

Child Safety on Farms



A Guidance Note

Number 7: Agricultural Health and Safety Guidance Note Series

This booklet aims to provide information and stimulate ideas toward improving child safety on Australian farms. It offers an overview of the main risks to children on farms; the key injury prevention strategies recommended based on the available research; and suggests ways in which these solutions can be applied.

The booklet is relevant for anyone with responsibility for the care of children on farms and rural properties. These may include parents; relatives; owners / managers; other care-givers/ child care workers. It may also be useful for others who work with farming families such as rural health professionals, educators or safety specialists.

Exercises and examples are included throughout the guidance note, to promote further thinking on the issues presented and to illustrate main points.

Practical guides are also included to help farming businesses and families to identify hazards, assess child safety risks and decide on the best options to prevent injury on their farm.

For those who work with farm families, the resource offers a greater understanding of the issues surrounding child safety on farms, so that they may be in a better position to provide advice/assistance to farm families where appropriate.

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1 Facts about child injury on farms

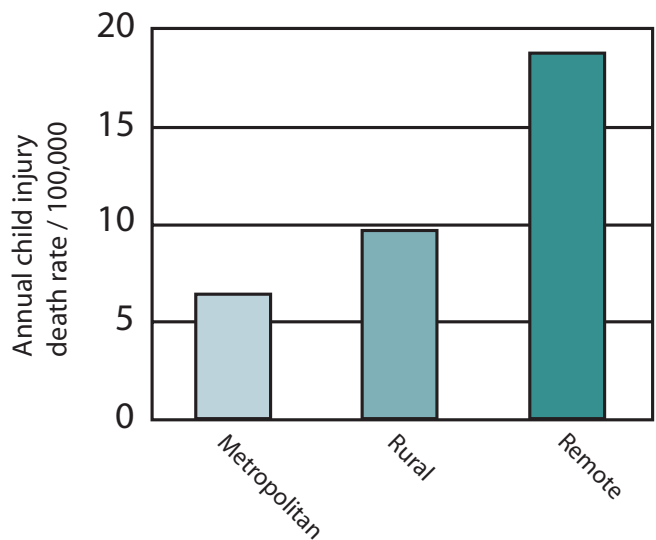
The majority of Australian farms are family-owned and operated enterprises. Children on farms can have an enriching life, yet can also be exposed to a variety of workplace hazards not present at most homes. The rate of child fatalities on farms and rural areas is higher than in urban areas¹ (Fig. 1).

1. On average, 30 children aged 0-14 years die on Australian farms each year as a result of injury. One-third of these fatalities involve children who are visitors to the farm².
 - *This equates to about one farm-related child death every 10 days.*
2. There are 575 children hospitalised each year in Australia as a result of farm related injuries³.
 - *This is more than 10 children admitted to hospitals with farm-related injuries each week.*
3. Many more children with farm related injuries present at Emergency Departments of country hospitals and to General Practitioners⁴.
 - A comprehensive study of farm fatalities in Australia² revealed the most common causes of child deaths were drowning, farm machinery and vehicles (incl. motorbikes) and horses. On further analysis,
 - 75% were boys
 - 63% were under five years
 - One third were visitors to the farm
 - 77% of the children were in an area where farm work was being carried out.
 - Most children (73%), were playing when the incident occurred.



Figure 1

Comparison of child injury death rates for metropolitan, rural areas, remote areas



1. Australian Institute of Health & Welfare. Australia's Children: Their Health & Wellbeing. AIHW. Canberra 2002

2. Franklin R, Mitchell R, Driscoll T & Fragar L. Farm-related Fatalities in Australia, 1989 - 1992 Australian Centre for Agricultural Health & Safety, National Occupational Health & Safety Commission, & Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation, Moree NSW 2000

3. NSW Health NSW Public Health Bulletin Vol 13, No.5 May 2002 p.109

4. Franklin R and Crosby J. NSW Public Health Bulletin Vol 13, No.5 May 2002.

Table 1:

Child deaths on farms 1989 -1992

(from Franklin et al 2000²)

Agent of injury / Death	AGE GROUP			TOTAL
	0-4yrs	5-9yrs	10-14yrs	
Vehicle	12	7	12	31
Tractor	7	2	2	11
Other machinery	4	1	1	6
Water body	43	5	1	49
Horse	1	3	1	5
Other animal	1	0	0	1
Other	6	7	1	14
Overall Total	74	25	18	117
Yearly Averages	19	6	5	30

Dams/creeks, farm vehicles and machinery were the most common causes of child fatalities. The most common causes of hospital admission related to farm injuries were:

- > Motorcycles
- > Horses
- > Other farm vehicles
- > Cutting/piercing injuries
- > Agricultural machinery.

Older children arrive at emergency departments more often than younger children, perhaps reflecting their expanding leisure activities and work roles.



Exercises:

Why might two year olds be at particular risk of drowning on farms?

Boys are injured more commonly on farms than girls, for all activities, except horse-riding. Can you explain what factors are involved here?

Is there a reason why agricultural machinery features more prominently in fatalities than for hospital admissions?

Why do older children 10 – 14 years present to emergency departments more commonly than younger children?

Royal Life Saving Society of Australia (RLSSA) research shows that rates of drowning are decreasing in urban swimming pools, but not in rural dams /inland waterways. What might some of the reasons for this pattern?

Commonly feared and dangerous hazards such as snakes, chemicals and firearms are not prominent in the statistics. Why might this be so?

What might this tell us about exposure/ severity of child injury; perception of risk; and risk controls?

How might we work toward controlling risk of injury from the familiar hazards children are exposed to everyday?

The 0-4 years age group are at greatest risk on farms. Dams, farm vehicles and tractors are major hazards.

2 Why children are injured on farms

There is a combination of factors which place children at particular risk of injury on Australian farms. These involve interactions between the physical farming environment; the characteristics of growing children; and the thoughts/actions and aspirations of the people involved.

1. The hazards

Children are commonly exposed to natural and workplace hazards on farms not present in urban homes. These include dams and creeks; tractors and machinery; farm vehicles; motorbikes; horses and others such as silos; chemicals; noise and firearms.

2. The farm is where we live and work

The farm is a workplace and off - farm childcare is not always available to farm families. This is made more difficult by isolation and increasing economic pressures for one parent to work off-farm⁵.

Children are sometimes brought into the farm workplace where it is difficult to always take sufficient care of them. Children have commonly been injured as bystanders in the farm workplace². Concepts of supervision vary and it is never perfect. Also, many farm activities involve the unpredictable eg. horses or cattle can do the unexpected.

3. A child's behaviour is never entirely predictable

Children tend to focus on play and the 'here and now' rather than seeing the 'big picture'. They seek greater independence, but cannot fully foresee consequences of their actions.

Children do develop the capacity to listen, understand, remember or apply rules across situations over time. However, this is never perfect due to the ease of distraction (eg. play, visitors), fatigue, or being overwhelmed by the unexpected (eg. "freeze" when confused or frightened).

Generally, children are:

- curious, quick and determined when they decide to do something (like run to a parent, follow a pet)
- not always able to make the right judgements in the interests of their own safety
- not reliable rule followers - children can't always remember or apply rules easily.

See the factsheet - Section 7 "Child Development and Risk" for an overview of the how children's growth patterns impact upon their safety.

4. It's too late once it happens

The proximity and time children are exposed to hazards on farms and rural properties, places them at particular risk. The consequences of a child related incident can be devastating.



Exercise:

What other factors might contribute to children on farms being at higher risk of injury?

5. Garnaut J & Applegate H. 1998. People in Farming, Research Report 98.6 ABARE. Canberra

3 Key elements for child safety on farms

Research on child farm fatalities from the above sources, together with research on effective prevention strategies,⁶ indicates that the following interventions will be the most effective in preventing major injuries to children on farms

1. Create a safe and secure area for children to play on the farm.

A safe play area, such as a securely fenced house yard, helps to prevent unsupervised access of children to farm hazards. See “Safe Play Areas on Farms: A Resource Package” for details. In summary, a safe play area:

- Defines the boundary between the “home” and the “workplace” where different standards and rules can apply – it recognises that the workplace contains dangers that generally don’t exist in the home and the distractions for adults are greater (work related)
- Stops a child from easily crossing that boundary without the knowledge or approval of an adult. It can also help stop farm hazards from getting near the children (eg horses, cattle).
- Is practical and can be relatively low cost
- Makes supervision of children at play more manageable
- Helps in managing child visitors who may not understand farm hazards
- Is a place where adults and children can relax together – where a short diversion or lapse in supervision is not critical and where work isn’t confused with play
- Helps professional farmers/farm managers meet OH&S duty of care obligations.

Aim to prevent children gaining unsupervised access to farm hazards - A securely fenced safe-play area, supported by out-of-bounds rules and active supervision is a good start.



Principles and Considerations in Fence Design / Selection ⁷

There is a range of factors in a farm setting that will be important in finding the most suitable, practical fencing option including, for example the size of the safe play area (fencing large areas is expensive) what is on the outside of the safe play areas (eg cattle paddocks or vehicle driveways) and the type of terrain in which the fence is to be built (eg sloping vs level ground).

Safe play area design

Consider the size of the area to be fenced in relation to the needs of the child and the cost.

- A higher quality fence in terms of “child resistance” for a small area is better than a lower effectiveness fence for a larger area
- A smaller but higher quality fenced area within a house yard may be a good option for young children and/or child visitors. This may also be removed when children get older.

Fence structure

The optimal standard for child-resistant fencing is provided in Australian Standard AS 1926.1 - 1993 (swimming pool fencing). This may not always be possible, but factors to consider are height structure, footholds, materials and gates.

- Ensure the fence is at least 1.2 metres high (pool fence standard)
- Ensure the fence has a maximum clearance of 100mm from the ground.

6. Fragar L, Gibson C, Henderson A, Franklin R. 2003 Farmsafe farms for Kids: Evidence based solutions for child safety on Australian farms” Australian Centre for Agricultural Health & Safety, (ACAHS) Moree.

7. Stiller L & Baker W. 2004 (in press) Fencing for children on farms: Effective safe play area fencing options for rural properties. RIRDC & ACAHS, Moree

Fence structure continued

- Use fencing materials that do not provide children with a hand and foothold to assist climbing (this can include commercially available fencing materials or can be improvised)
 - one farmer used conveyor belting obtained very cheaply from a local mine to form a child resistant fence)
- Keep diagonal stays on the outside of the fence or preferably use box stays so that a child cannot use them as a foothold
- Ensure the surface under the fence and gates is not subject to erosion/wear to provide possible access points.



Don't assume your child resistant fence is 100% effective 100% of the time – plan for the unexpected.

A fenced house yard/safe play area should be supported with active adult supervision and family rules and it always useful to have resuscitation skills.

Gates and Latching Mechanisms

- Gates are often a critical weakness as they can so easily be left open - so minimise the number of gates to keep costs down and reduce risk
- Ensure that the gate is consistent with the fence in height and configuration to maintain child resistant properties and place latches at least 1.5metres from the ground

- A proven automatic latch (such as the Magna latch) with a gate closing mechanism should be used wherever possible (especially on high usage gates)
- Consider using a “please close the gate” sign on all entrances to the safe play area and a “please hold my hand” sign on the inside to remind people to hold young children close when they are taken into the farm workplace
- Consider placing a bell on commonly used entrances to provide an audible signal that the gate is being opened/closed.

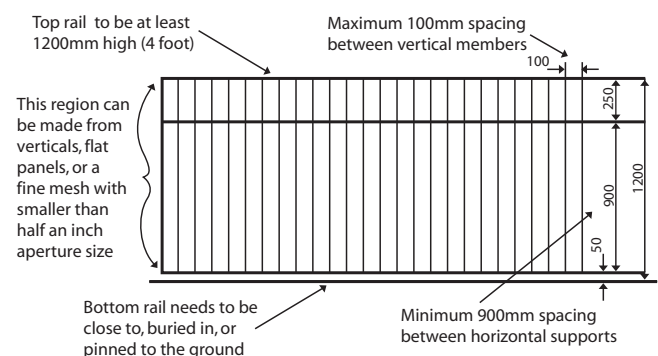


Other Factors

- Consider the age, size, agility and nature of the children. Prepare for the unexpected – don't assume because a child hasn't wandered before that they won't tomorrow
- Consider special circumstances with visiting children
 - younger children may follow older children who may not be as reliable as adults in providing care
- Consider the level and intensity of adult supervision for children within the safe play area.

Ensure that items in the safe play area cannot be used to assist climbing over the fence

General Advice - Child Resistant Fencing



- Also Note:**
- Consider the layout of gates and openings - does it still keep the kids in?
 - Consider visitors and visitors kids - is the barrier fool proof?
 - Monitor and maintain integrity of fence - is it still in good nick?

Safe and interesting

Finally, a child is less likely to seek further adventure in unsafe areas, if he/she is stimulated with interesting activities in the play area. Safe Play Areas are ideally:

- Located where children can be easily observed (eg. a verandah, kitchen)
- Include safe and interesting play activities such as sand pits, swings etc.



2. Have safety rules about out-of-bounds areas/activities for children supported by close and active adult supervision

Research indicates that developing appropriate safety rules can help to keep children safe on farms. It is recommended such rules should include the following.

Minimum rules recommended:

1. Younger children stay in the house yard unless an adult takes them out and looks after them
2. Children wear seat belts when in cars, utes and trucks
3. Children do not ride on tractors, ATV's or on the back of utes
4. Children always wear helmets when riding any bikes or horses

Rules need to be supported by adequate supervision. The concept of 'adequate' will vary according to personal experiences, perception of risk, understanding of farm hazards and age/maturity.

The quality of supervision is the key. Lapses in supervision can occur through common distractions such as phone calls, visitors, or work activities. Older children acting as carers may not respond adequately in a crisis and can be easily distracted themselves (see Child Development and Risk - Section 7).

The amount of supervision required will depend on an individual child, the number of children, the type and location of play. Children are different and supervision needs to be tailored accordingly – but young children need close and active supervision.

Recognised early childhood road safety programs⁸ recommend that a young child needs to be generally within sight / sound of an adult at all times, but holding hands or held close by an adult in the vicinity of particular threats to safety (eg. moving vehicles).

Everyone on farm needs to 'watch out' for children, but ensure there is a designated carer to actively supervise.

Water safety advocates describe this as a "keep watch" approach to adult supervision.⁹ This helps to ensure children do not fall through a loophole where "...everyone's supervising...but no-one's actually supervising...."



Supervision

Young children need close and active supervision. This means being within sight or sound of an adult - even within a safe play area.

When out and about on the farm, a young child needs to be "holding hands" or "held close" in the vicinity of hazards to ensure their safety.

8. Kids and Traffic: Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program, <http://kidsandtraffic@mq.edu.au> Macquarie University, Sydney 2004
9. Royal Life Saving Society Australia <http://rlssa.org.au> Sydney 2004

3. Reduce hazards and minimise risk of injury using a variety of controls

This approach is commonly used in OHS management. It forms part of a process that includes consciously identifying farm hazards and assessing risk. A variety of measures can then be used to control the risk.

Removing, substituting or reducing hazards may include filling in old sheep dips, covering tanks, putting locks on sheds, adjustments to limit the speed on farm bikes and limiting access to vehicle keys.

Minimising potential harm could include design features (eg. seatbelts) and personal protective equipment (eg. helmets, hearing protection) and learning to resuscitate a child.

Use the following checklist to help identify farm hazards and child safety measures.

The Child Safety on Farms Checklist

A Safe Place to Play

- > Is there a safe play area (eg. a fenced houseyard) for small children which is securely separated from farm machinery, vehicles, work activities and other hazards?
- > Does the safe play area have shade and interesting things for children to do?
- > Are there 'out-of-bounds' rules, for children who are not with a supervising adult, which are regularly reinforced?
- > Do 'out-of-bounds' areas include all hazardous places? (eg. dams, machinery and vehicles, silos, workshops and yards when stock are handled).

Water

- > Are swimming pools, effluent ponds, channels or dams near the house securely fenced?
- > Are tanks, wells and troughs near the house fitted with lids/mesh and are unused dips and ditches filled in?
- > Have those who look after children been alerted to 'keep watch' with children around / could wander into water?
- > Do you know how to resuscitate a drowning child?

Farm Motorcycles

- > Are children appropriately trained and supervised when learning to ride two-wheeled motorcycles?
- > Do all riders always wear a correctly fitted motorcycle helmet, long pants, and sturdy footwear when riding farm motorbikes?
- > Does the farm adopt manufacturers' recommendations and:
 - Prevent children under 16 from riding ATVs?
 - Prevent passengers riding on ATVs?

Horses

- > Are children only allowed to ride horses suited to their age and riding ability?
- > Are children appropriately instructed and supervised on your farm when learning to ride horses?
- > Do children on the farm always wear well fitting riding helmets and smooth-soled riding boots when riding horses?

Tractors and Machinery

- > Do you prevent children from riding as passengers on tractors and mobile plant?
- > Are children encouraged to keep away from tractors and machinery on your farm or rural property?

'Tractors, machinery and children do not mix!'

Farm Vehicles

- > Do children always use seatbelts and proper restraints and never ride in the back of utilities?
- > Are drivers careful when moving vehicles near the house in case children are present?

'Watch out – children about'

- > Are keys kept out of reach of children when vehicles are not in use?

Other hazards

- > Have other hazards (eg. firearms, chemicals, electrical, noise, silos) that children could access on your farm or rural property, been identified and addressed?



4 A systematic approach to farm injury prevention

A systematic approach to health and safety management fosters an awareness of the factors that result in injury, in order to plan the most effective interventions in an ongoing way.

A process of hazard identification, assessment and control can form part of a comprehensive OHS plan to make the farm a safer place for people of all ages – children and adults. The acronym S-A-F-E-R captures the idea of approach.

The S-A-F-E-R approach to farm safety

S	See the hazards
A	Assess the risks
F	Fix the problems
E	Evaluate the controls
R	Record the process

S See - Identify the hazards

Farm families, managers and workers can regularly conduct a farm safety audit to identify activities and hazards which may be harmful to children such as dams; tractors and farm machinery; farm vehicles, motorbikes; horses and other hazards such as silos, chemicals, noise and firearms.

A regular farm safety audit can also provide an opportunity to teach and involve older children in discussing hazards and ways to control the risk of injury. This is best planned for when full attention can be given to the teaching task.

Consistent with principles of inclusion and engagement¹⁰, encouraging older children to identify safety hazards and be involved with finding solutions, can help them to feel respected, 'own' solutions and understand reasons for safety 'rules'. For their future, identifying and addressing safety risks needs to be seen as a valued and planned element of farming.

A Assess - The risk of injury

This involves determination of the level of injury risk by considering factors such as:

1. The potential severity of an injury

Injuries to children are also likely to be more serious due to their physical immaturity. Age/developmental characteristics will also effect what control options are best.

2. How often/much children are exposed

It is also necessary to consider exposure levels of children to hazards identified in the previous step. For example, young children may be swimming unsupervised in a dam daily – which presents higher exposure to a potentially lethal hazard, than the lower likelihood of stepping on a deadly snake.

The OHS Priority Table, widely used in OHS practice, can assist in the weighing up of severity and exposure variables.

3. Age/development characteristics

To determine the relative importance or priority of each risk, it is necessary to consider the age/development of the child. The child's ability to interact safely with their surroundings, and the level of skill they can acquire to deal with unsafe situations, initially depends upon their level of physical and mental maturity.

Children are physically different, but are also think, react and behave differently to adults. It can be easy to over-estimate their abilities.

See the Child Development and Risk - Section 7 for more information and examples to consider when assessing child injury risk on farms.

Table 2:

OHS Hazard Priority Table¹¹

Severity of Injury	Frequency of exposure to hazard		
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
Fatal or requires hospitalization	High	High	High
Needs treatment and several days recovery	High	Moderate	Moderate
minor first aid only	High	Moderate	Low

F Fix the problem:

In scientific terms, injuries result from an uncontrolled interaction between a hazard (agent), a person (host) and the environment (time and space). By controlling hazards and the potential for unsafe interactions, injury risk can be reduced.

A variety of hazard control measures are possible. For child safety, these should begin with what adults can do to reduce hazards and separate small children from gaining access them. This should be supported by safe practices such as rules and supervision.

Workplace safety authorities, codes of practice and industry standards, commonly refer to the 'hierarchy of control measures,' to describe levels of injury prevention action. The hierarchy refers to the principle of first trying to eliminate hazards if possible, then substituting for a lesser hazard etc..down the order.

Higher order controls can be more costly, labour intensive and time consuming initially, but can be factored out over time. An advantage is that they are generally more effective / reliable in preventing injury. They are less dependent on human concentration, skill and behaviour, such as consistent vigilance and remembering rules.

- ### Hierarchy of hazard control measures
- 1 Eliminate the hazard
 - 2 Substitute for a lesser hazard
 - 3 Engineer / design
 - 4 Safe practices
 - 5 Personal protective equipment
 - 6 First-aid

Example:

- A farm ute and the family car are used daily and parked beside the house. Two year old Sam goes outside each day and plays on the lawn next to the driveway where the cars are parked.
- Based upon the risk assessment and priority table, the consequence of vehicle runover is serious or fatal. Sam is exposed to the hazard daily. Based on these features, this is a HIGH risk situation requiring priority attention. Consider Sam's developmental characteristics which add to this risk.
- Preventing access to areas where there are moving vehicles by providing a fenced house yard, is one recommended design intervention. Close supervision and family rules (eg. speed limits, no keys left in vehicles etc.) are safe practices to support the design intervention. However, on their own, safe practices are more subject to human error.



11. (Adapted) Worksafe Australia. Plant in the Workforce: Making it safe. Commonwealth of Australia. August 1995.

...it's so easy to forget...

Higher order control will tend to be more reliable and less subject to human error.

For example, a self latching gate on the house yard (engineering / design control) is preferable to a 'close the gate' rule, because it is less crucial if visitors don't know the rule, or if older brother forgets when he's running to catch the school bus.

Using more than one intervention also reduces risk, in the event of one failing. Supervision is made easier when backed up with a fenced house yard.



The following child safety interventions illustrate examples for each level in the hierarchy of control. Removing or reducing hazards is ultimately more effective from a safety point of view, but often not often possible on farms.

Child safety on farms and the Hierarchy of Control

Remove child safety hazards where possible

- Fill in unused ditches; cover tanks.

Substitute for a hazard of lesser risk

- Size and age appropriate horses and bikes.

Engineer/design for safety

- Create safe play areas, such as a securely fenced house yard
- Adjust the throttle of a child's motorcycle to limit maximum speed
- Construct controlled riding arenas, tracks for children learning to ride horses, bikes.

Safe practice and safety rules

- Family rules that everyone knows and follows. In particular, it is strongly recommended:
 - Young children stay in the safe play area unless an adult takes them out and looks after them
 - Children always wear seatbelts in cars utes and trucks (not on the back)
 - Children don't ride on tractors, ATV's or the back of utes
 - Children always wear helmets when riding any bikes and horses
- Ensure close and active supervision. Have someone is designated to 'keep watch' over children. Reinforce areas and activities that are 'out of bounds'
- Model safe behaviour (eg. no passengers on machinery).

Personal protective equipment

- Ensure helmets and boots for all motorcycle and horse riders
- Hearing protection for children if with adults using firearms, chainsaws, noisy machinery.

First aid

- Resuscitation, first aid, emergency plan.

Exercises:

1. What might be some of the main barriers to eliminating / reducing hazards or modifying design of the farm workplace?
2. Is the setting and appeal to follow rules likely to be a common strategy to prevent injury on farms?
3. Why might rule-following be a particular problem for child safety?
4. How might barriers to implementing higher order controls be overcome?

E Evaluate and..... R Record your actions

There is a need to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of hazard controls put in place. This is particularly necessary as children pass through the early childhood years where there is rapid increase in mobility / agility over and above mental maturity.

Recording the process of assessment and implementation can be a routine part of a comprehensive OHS plan on the farm. Templates are available to record risk management processes and action plans undertaken on farm.

Farm specific templates can be obtained from selected farm safety training providers (contact your state Farmsafe organisation). Generic workplace templates can also be obtained from most state work health authorities.

As an alternative to templates, farm families can devise their own record keeping format, based on the principles of hazard identification, risk assessment and control options discussed in this booklet. An example of one possible format is shown in Table 3.

Legal responsibilities and child safety on farms

Each state and territory has legislation relating to workplace health and safety. Family farms, like other businesses, have responsibility for the health and safety of all persons on the farm – employees, contractors, visitors and children.

A formally recorded farm safety management plan also provides evidence of a farm business meeting their legal OHS responsibilities.

Child protection legislation also deals with duty of care toward children. These arise from community expectations about the protection of children from neglect and preventable injury. For more information contact your state workplace health authority or child protection agency.

Exercises:

1. Take a look at the example in Table 3. Choose another hazard to Sam's safety and decide on the actions to be taken using this format.
2. Choose a hazard for Sam's 13 year old brother, Ben. Practice recording your assessments and planned interventions.
3. Modify this format to one of your own liking. Continue to follow a systematic process that reflects the principles of hazard identification, assessment and the practicalities / likely effectiveness of a variety of solutions.
4. Remember, reducing or limiting access to hazards are higher order solutions; and a variety of interventions will be more reliable than depending on one method alone.



Table 3:

Example of a single hazard child safety assessment and action plan

Hazard	Nature of the hazard	Nature of Potential injury	Risk features	Risk rating	Goal	Possible interventions	Pros, cons and considerations	Actions: Commence and review
Dam	30m from house next to main driveway. Deep murky water, steep, muddy banks difficult for small child to climb out of if they fall	Drowning (Fatal)	<p>Consequence: Fatal</p> <p>Exposure / accessibility: Daily</p> <p>Child characteristics: Sam, 18 months old toddler- highly curious and increasingly mobile, not able to follow rules or understand danger of drowning. Poor co-ordination and overbalances easily. Attracted to water</p>	High- le. Some form of immediate/ temporary action. More permanent solutions within 2 weeks	Prevent unsupervised access to the dam	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Construct a fenced barrier, by either <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A secure house yard Fencing off the dam Close and active adult supervision at all times Family rules: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure a certain designated carer at all times Avoid taking toddlers near the dam until older Hold hands/ within arms reach of an adult when in vicinity of dam Where possible, dress in bright coloured clothes Practice child resuscitation & emergency procedures 	<p>Pros: Higher order control – less reliant on memory</p> <p>Cons: Costs of materials/labour</p> <p>May limit functional use by livestock</p> <p>Barriers not adequate unless integrity is maintained</p> <p>Pros: Ensures whereabouts is always known</p> <p>Cons: Quality subject to work demands and distractions- lapses inevitable</p> <p>Childcare issues due to business pressures and isolation</p> <p>Pros: Prevents supervision loopholes</p> <p>Reduces exposure and may reduce appeal / fascination</p> <p>Ensures active supervision and prevents falling in water</p> <p>May assist in detection in the event of wandering off and in murky water (Anectdoctal and does not prevent wandering)</p> <p>Con: Quality and consistency of rules can be highly variable between persons – requires vigilant adherence to work</p> <p>Pro: Can save a life if in time</p> <p>Con: Does not help to prevent incident</p>	<p>Commence house yard in 2 weeks</p> <p>Dam not to be fenced</p> <p>Ongoing review of fence's effectiveness</p> <p>Supervision current & ongoing</p> <p>Investigate childcare options for harvest / shearing</p> <p>Ask grandparents to mind child on Tuesdays</p> <p>Discuss and agree to new rules this week</p> <p>Contacts list and CPR chart near phone</p> <p>Investigate first-aid courses for next month</p>

5 Case study: The Harvey's - making the farm safer

This case study provides a working example of how one family has integrated child safety into their daily operations. Along with the information and tools throughout this guidance note, the exercises provided move toward enabling farm families to better develop their own plan for child safety on the farm they live.



Graham and Lyn Harvey at the entrance to the farm shed area

A safer farm for kids at the Harvey's

Lyn and Graham Harvey run a livestock and cropping farm near Cowra, NSW. As National Winners of the Farmsafe Australia Child Safety on Farms Competition, Lyn says...

"The only reliable approach is to identify potential hazards, so we can intervene to ensure prevention."

For the Harvey's this has included:

1. Reducing hazards and risks such as covering sheep dips and improving visibility around farm machinery and vehicles
2. A fenced safe play area that separates the house from the driveway and dam
3. Use safe methods of work and adopt safety rules for themselves and their children.

The Harvey family runs a livestock and cropping farm at Cowra NSW. Graham and Lyn share the farm work and raise their three children Allisha (11), Kaitlyn (8) and Jack (6). They are the third generation of farmers working two adjacent 900 acre properties.

The Harveys were selected as winners of Farmsafe Australia's Child Safety on Farms Summer Safety Competition for 2002/03 from 62 entrants Australia wide.

Making the farm safer for kids

The Harveys are a great example of an ordinary farming family working on a day-to-day basis with a focus on the safety of their children.

Importantly the Harveys:

- make their farm environment safer by having a securely fenced safe play area, covering water hazards such as sheep dips and clearing trees and clutter to improve visibility when moving farm machinery and vehicles
- plan ahead— risky or demanding activities are done when the children are at school
- use safe methods of work and adopt safety rules for themselves and their children.

"We (as parents) are the ones that would have to live with it if something happened to one of them. We have made some strict rules for our children while they are around us when we are working but more importantly we have made some strict rules for ourselves.

Rules are broken and bad judgements are made by children all the time so the responsibility for obeying safety rules is best placed on the shoulders of adults.

We must make kids aware and enforce rules on the kids but they are just that, kids, they don't have the experiences that life has dealt us and they are so easily distracted."

A commitment to safety and farming

Graham has primary management responsibility for the farm but bounces most decisions off Lyn. Lyn is active on the farm and her day to day involvement gives her an equal insight with Graham into the safety risks to her children.

"I'm in it, boots'n all. I don't look out on the farm from the kitchen window."

Lyn's involvement means that she has the experience and the credibility to get things done to improve safety.

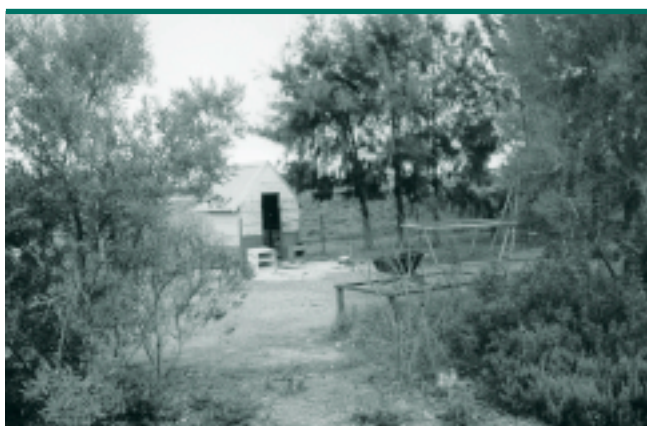
"I can raise something with Graham, like securing the gate over the sheep dip, and he'll just go and do it."

However, at times she has to take the initiative:

"...if you aren't prepared to roll up your sleeves and do it yourself ... it just won't get done."

As a child Lyn lost a close friend in a fall from a horse and more recently a 5 year old local child died tragically in a tractor accident"— these incidents have influenced her passionate commitment to safety on the farm.

"Giddy Goanna is a fantastic way to get safety across to children. I've given Giddy books to all my nieces and rural friends kids. I borrowed a Giddy suit a few years ago for a Girl Guide games day. We walked the main street handing out pencils and balloons. The kids loved it!"



The Harvey's play area complete with swings, cubby house and trampoline

Graham is also aware of the need for safety: "we haven't even had a near miss here ... but you hear enough stories, you see enough kids around here with bandages or broken bones.

Even off the farm I'm aware of the dangers to kids, in carparks for example."

Graham and Lyn are also passionate about teaching their children about farming and introducing them to farming experiences.

"Farmers are created, not made. It is a trade that has an apprenticeship that starts when you start to walk. A part of creating our future farmers is allowing them to see it happen, see how it works, why it works (or didn't) and experience it for themselves."

Consequently, the Harveys are working with the key challenge for farming families – how to have their children grow to become part of the farm and experience the best that farm life can offer and keep them safe at the same time.

The Childcare Issue

Child care has been a key issue, particularly before the children started school. Graham's mother (Nan) lives 2km away from their house and has been a major help:

"This is a three way working business, Nan knows that she's needed for the business to work and it's a way in which she can contribute. She helps now with after school care and if we are doing things that make it difficult to watch them properly, the kids go to her and she can keep a closer eye on them."

But Nan's help has to be supplemented by that of friends, relatives, neighbours and understanding bus drivers to get them through the busy periods - whether it is meeting Lyn at the silo on the first load of the day to pick up the kids or bridging the childcare gap between when preschool ends and the day's work is over.

"Without their help the kids would have missed out on a lot of their Christmas parties, sports and other social events that occur at harvest time. We would have had to either employ an extra person or drag them around in the heat more than we already do."

There were also logistical problems in getting children to and from childcare. Apart from the time involved (the centre was 110km to drop off and pickup) it was not always easy to drop what was being done to go and pick them up on time.

Lyn was active in supporting the establishment of a mobile care van that once a fortnight brings childcare much closer to home.



The house and nearby dam are separated by a fence

Childcare has been a key issue. Relatives, friends and neighbours have been a major help. A mobile van visits the area once a fortnight to bring childcare a little closer to home.

Drowning—the biggest risk

A dam and a busy highway that runs past the front of the house were the biggest and most obvious risks – particularly when the children were toddlers.

“We have a very large dam only 100 metres from the house, the old yard was very small, no trees, no garden, very escapable and the dam was the only interesting thing that was visible.”

The Harveys made changes to create a securely fenced house yard:

- A side fence was built along the drive between the house and the garage to separate where vehicles enter/exit and the house yard

- On the dam side of the house a netting fence was erected with straight wires on the outside so that there were no footholds for climbing
- The gates leaving the house were fitted with fine mesh to make them unclimbable.

A cubby house, swings and trampoline were placed so a head count of children could be made with a glance from the kitchen or laundry.

As well, a row of sheoaks were planted along the fence line to make the dam look less inviting, the dog kennel was moved to under a big tree outside the yard and leaky, unstable water tanks were removed.

“To date I’ve never had a child wander from the yard while playing. But its not something that you can rely on totally ... you still have to keep an eye on them ... it’s when things go quiet that you start to worry. Also you have to drum it into them ... that the dam and the road are out of bounds.”

Lyn remains concerned about the water hazards on the property. She has decided that she won’t be allowing the children to swim in the dam until her youngest child is a strong swimmer. In the meantime, because the children love swimming, it’s the long drive to town to the swimming pool.

Also, after using Farmsafe Australia’s Child Safety on Farms checklist, the risk that a sheep dip posed was revisited. While the dip is located in an area that is “out of bounds” to the kids and has always had a gate lying over the top to prevent them falling in, the gate has now been secured in place with wire.



“You can’t be as stupid as to think they will never go near it, with my youngest two nick-named ‘Bonnie and Clyde’ you can never be too sure.”

Managing the motorcycle risk

Lyn spends a lot of time on a four wheeler, moving stock, spot spraying and crop monitoring. When the children were younger she did take them with her on the bike but as they got older she felt that this became too dangerous and uncomfortable.

After much thought they purchased a 90cc 4-wheel Polaris for the children's use. As Graham pointed out, their decision was based on safety, in particular, their own experiences:

"We basically decided that four wheels were better than two. I've come off a two wheeler a couple of times and Lyn lost her kidney in a motorcycle fall."

The key feature in deciding on the particular brand of 4-wheeler was the screw control on the throttle that allowed the speed to be limited until the children were more competent.

Other things to limit the risk include:

- A good quality helmet that, together with sturdy boots, must be worn (if a child fails to follow these rules bike privileges are lost for a week)
- The children have to ask permission to ride outside the shed area and permission is given depending on which child is involved, why they want to go and where they are going.

Creating a designated bike track from one end of the property to the other and between their and Nan's house. The children use the UHF to communicate that they have arrived safely.

Close monitoring of each child's skill and competence – as they prove themselves they are given a wider range of places they can travel on the bike. "They have been taught to check the oil, fuel and tyres before they ride. I wanted them to get an understanding of the mechanics of the bike so they would realise that it isn't a toy."

These controls are not optimal. Farmsafe Australia does not recommend that children under 16 ride 4-wheeled motorcycles nor should there be passengers – the evidence suggests that while children are more likely to fall from a two-wheel than a four wheel motorcycle, the injury associated with a four wheeler is more likely to be more serious or fatal.

However, the Harveys have worked to manage the potential risk to their children while building a safety ethic and respect for the machine that will hopefully stand them in good stead as they grow older and use more powerful bikes in more demanding conditions.



Tractors and Machinery

The Harveys have a range of tractors and mobile plant including a tractor, header, three trucks, a ute and a dozer.

The potential for runover is high, and the Harveys have done a number of things to limit this risk.

Firstly, the area where vehicles and mobile plant move has been tidied up and the low tree branches removed to improve visibility.

A tree blocking vehicle movement through the main shed has been removed to reduce the need for reversing.

Also, where possible, jobs which involve a lot of vehicle movement or are risky in other ways – for example unloading grain into a silo with an auger - are done while the children are at school.

"We spend a lot of time sitting and planning what can be done. I'm not going to have the kids with me if I have to climb a silo. Things happen just too quickly. We work it out so that it's done when the kids are at school."

Where vehicles and machinery are to be moved and the children are at home, the following rules apply:

- Nothing moves until the location of all children is certain (visually)
- If a machine is to be moved and the children aren't in view the driver radios the house to make sure they are there

- If the loader is to be operated (it doesn't have a cab) the children have to leave the area and go to the house (the case when they were three to four years of age) or "hug a tree" in full view while the job is done "
- If a tractor (with a cab) is to be moved the children ride in the cab with the parent until the move/job (short duration) is completed.

While this arrangement is not optimal the Harveys believe that this is the lowest risk option in the circumstances.

Farmsafe recommends that children not ride as passengers on tractors, even those with cabs - the risks are in getting on and off the tractor and falling from the tractor as a result of the cabin door inadvertently opening when being leant upon.

The other risk is vehicles such as the fuel, stock and grain trucks that drive onto the property. Lyn has placed a warning sign on a tree at the entrance to the property, limiting speed to 20km.

"I have had many comments about the sign. I even had a stock truck driver ask me if any kids were about before he left one day."

Teaching the kids safely

Lyn and Graham believe strongly that despite the increasing economic pressures that are making farming more of a business than a lifestyle, with planning and forethought children can still be integrated into farming life.

They believe that by introducing them to farm machinery and tasks their curiosity is satisfied, the mystery is removed and they won't sneak back later to try it out for themselves. Here is what they do when they involve their kids:

- Set aside the time to do a job or part of a job with all attention on the safety of the child/ children (including wearing safety gear)
- Don't do it when you are flat out or distracted, and especially when things are going wrong.

Advice for others

The Harveys have clearly demonstrated that with planning, forethought and a willingness to make changes to the farm environment children can experience the best that a farming lifestyle can safely offer.

Their advice to other farmers?

1. Teach yourself good safety habits
2. Stop and have a look at what you're doing before you do it. Farmsafe Australia's Child Safety on Farms checklist (page 8) can be used periodically to review what you have in place to keep your kids safe.

Exercises:

1. List the main safety concerns the Harvey's have identified for children on their farm.
2. What strategies have the Harvey's employed to reduce the risk in each case?
3. What practical limitations have the Harvey's had to consider in planning for safety? How have they overcome these?
4. How have the Harvey's balanced the desire to involve children in farming life, with the responsibility for keeping them safe?
5. Availability of childcare is major issue for farming families. What services are available in your area to help overcome this?
6. The Harvey's regard planning as an important part of farm safety. Develop a child safety plan for your farm, OR a plan for keeping children safe when visiting a farm.

6 Teaching Children Safely

The following suggestions illustrate ways to foster safe learning about farm life. These are not specific recommendations, but examples which might be applied to the farm environments generally. They are an attempt to integrate understandings of child development; OHS management; and learning outcomes within school curricula, as can be applied to child safety in the farm environment.

Box 2a. Toddlers – Pre-school age

Generally:

Curiosity, mobility and poor concept of danger / rules mean safe play areas and close active supervision are essential. This means being within sight or sound of an adult in a safe area and holding hands / held close by an adult in the vicinity of farm hazards (eg. reversing vehicle).

Toddlers:

Learning experiences need to be provided within sight or sound of an adult in a safe area. If out of the safe area and in the vicinity of farm hazards (eg. reversing vehicle) , need to hold hands / be held close by an adult.

Pre-school age:

- Encourage / reinforce basic recognition of:
 - safe play areas vs. work areas & farm hazards
 - feelings when safe vs. unsafe / unsure.
- Introduce simple rules but do not rely on adherence to these. For example:
 - Play in designated/fenced safe play areas only - keep away from work areas
 - Always stay within arms reach of an adult when out and about on the farm
 - Ask before eat/drinking anything
 - Call for help when feeling unsure.

Encourage supervised participation in simple farm tasks that do not require great coordination – collect eggs, feed pets, water garden.

Box 2b. Early - middle primary age

Generally:

- Encourage and reinforce basic recognition of safe play areas / work areas & hazards
- Discuss safe behaviour with children, possible injuries and consequences of unsafe behaviour
- Set and consistently reinforce safety rules but do not expect / rely on complete understanding or compliance.
- Provide continuing supervision of children learning to swim and ride bikes and horses, past the initial learning phase.

For early school age:

- Play in safe areas only and keep away from water bodies / work areas / livestock unless actively supervised by an adult
- Stay close by an adult when out on the farm
- Ask before eat / drinking anything
- Call for help if feeling unsafe / unsure
- Adults to provide active supervision and ensure children wear PPE (hats, sunscreen, helmets).

For middle primary age:

- Play in designated safe areas and keep away from water bodies / work areas / livestock unless actively supervised by an adult
- Always wear hat, sunscreen outside
- Always wear helmets riding horses and small capacity 2 wheeled motorbikes
- Never ride as a passenger on machinery, ute trays or on 4 wheeled motorbikes
- Basic “No fooling around” rules. eg. with bikes, horses and when friends visit (discuss why)
- Encourage participation in ‘farm safety walks’ with an adult. Discuss reasons for rules, to increase understanding, ownership and responsibility for improving unsafe behaviour / situations
- Assign simple tasks – collect eggs, feed pets / pony, water & weed garden. Use of hand tools
- Teach animal behaviour and plant growth basics – through garden care; feed pets/pony/poultry-collect eggs; simple mustering of quiet stock under active supervision
- Teach basic first-aid skills - how / who to get help from in an emergency
- Do not give responsibilities requiring complex judgements; or allow lone access to work areas; or set any form of intense, physical activity.

Box 2c: Upper primary – school leaving age

Generally:

- Judgement / concentration skills, size and age need to be considered to determine maturity for tasks
- Set and regularly reinforce clear and consistent rules, especially for activities with serious consequences
- Encourage participation in 'farm safety walks' with adults. Discuss specific hazards, consequences and reasons for rules. Allow input, to increase understanding, ownership and responsibility for improving unsafe behaviour / situations. Use positive reinforcement to build esteem and value the child's opinion
- Discuss ways to deal with situations where the child may feel pressured / motivated (by family, friends) to engage in risky behaviour
- MODEL and INTEGRATE safety. Lead by example and incorporate safe practice when teaching routine farm production processes.

For upper primary age:

- Play in designated safe areas
- Always ask an adult before going outside the safe play area
- Keep away from water bodies / work areas / livestock and identified farm hazards unless actively supervised by an adult
- Always wear hat and sunscreen outside
- Always wear helmets riding push bikes, horses and 2 wheeled motorcycles (and under adult supervision)
- Never ride as a passenger on machinery, ute trays or on 4 wheeled motorbikes
- "No fooling around" rules. eg. with bikes, horses and when friends visit (discuss why)
- Gradual increase in ability to perform farm tasks – but still requires close supervision due to risk taking, clumsiness and ease of distraction
- Can perform some tasks completely with adequate training and supervision (eg. ride motorcycles, horses, mow lawn, small power tools, handling / assisting with animals, vegetable garden responsibility)
- Teach basic first-aid skills – how to respond to specific situations -how / who to get help from in an emergency.

For lower - middle secondary age:

- Gradually increase farm tasks as competency is demonstrated
- Can learn/assist with basic and routine workshop machinery maintenance and livestock handling with active adult supervision and training.
- Teach to follow standard safety and hygiene instructions when using tools, equipment or non mobile agricultural machinery, under supervision and in accordance with OH&S requirements
- Extend first aid capabilities to include CPR and specific injury responses
- Encourage practice of skills in identifying potential problems and risk associated with an activity/situation and problem-solving-but DO NOT RELY on these to protect the child (inconsistent application of learning).

Box 2a, 2b, 2c general references:

- Fragar L, Gibson C, Henderson A, Franklin R. Farmsafe Farms for Kids: Evidence Based Solutions for Child Safety on Australian Farms. Moree: Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety, 2003
- Worksafe Australia. Plant in the Workforce: Making it safe. Commonwealth of Australia. August 1995.
- Farmsafe Australia. Factsheet: Child development and risk Farmsafe Australia Moree NSW 2003 (see source references)
- Curriculum Corporation Statements for Australian Schools: Health and Physical Education. Melbourne.1994

Child Development and Risk

CHARACTERISTICS OF GROWING CHILDREN THAT PLACE THEM AT RISK OF INJURY

Children grow and progress through stages of physical, mental and emotional development. Children are not only smaller, they see the world differently to adults. Consider the following characteristics of children when assessing the risk of injury on the farm or rural property. It is recommended not to overly rely on children to always behave in ways adults consider safe, even if they have been given rules to follow, or been OK in a similar situation.

CHILD SAFETY IS AN ADULT RESPONSIBILITY

1. Toddlers and small children 0-4 years

Small children and toddlers lack the physical and mental capabilities to avoid many farm hazards and may even be attracted to them. They are still developing their balance and are mobile, curious and determined to explore. They have no/poor concept of danger and are easily excited/confused by multiple/sudden changes. Children 3-4 years cannot be relied upon to follow rules and children under this age cannot understand the concepts of rules or safety. They should not be exposed to farm work hazards.



Matthew, 2 years:

Matthew sees the world as a wondrous and full of adventure. It is natural for him to be attracted to the dam, reach for a stick - and fall in. He wants to follow his mum/dad to the workshed, but is hard to see/hear a small child and he can easily be run over - he likes to climb and doesn't know what being entangled in those fascinating moving parts will mean.

2. Young children 5-9 years

Young children may understand basic rules, but are easily distracted by play and may forget them or not apply them across situations. They seek greater independence to play and explore the world. They can accept small responsibilities on farm (eg. collect eggs, feed small animals, handtools, water plants), but not necessarily complete all parts of a job that involves several steps. They lack eye-hand co-ordination and have difficulty being able to adapt /react if circumstances suddenly change. They are not ready to play unsupervised on the farm or engage in long or complex farm tasks.



Geena, 6 yrs

Geena likes to play tip and hide from her brother. She doesn't think rules about playing in the creek apply when she's only just hiding there. She would also like to have a go at riding the young horse. She can catch him OK and will be able to get on bareback from the fence post. Geena hasn't the strength or skill to control the horse - and will forget about a helmet too. But who thinks about that when all you want to do is muster the sheep on the new horse?

3. Older children and young teenagers 10-14 years

Older children may have better coordination, but can have lapses of awkwardness. They want to prove themselves as independent and capable and may try to impress parents or peers or try out new skills without adult supervision. They may be able to work with some equipment under close supervision (eg. lawnmower, some power tools). However, they lack the coordination and judgment skills required to safely operate large vehicles and machinery, especially if something out of the ordinary were to happen. They also lack a sense of caution and have unfounded confidence in their own ability - so that they may begin to engage in risk taking behaviour.



Alex, 13 years

Alex really impressed his mates yesterday by showing them how to do donuts on the ATV. Dad wasn't real pleased about that. He just doesn't remember how you can do anything when you're thirteen. He might have to show Dad how handy he can be, by working the bottom paddock with the tractor while he's in town. That'll show Dad!



For further information on child safety on farms contact your state Farmsafe organisation or Farmsafe Australia on ph. 02 6752 8218 or www.farmsafe.org.au

This factsheet is sponsored by:



Overview of Child Development Characteristics relating to Farm Safety Risk

It is easy to over- estimate the ability of children to prevent, assess and respond to unsafe situations. Consider the above characteristics of growing children to help avoid overly high expectations and setting of inappropriate rules or jobs

	Toddlers and small children (1-4 yrs)	Young school age children (5-9 yrs)	Older children / young teenagers (10-14 yrs)
Physical growth rate	Rapid growth, beginning motor skills development. Fragile, growing bones.	Steady growth stage - learning to use small and large muscles.	Steady to rapid growth rate as puberty commences. Small muscles rapidly developing.
Size, vision balance, Coordination	Small size - will tend to climb over or step out to see around things. Poor side vision - Have balance problems and slow reaction times. Toddlers just learning to control body movement - are top heavy and easily fall over. Can't judge distances or speed properly (ie. moving objects).	Small size - will still tend to climb over or step out around things. Difficulty judging distances or speed properly (ie. moving objects). Developing better side vision. Poor eye-hand co-ordination. Slow reaction times.	Increasing size can be a misleading sign of maturity and strength. Similar coordination to adults, but lapses of awkwardness common.
Discovery, learning & thinking skills	Curious, mobile and want to explore the world around them through touching, feeling, tasting. Discovering new behaviours - how to pull climb on things to open a gate, imitating parents and following older children. Are able to climb, walk and disappear quickly and quietly. Thinks without logic - has 'magic' thinking. Attracted by moving objects, noise and water.	Continue to learn through play and exploring the world with increasing competence and independence. Developing concrete thinking processes - dealing in present observable facts. Not yet capable of abstract ideas/thinking.	Desire to learn and try out new skills without constant adult supervision. Thinks logically and capable of more abstract thinking processes. Can find solutions to own problems with some adult guidance.
Sense of self belonging & acceptance	Attachment and bonding to parent / familiar carer - may protest at parent leaving to work and may try to follow them.	Seeks parental approval and wants to be seen as competent. Tries to master more complex skills but may take on tasks without adult supervision beyond their capability.	Success is important for self concept. May continue to seek parent acknowledgement / approval of independence. Increasingly seeks to impress peers and may be easily influenced by the group.
Focus and priorities	Live in the present moment, and can only focus on one thing at a time (not safety). Wants something NOW and will try to breach any obstacle to get it. May run out into path of vehicles, animals, machines, water in pursuit of objects / toys. Self-focused play.	Continued tendency to act before thinking. Easily caught up in or distracted by play and playmates. Safety and rules forgotten about in these circumstances.	Easily distracted and caught up by peers. Often affords safety a low priority compared to group needs and sense of self-competency and invincibility.
Awareness & response to hazards	None to limited awareness of common hazards. Easily excited and confused if a situation changes.	Can recognize common hazards, but are often unable to foresee serious consequences or recognize a changing danger quickly enough to react or avoid it	Can identify and assess hazards and foresee some unsafe consequences - but have unfounded confidence in their own ability and engage in risk taking behaviour (sense of immortality).
Awareness & response to rules	Either has no or very limited concept of 'rules' (0-2/3 yrs) or has limited ability to remember these at any one time.	May understand and follow simple rules, but can not be relied upon to remember or easily generalize / apply them across different situations.	Can follow rules and basic operating procedures, in 'normal' circumstances. May rationalize the need to adapt rules for own purposes, but may lack appropriate assessment of this.
Listening skills & compliance	Some difficulty in locating the direction of sounds or understanding verbal instructions.	Often doesn't hear what is said to them (not an active listener) May question authority and refuse cooperation. Is discovering that parents make mistakes.	Resists adult authority and may not listen to safe operating instructions.
Assisting with jobs	May be able to start participating in short, simple jobs of a token nature accompanied by an adult, but unable to take on meaningful responsibility.	May be able to accept some responsibility for short, simple, low risk jobs under supervision. Lack the attention span, lateral thinking, endurance and foresight to follow through to completion jobs requiring several steps or attention to multiple factors. Not ready for full responsibility. May want to be included in adult work without understanding job requirements and their own limits.	May be physically strong enough and able to complete some farm procedures under supervision and accept limited responsibility. Still developing focus, lateral thinking and foresight. Lack skills to think/coordinate / react in an emergency required to safely engage in more complex tasks without close supervision. Tires in jobs which go for prolonged periods & is easily distracted from safe practice.

References:

Murphy D. J., & Hackett, K. M. (1997). Children and Safety on the Farm, The Pennsylvania State University, College of Agricultural Sciences, Cooperative Extension
 Tevis, C. (Feb 1994). Downsizing Farm Chores, Successful Farming (p 48 – 51).
 Graham L., & Miller L. (July 2001). Farm Safety for Young Children, Iowa State University, PM- 1592 Revised.
 Peterson C. (1996). Looking forward through the lifespan. developmental psychology, 3rd Edition, Prentice Hall Australia Ltd.



8 Contacts and Summary

The following organisations can provide further information on farm safety including training programs and links to farm safety action groups that may be operating in your local area.

For further information about the Child Safety on Farms Program, contact Farmsafe Australia or visit the website www.farmsafe.org.au

Farmsafe Australia

Ph. (02) 6752 8218
Fx. (02) 6752 6639

Farmsafe NSW

Ph: (02) 6752 8214
Fax: (02) 6752 6639

Farmsafe Queensland

Ph: (07) 4774 0522
Fax: (07) 4774 289

Tasmanian Rural Industry Training Board

Ph: (03) 6331 2131
Fax: (03) 6331 4344

Farmsafe Victoria

Ph: (03) 9207 5509
Fax: (03) 9207 5510

Farmsafe SA

Ph: (08) 8232 5555
Fax: (08) 8232 1311

Farmsafe WA

Ph/Fax: (08) 9359 4118



Summary: Child safety on farms

The most common causes of serious death and injury to children on Australian farms are dams/creeks; farm vehicles and machinery; motorbikes and horses.

Research indicates that the measures most likely to be effective in preventing child deaths and injury on farms are to:

- Create securely fenced safe play areas that separate children from unsupervised access to farm hazards
- Have safety rules about out-of-bounds areas/activities for children supported by active adult supervision.

In particular, it is recommended

1. Younger children stay in the house yard unless an adult takes them out and looks after them
 2. Children wear seat belts when in cars, utes and trucks
 3. Children do not ride on tractors, ATV's or on the back of utes
 4. Children always wear helmets when riding motorbikes, pedal bikes and horses.
- Reduce hazards and minimise the risks of injury using a variety of control measures.

Use the Child Safety on Farms Checklist (page 8) and other tools in this booklet, to assist in identifying hazards, assessing risks and putting in place the best options for child safety.

Child safety can form part of a systematic farm safety management plan in the OHS framework

