

SAFE PLAY AREAS

FACTS

- More than 1.12 million children live on farms in the United States.
- Every year, an estimated 9,000 children sustain non-work related injuries.
- Between 1995 and 2002, an estimated 907 children died on farms.
- Of these deaths, 23 percent involved machinery, 19 percent involved motor vehicles including ATV's and 16 percent were caused by drowning.
- Over half of the children's injuries and deaths were non-work related.

INJURY PREVENTION

- Never allow a second rider on farm equipment.
- Never allow children to play in or around grain transport equipment.
- Never allow children to play in or around farm ponds, farm shops or other farm buildings.
- Always be sure that safety shields are in place on equipment.
- Always supervise young children—hire a babysitter when both parents are in the field.
- Always remove the keys from tractors and other self-propelled machinery.

Building a Safe Play Area can be the best way to protect your children from farm hazards. The area should:

- Be situated away from farm work areas.
- Be visible from the house.
- Be fenced in and at least four feet high.
- Include a gate with a child-proof latch.
- Include nine to 12 inches of ground covering. Wood chips are best; but sand, bark mulch and chipped rubber work well also.

Create a space that is safe and fun with:

- A sand box with shovels, scoops and funnels. Kitchen utensils are also an inexpensive option.
- Commercially made swings and climbing structures assembled according to instructions.
- Tires used as swings, sandboxes or climbing structures.
- Boxes and crates for building.
- Tricycles and bicycles to ride on, including safety helmets.

Here are some safety hazards to watch out for when building a Safe Play Area:

- Keep at least 6 feet of spacing between climbing structures and other objects to prevent injury in the event of a fall.
- All wood items should be sanded smooth and splinter-free.
- Look for and eliminate locations where head entrapment could occur.
- There should be no protrusions of nails or screws.

REFERENCES

Fisher, RM and Lee, BC (2006). Interactive Demonstrations of Safe Play Areas. Marshfield, WI: Marshfield Clinic.

National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety (2008). 2008 Fact Sheet - Childhood Agricultural Injuries. Marshfield, WI: Marshfield Clinic.

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