

Taking care of business and children: Accessing child care for ranch families ^[1]

Regular daycare is not always feasible for producers, but these parents have found options that work for them

Author: Mulhern Davidson, Tara

Source: Canadian Cattlemen

Format: Article

Publication Date: 11 Mar 2024

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

Excerpts

...

Farm and ranch child care can be complicated. There are busy seasons when parents need to be out at odd hours, ranches are often in remote or rural locations, and there are fewer daycare spaces or daycare providers to draw from. Many beef producers also have off-farm jobs that can further strain child care needs.

What works for one family and situation will not necessarily work for another. What works for a family for a few months, may not work forever. However, cattle producers are resilient and many have found unique solutions to a universal problem.

When daycare is a chore

Concerning regulated daycare facilities, many producers experience a lack of availability. Or, strict operating hours or locations may not suit their particular situation.

Jacquelyn Wolf, an Alberta rancher and nurse, says a subsidized child care facility can be tough to get into, especially if you have multiple kids. "Our options were for me to take kids to town with me 40 minutes away or go private and only travel 15 minutes."

...

Hill's peak busy seasons on her Maritime farm are spring and summer. For her, full-time daycare was not feasible. During COVID, she hired a student through a government summer student program to provide in-home child care. She emphasizes that it was a one-time special circumstance, and it took a lot of advocating on her part to justify her need.

...

Another pair of hands

Alberta rancher Justin Hozack says his family has had a child care provider come into their home five days a week. "It has been a game changer," says Hozack, who appreciates being able to bring his young kids along for ranch work but has the option to drop them off if it's too long of a day or they otherwise need a break.

Aimée Ferré Stang and her husband, Sheldon, tried many child care options on their west central Saskatchewan farm before sourcing seasonal au pairs from France to look after their young sons.

...

Regardless of the farm and family situation, raising kids and finding child care solutions in a rural setting requires patience, persistence and money. There are some compromises, but when a solution comes together, the payoff for most families is well worth it.

"When you're in the thick of it, it's difficult," says Hill. "When I look back and see, I'm so glad my kids grew up this way."

Other childcare ideas from farm and ranch families

Accessing daycare can be a challenge but some communities address the need head-on. Janine Paly, an Alberta farmer and agrologist in the County of Thorhild, explained how her community rallied to develop a new daycare within their school.

"The local municipal government provided support with a startup loan," she says. The Co-op store provides a donation that the daycare uses to purchase snacks.

"The daycare is open from 6:30 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.," Paly says, which helps provide a greater range of dropoff and pickup times.

For families with medically complicated children, this puts additional pressure on rural child care needs, as one ranch parent explained.

“I put blinders on when I paid for the private day home because I needed a little normalcy,” explained one parent. Travelling for quality – but expensive – care was a worthwhile tradeoff that allowed them to do things to support their ranch, gave them time to recharge and also improved their overall well-being.

...

Related link: [4 farm-friendly ideas to help with the childcare struggle](#) [3]

Not done yet: [\\$10-a-day child care requires addressing Canada's child care deserts](#) [4]

Region: [Canada](#) [5]

Tags: [access](#) [6]

[child care deserts](#) [7]

[non-standard hours](#) [8]

[rural](#) [9]

Source URL (modified on 13 Mar 2024): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/24/03/taking-care-business-and-children-accessing-child-care-ranch>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/24/03/taking-care-business-and-children-accessing-child-care-ranch> [2]

<https://www.canadiancattlemen.ca/features/taking-care-of-business-and-children-accessing-child-care-for-ranch-families/> [3]

<https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/23/11/4-farm-friendly-ideas-help-childcare-struggle> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/23/05/not-done-yet-10-day-child-care-requires-addressing-canada's> [5]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/access> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9309>

[8] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/non-standard-hours> [9] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/rural>