

Child Development and Farm Safety

Age	Developmental Characteristics	Safety Strategies
0-6 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid physical and mental growth • Motor skills developing • Difficulty with balance • Slow reaction time • Curious, exploring • Fascinated by movement • Imaginative thinking • Energetic • Little sense of danger and risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model safe behavior • Keep child out of the farm worksite • Never allow child as extra rider on tractor • Install physical barriers around farm worksite hazards • Provide close supervision in fenced play area or indoors • Reward safe behavior
7-9 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steady growth • Developing hand-eye coordination • Operates with concrete facts • Curious about how things work • Poor attention span • Stays active • Wants to appear competent • Wants to try tasks without supervision • Not ready for significant responsibility • Unaware of many dangers and risks in the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model safe behavior • Set and enforce consistent rules • Reward safe behavior • Assess readiness to do jobs • Do not assign jobs that require hand-eye coordination • Repeatedly show child how to do the job safely • Limit job to 15 minutes • Provide continuous and close supervision
10-12 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steady growth • Coordination improving, but still awkward at times • Improved reaction time • Strength and dexterity increase • Desires peer and social acceptance • Desires independence from adults • Attempts tasks without supervision • Success important for self-concept • Does not fully understand consequences of actions • Easily distracted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model safe behavior • Set and enforce consistent rules • Reward safe behavior • Assess readiness to do jobs • Show child how to do the job safely on several occasions • Limit job to 20 minutes • Provide close supervision • Provide appropriate personal protective equipment
13-15 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid growth, changing physically • Moving to abstract thinking • Can have trouble making good decisions • Still needs adult guidance • Desires peer acceptance • Resists adult authority • Feels immortal and invulnerable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model safe behavior • Set and enforce consistent rules • Assess readiness to do jobs • Show child how to do the job safely • Frequently reassess job assignments • Slowly increase complexity of jobs • Check the child every 20 to 30 minutes to assess for fatigue/inattention and provide work breaks • Provide close supervision based on job hazards and the work environment • Provide appropriate personal protective equipment
16-17 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical growth slowing • Sexual maturity reached • Learning to think abstractly • Does not always consider consequences of actions • Peer influence remains strong • Poor ability to control impulses • Feels immortal and invulnerable • Desire to behave independently from adults • Still dependent on parents • Not yet thinking at adult level in many domains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model safe behavior • Set and enforce consistent rules • Assess readiness to do jobs • Show child how to do the job safely • Slowly increase complexity of jobs • Check the child every 30 minutes to assess for fatigue and provide work breaks • Provide close supervision based on job hazards and the work environment • Provide appropriate personal protective equipment