

## Keeping Children Safe on the Farm: What Kinds of Solutions do Farm Parents Want?



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**Background:** Farm safety experts have long recommended the supervision of children outside of the worksite to reduce children's high rates of injuries and fatalities. However, farm parents' limited use of childcare, even when aware of the dangers, underscores the need to understand parents' lived realities raising children, as well as solutions that may make it easier to keep their children safe.

**Methods:** Our analysis draws on qualitative (focus groups, n=68 and photovoice activity, n=33 – in three states) and quantitative (survey, n=860 – in 47 states) data from farm households with children. We conducted univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses to identify childcare solutions that farm parents find most helpful, as well as how such solutions are associated with sociodemographic characteristics and childcare lived realities. We also categorized and summarized the 18 childcare solutions from the survey with an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). A thematic analysis of focus group and photovoice debrief transcripts was conducted to understand farm households' preferences.

**Results:** Findings from the quantitative analysis indicate that three of every four parents report at least some problems with childcare. The EFA identified three categories, including solutions to support: 1) Access to childcare, 2) Health and economic wellbeing of the household, and 3) Keep children safe while on the farm. Respectively, 80%, 94%, and 89% of respondents found each of these solution categories helpful. Limited associations for farm characteristics variables hint at universal desire for solutions across the agriculture sector. The qualitative analysis indicated that farm women value raising their children on their own but would like to see more support for their lifestyle, including paid maternity leave, childhood farm safety materials, and greater support for childcare, affordable health insurance, and adequate farm income.

**Conclusions:** Our findings provide a counterpoint to a common narrative that farmers do not want help. Furthermore, our findings highlight the importance of addressing social and economic conditions in agriculture to ease the adoption of farm safety practices.