

SUN PROTECTION POLICY

PURPOSE

The Sun Protection Policy applies to all children, educators, staff, and students with the aim to promote sun safety and reduce exposure to UVR, whilst ensuring some safe and appropriate UV exposure for vitamin D. Through a comprehensive approach reflecting on sun protection behaviour, organisation of activities, the outdoor environment and education of children, educators, staff, and parents we aim to ensure:

- All children, educators and students are well protected from too much UV exposure by using a combination of sun protection measures during the daily local sun protection times (issued whenever UV levels are 3 and above).
- The outdoor physical environment is sun safe and provides opportunities to seek shade and provide shade when required
- All children are encouraged and supported to develop independent sun protection skills through independent learning and collaborative conversations.
- The support of duty of care and regulatory requirements.
The use of appropriate WH&S strategies, to minimise UV risk and associated harms.
- That this policy is available to all educators, staff, students, families, and visitors.

BACKGROUND

A balance of ultraviolet radiation (UV) exposure is important for health. Too much of the sun's UV can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Exposure to the sun's UV during childhood and adolescence is associated with an increased risk of skin cancer in later life. Too little UV from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is essential for healthy bones and muscles, and for general health.

IMPLEMENTATION

We have developed this policy in consultation with Cancer Council NSW and Sun Smart Childcare – a policy guide for service providers. The aim of the policy is to reduce the risk of long-term skin damage by exposure to UV radiation caused by our harsh climate and hot sun.

OUTDOOR HEALTHY ACTIVITIES

Our Sun Protection Policy applies to all who attend our centre, being children, educators, staff, families, and visitors and applies all year round:

- Sun protection times are a forecast for the time of day UV levels will reach 3 or above. At these levels, sun protection is recommended for all skin types and the policy areas should be implemented. In NSW, UV levels are high enough (UV 3 or above) to damage unprotected skin most months of the year.
- UV levels and daily sun protection times are used to plan daily activities and ensure a correct understanding of local sun protection requirements.

- UV radiation exposure is considered as part of a service's risk management and assessment for all outdoor events and activities on and off site.
- When children are on excursions all sun protection practices are planned, organised, understood and available.
- The Cancer Council UV Meter posters are also visibly posted in several outdoor areas to promote understanding and awareness of the UV Index.

Parents are encouraged to apply sunscreen in the morning and educators will apply again before going out in the afternoon. Sunscreen is provided in all children's rooms and parents are reminded to apply sunscreen through various communication.

The Licensee will be responsible for ensuring that the outdoor play area is well shaded by trees, shade cloth and portable shade equipment. During outdoor play, equipment will be set up in shaded areas with children being encouraged to play in the shade. Regular shade assessments will be made throughout the day and equipment moved to maximise the use of shade over the day.

Vitamin D and sun protection

Vitamin D, which is essential for developing and maintaining strong and healthy bones and muscles, is made in the body when skin is exposed to UV radiation. We now know that, despite our sunny climate, some Australians who spend little time in the sun may have low levels of vitamin D.

For most people, adequate vitamin D levels are reached through regular incidental exposure to the sun. When the UV Index is 3 or above (such as during summer), most people maintain adequate vitamin D levels just by spending a few minutes outdoors on most days of the week.

In late Autumn and Winter when the UV Index falls below 3, the Cancer Council states that it is safe to spend time outdoors in the middle of the day with some skin uncovered. The Cancer Council SunSmart App is used daily to check the current UV Index. On the days that the UV Index is above 3 children and educators are required to wear sun-safe hats.

Research tells us that being physically active also helps boost vitamin D levels.

SUN SAFE HATS- Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF):

- The wearing of sun safe hats is required ie. All staff and children are required to wear SunSmart hats that protect their face, neck and ears.
- Hats may be labelled with an Ultraviolet Protection Factor or UPF. The UPF is a scale developed to rate how much UV protection a fabric provides. The service provides each child a sun safe bucket hat on enrolment (\$12 fee). The fabric has a UPF of 50 allowing only one-fiftieth (or 2%) of UV radiation to pass through it and so offers excellent protection. Educators will ensure that these hats are always worn during outdoor play throughout the year.
- Children without a SunSmart hat are encouraged to play in an area protected from the sun (eg. Under shade, veranda or indoors).

SunSmart hats include;

- Broad brimmed hats with a brim size of at least 6cm (adults 7.5cm)

- Bucket hats with a deep crown and brim size of at least 5cm (adults 6cm)
- Legionnaire style hats
- NB – Baseball caps or visors do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended.

SUNSCREEN:

The centre will provide a SPF 30, SPF50 or SPF50+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen lotion, with parents expected to apply the lotion on arrival. Educators will assume the responsibility for applying or re - applying sunscreen when required and 20 minutes before the afternoon outdoor session. According to the TGA regulations and Australian Standards Test protocol a broad-spectrum sunscreen must block more than 90% of UVA rays. An SPF30 sunscreen blocks 96.7% of UV and transmits the remaining 3.3%. An SPF50 sunscreen blocks 98% of UV.

Children under 12 months of age, and those children and educators who are not able to wear any sunscreen for medical reasons, will use only the shaded areas of the playground and not be exposed to direct sunlight.

Parents wishing to use their own sunscreen may bring in sunscreen clearly labelled with their child's name. It is recommended that this action should only be for the purpose of children who have skin allergies or reactions to certain chemical absorbers. These are placed out of reach to ensure that they are used only for the child detailed on the label. Expiry dates are regularly monitored. Parents will be asked to fill out specific forms for ongoing use.

PROTECTIVE CLOTHING:

Children and staff are required to wear SunSmart clothing that covers as much skin (especially the shoulders, back and stomach) as possible.

SunSmart clothing includes;

- Loose fitting shirts and dresses with sleeves and collars or covered neckline.
- Longer style skirts, shorts and trousers.
- Midriff, crop or singlet tops do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended.

If inappropriate clothing is worn and there is no other appropriate clothing available, children will be encouraged to play indoors.

EDUCATORS, STAFF and STUDENTS

As part of WH&S UV risk controls and role modelling, staff, families and visitors demonstrate SunSmart behaviours when outside, including:

- Wearing a SunSmart hat, protective clothing, and wearing sunglasses (optional).
- Applying SPF30 (or higher) broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen.
- Promoting the use of shade.
- Discussing sun protection with children and demonstrating a positive and proactive approach to the management of sun protection in the service.

Sun safety is everyone's responsibility. By being role models ourselves and leading the way with our own sun safety, we can inspire our children to be SunSmart when they step outside.

BABIES:

- Babies under 12 months are not exposed to direct sunlight.
- Babies clothing, hat and shade positioning are checked regularly to ensure they continue to be well protected from UV.
- The use of sunscreen on babies under 6 months is not recommended due to their sensitive skin.

EDUCATION:

- **SunSmart App daily UV**

Educators will incorporate sun protection awareness activities in teaching programs and display posters available from the Cancer Council NSW as reinforcement for these programs. Information and change of season reminders on Sun Protection and vitamin D will be available to parents through Elder Street ECHC Centre handbook and weekly check in email communications.

Engaging children, educators, staff, and families

- Staff, educators, and families are provided with information about sun protection through family Elder Street ECHC Centre handbook, daybooks, weekly check in email communications, information booklets, noticeboards, and the centre's website.

When enrolling their child, families are:

- Informed of the service's SunSmart policy.
- Asked to provide a suitable sun protective hat, covering clothing and sunscreen for their child.
- Required to give permission for educators to apply sunscreen to their child; and
- Encouraged to use SunSmart measures themselves when at the service.
- As part of WHS UV risk controls and role-modelling, educators, staff, and visitors:
 - Wear a suitable sun-protective hat, covering clothing and, if practical, sunglasses.
 - Apply sunscreen; and
 - Seek shade whenever possible.

Monitoring and review

- All staff, including management and educators, monitor and review the effectiveness of the SunSmart policy and revise the policy when required (at least once every three years) by completing a policy review and membership renewal with SunSmart at sunsmart.com.au.
- SunSmart policy updates and requirements will be made available to educators, educators, families, and visitors.

REVIEW:

Reviewed: 10 June 2005 by M Duffy-Fagan
 16 March 2005 by M Duffy-Fagan
 20 April 2006 by M Duffy-Fagan
 December 2008 by M Duffy-Fagan, staff, and families
 October 2009 as above
 May 2012 as above

July 2016 K Pomfrett & M Duffy-Fagan
April 2018 M Duffy-Fagan, K Pomfrett R Saville, Creighton,
October 2020 K Pomfrett, L Berwick, C Chippington, E Austin
August 2022 K Pomfrett, E Austin, C Chippington
August 2023 B Creighton, P Guy, K Hewat
July 2024 K Hewat in consultation with SunSmart

Source:

The Cancer Council NSW
Sun Smart Childcare – A policy guide for service providers
Safe Work Australia
National Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)
National Quality Standards
Cancer Council