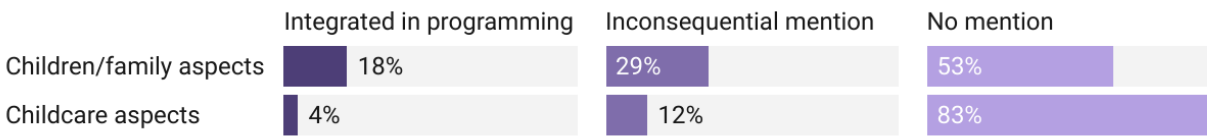


“Linking Childcare to Farm Children Safety” Project: Research Brief #1 February 2023  
 Florence Becot, Shoshanah Inwood, Andrea Rissing

**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.

**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 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.

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

FACTORS	✓	✗
<b>RESOURCES</b>	Member-funding allows response to needs	No grants available to do this work
<b>POPULATION SERVED</b>	Younger farmers	Older farmers
<b>VIEWS OF FARM</b>	Household issues are business issues	Household and business are separate entities
<b>ORGANIZATION’S SCOPE OF WORK</b>	Grassroots nature of the organization	Children/childcare not connected to scope
<b>ORGANIZATION’S STRUCTURE</b>	Space to react and try innovative programs	Limited ability to develop programming
<b>INTERVIEWEES’ LIVED EXPERIENCES</b>	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 Ruskowski. Funding: CDC NIOSH grant U54 OH009568-10.

For more information, contact Florence Becot (becot.florence@marshfieldresearch.org) or visit the [project page](#).