



CASW Safety Advice Article #3

Headline: Be the Difference As An Educator

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Educators just don't teach in schools. Educators are also 4-H leaders, coaches, Guide & Scout leaders and other adults with an interest in seeing youth and children learn and thrive in the community. Educators, whether in a school setting or in the community, can be the difference for farm safety for children and youth.

As an educator, you can help farm children and youth stay healthy and safe on the farm. The first step to being the difference as an educator is to understand the issues. It's important to understand the roles that children and youth often take on their family farms. These young people may be depended on to help out with chores, look after younger siblings and generally contribute to the running of the farm operation.

What else can an educator do? Start by having conversations about farm safety with children and youth. Ask young people about their farms and help them develop tactics that they could use to address safety concerns on their farm, including ideas about staying away from ongoing farm work and speaking up if they see something dangerous. Let them know that you are there to talk to about any concerns. Become a trusted advisor.

Modelling safety-first behaviours to children and youth can have positive impacts on young peoples' attitudes and behaviours. When educators model good safety practices, this shows young people that safety-first attitudes and behaviours are the norm. Just like budding leaders require good role models for leadership in the community, safe and healthy youth require safe and healthy role models.

Helping children, youth and their parents understand the hazards on the farm is one of the best ways educators can be the difference. Farm safety training and education events are excellent, unthreatening ways to create a sense of awareness around farming hazards. Sometimes, parents think that their child is faster, smarter, stronger and more capable of completing tasks than other young people. A farm safety education event can show children and their parents that hazards do exist and without knowledge and training the risks of injury are great. The Progressive Agriculture Foundation's Safety Day® program is one such educational event that highlights hazards on farms and is geared specifically to children.



As an educator, teaching comes naturally, whether it is how to subtract, shoot a hockey puck or build a fire. Teaching about age-appropriate tasks is also part of being the difference. Resources like the North American Guidelines for Children’s Agricultural Tasks (NAGCAT) are excellent ways to inform parents about age-appropriate tasks and capabilities of children and youth. The NAGCAT is a collection of guidelines designed to assist parents and others in assigning age-appropriate tasks for children ages 7–16 who live or work on farms and ranches across North America.

Lastly, informing young people about their responsibilities and rights in the workplace can be the difference between a successful, satisfying and safe work experience and an injury. Speaking and teaching basic worker rights to young people who might be looking to work in a farm setting empowers them to take control of their own health and safety at the workplace. As an educator you can be the difference!

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Canadian Agricultural Safety Week is March 15-21, 2015. For more information about how you can “Be the Difference”, please visit agsafetyweek.ca.

