

Three ways to make the farm a safer place to play

Outdoor play is a wonderful way for children to grow their minds and bodies, plus spring provides pleasant weather for playing in sandboxes, on playground equipment, or in the yard.

Grinnell Mutual makes the following recommendations to keep your children playing safe during planting.

See your farm through the eyes of your children.

"The kids that don't grow up on the farm don't know the risks," said Grinnell Mutual Farm Claims Manager Vicky Hartgers. "Kids will find their way to the barn chasing a cat or whatever the case may be. It's not unusual to hear about a child run over by a piece of farm equipment by a family member. You need to be aware of where children are at all times."

It may help to view your farm as a child would.

"If you don't have kids there all the time you're not aware of those things. We walk around our place," said Hartgers, who also farms with her husband. "Look at the world of the farm through the eyes of a child. What do they see at their height? What is tempting to them? Keep those things cleaned up and picked up."

Fence farm animals away from the play area.

"Everybody wants to pet the calves and that's not always the best place to be," said Hartgers. "Animal behavior is unpredictable when they are cornered or in a close situation."

Fence the farm animals away from the play area. It will keep both the animals and the children safe.

Designate a play area.

Build a fence or other barrier to border a safe play area. Homes and garages can be used as part of the boundary. Build the play area at least 50 feet from the majority of farm activity and roadways.

The play area should be free from pests, dangerous obstacles, debris such as old pieces of wood and metal, and open water. Grinnell Mutual recommends shade for play areas—at least 30 percent—to help shelter children from sun, wind, and dust.

"Keep the hazards clear all over the farm yard," said Hartgers. "Make sure the play space is a safe place."

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