

Sun Protection Policy

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

Policy Statement

The sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation can't be seen or felt and is most intense during the middle of the day. Whatever the weather, it's important for people of all skin types to use sun protection whenever UV levels are three or higher.

Too much of the sun's UV can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, with two in three Australians developing some form of skin cancer before age 70. Infants and toddlers up to four years of age are particularly vulnerable to UV damage due to lower levels of melanin and a thinner stratum corneum (the outermost layer of skin). UV damage accumulated during childhood and adolescence is strongly associated with an increased risk of skin cancer later in life.

By teaching sensible sun protection habits from an early age and implementing sun protection measures, early childhood services can play a significant role in reducing skin cancer risk.

Background

Our Sun Smart policy has been developed to ensure all children, employees and visitors attending our service are protected from UV.

This policy provides guidelines to:

- ensure all children, educators and staff are protected from over-exposure to UV radiation;
- ensure the outdoor environment provides shade for children, educators and staff;
- ensure children are encouraged and supported to develop independent sun protection skills;
- support duty of care and regulatory requirements; and
- support appropriate WH&S strategies to minimise UV risk and associated harms for educators, staff and visitors.

Strategies

To assist with the implementation of this policy, educators and children are encouraged to access the daily local sun protection times (available from the SunSmart widget on the service's website, the free SunSmart app, or at Bureau of Meteorology).

The sun protection times are a forecast from the Bureau of Meteorology for the time of day UV levels are forecast to reach three and above.

Sun protection times

UV levels vary across Australia and throughout the year. This listing highlights when UV is typically three and above in each state / territory. There may be times UV levels are three and above outside these periods. *Please check the daily local sun protection times and UV levels to be sure you are using sun protection when it is required for your location.*

- **NSW** All year - extra care is taken during the peak UV radiation times and outdoor activities are scheduled outside of these times where possible.

The sun protection measures listed are used for all outdoor activities **during the daily local sun protection times.**

A combination of sun protection measures are considered when planning all outdoor activities such as excursions and water play :

1 – Seek shade

- Management makes sure there is a sufficient number of shelters and trees providing shade in the outdoor area particularly in high-use areas.
- The availability of shade is considered when planning all outdoor activities.
- Children are encouraged to choose and use available areas of shade when outside.
- Play activities will be set up in the shade and moved throughout the day to take advantage of shade patterns.
- Children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are asked to choose a shady play space or a suitable area protected from the sun.
- Shade provision is considered in future plans and upgrades.
- A shade assessment is conducted regularly to determine the current availability and quality of shade.

2 - Slip on sun-protective clothing

- Children are required to wear loose-fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible. Clothing made from cool, densely woven fabric is recommended. Families are asked to choose tops that cover the shoulders, higher necklines (or collars) and knee-length or longer style shorts, skirts and dresses for their child. If a child is wearing a singlet top or shoestring dress, they will be asked to choose a t-shirt/shirt to wear over this before going outdoors.

3 - Slap on a hat

- All children and educators are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears (legionnaire, broad-brimmed or bucket style). Peak caps and visors are not considered a suitable alternative.
- Children without a sun protective hat are encouraged to play in the shade.

4 - Slop on sunscreen

- SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen is supplied by the service and/or families.
- Sunscreen is applied in accordance with the manufacturer's directions (which state to apply at least 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapply every two hours (or after sweating, towel drying or swimming)).
- To help develop independent skills ready for school, children from three years of age are given opportunities to apply their own sunscreen under supervision of staff and are encouraged to do so.
- Sunscreen is stored in a supervised, cool place, out of the sun and the expiry date is monitored.
- Where children have allergies or sensitivities to sunscreen, parents are asked to provide an alternative sunscreen or children are encouraged to play in the shade.
- Cancer Council recommends a usage test before applying a new sunscreen.

5 - Slide on sunglasses [if practical]

- Where practical, children are encouraged to wear close-fitting, wrap-around sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard 1067 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4) and cover as much of the eye area as possible.

Learning and skills

Sun protection is incorporated into the learning and development program.

The SunSmart policy is reinforced by educators and through children's activities and displays. Educators are encouraged to complete Cancer Council's free **Generation SunSmart** online learning modules.

Engaging children, educators, staff and families

- Educators, staff and families are provided with information about sun protection through family newsletters, service handbook, noticeboards and the service's website.
- When enrolling their child, families are:
 - informed of the service's Sun Smart policy;
 - asked to provide a suitable sun protective covering clothing and sunscreen for their child (if unable to use the sunscreen provided by the service);
 - required to give permission for educators to apply sunscreen to their child; and
 - encouraged to use SunSmart measures themselves when at the service.

WH&S

As part of WH&S 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.

- Educators will regularly monitor impact of sun on play equipment and surfaces that children will be touching and using such as softfall, mats, climbing equipment by feeling with their hand and using a temperature gun reading if required.

Related Legislation:

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167: Protection from harm and hazards

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Part 4.2: Children's health and safety

Reg 100 Risk assessment must be conducted before excursions

Part 4.3: Physical Environment

Reg 113 Outdoor space: natural environment

Reg 114 Outdoor space: shade

Part 4.7: Leadership and Governance

Reg 168 (2)(a)(ii) Policies and procedures: Sun protection

Reg 170 Policies and procedures to be followed

Reg 171 Policies and procedures to be kept available

Reg 172 Notification of change to policies or procedures

Relevant references:

- Belonging, Being and Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework (July 2009)
- Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) – Standard 4.4 and 7.2
- ARPANSA Radiation Protection Standard for Occupational Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation (2006)
- Safe Work Australia: Guide on exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation (UVR) (2019)
- AS 4174:2018 Knitted and woven shade fabrics
- AS/NZS 1067.1:2016, Eye and face protection - Sunglasses and fashion spectacles
- AS/NZS 4399:2020, Sun protective clothing - Evaluation and classification
- AS/NZS 2604:2012 Sunscreen products - Evaluation and classification

- Australian Government Therapeutics Goods Administration (TGA) – Australian regulatory guidelines for sunscreens: 4. Labelling and advertising – directions for use of the product
- AS/NZS 4685.0:2017, Playground equipment and surfacing - Development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation.6.2.1 General considerations, 6.3.9 Shade and sun protection, Appendix A Shade and sun protection

POLICY REVIEWED: July 2026

POLICY REVIEWED BY: Suzi Scott

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MODIFICATIONS: Updates to Quality Areas