*This policy template provides current evidence-based sun protection guidelines and recommendations from Cancer Council. Early childhood education and care services are welcome to use this policy in its entirety or adopt the sun protection principles in this policy into their own policy and procedures. Any changes or adjustments to the policy may mean it no longer meets SunSmart Service program membership guidelines (February 2025).*

**<SERVICE NAME>’s SunSmart / Sun protection / UV protection policy**

**This policy applies to all service activities and events on and off-site.**

## **Purpose**

Our <INSERT POLICY TITLE> policy has been developed to ensure all children, staff and visitors attending our service are protected from skin damage caused by harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun.

This policy provides guidelines to:

* ensure all children, educators and staff are protected from 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 Work Health & Safety (WH&S) strategies to minimise UV risk and associated harms for educators, staff and visitors.

**Background**

The sun’s ultraviolet (UV) radiation can’t be seen or felt and generally peaks 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 and above.

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 in their lifetime. Infants and toddlers are at a higher risk of UV damage as their skin is particularly susceptible to the harmful effects of solar UV. 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.

## **Legislative requirements**

**<**INSERT RELEVANT STATE/TERRITORY LINKS>

[Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-care-services-national-law-act-2010/020): Education Section 167: Protection harm and hazards

[Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-regulations)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Part 4.2:** **Children’s** **health and safety** | |
| Reg 100 | Risk assessment must be conducted before excursions |
| Reg 101 | Conduct of risk assessment for excursion |
| **Part 4.3: Physical Environment** | |
| Reg 113 | Outdoor space: natural environment |
| Reg 114 | Outdoor space: shade |
| Reg 116 | Assessments of family day care residences and approved family day care |
| **Part 4.7: Leadership and service management** | |
| **Reg 168** **Education and care service must have policies and procedures** | |
| Reg 168 (2)(a)(ii) | Policies and procedures: Sun protection |
| Reg 169 | Additional policies and procedures – family day care services |
| 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 |

## **Special note regarding infants**

SunSmart practices consider the special needs of infants. All babies [**(0-12 months)**](https://www.cancer.org.au/about-us/policy-and-advocacy/prevention/uv-radiation/related-resources/sun-protection-babies) are kept out of direct sun when UV levels are 3 and above. The best sun protection can be achieved when a combination of physical sun protection measures such as shade, clothing and hats are used. For those small areas of unexposed skin not protected by hats, apply sunscreen to infants 6 months and older. The widespread use of sunscreen on babies under 6 months old is not recommended.

## **Procedures**

The sun protection times are a forecast for the time of day that UV levels are predicted to reach three and above. To assist with the implementation of this policy, staff and children are encouraged to access and display the daily local sun protection times via the [SunSmart widget](https://www.sunsmart.com.au/resources/uv-widget), free [SunSmart Global UV app](https://www.sunsmart.com.au/resources/sunsmart-app), [myUV.com.au](https://www.myuv.com.au/) or the Bureau of Meteorology website.

Cancer Council’s advice is to promote physical activity and active play while being SunSmart. UV levels reach three or above year-round in some parts of Australia, and most months in others. Average annual, monthly and seasonal values of the UV Index are available on the [Bureau of Meteorology](http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/ncc/climate_averages/uv-index/index.jsp) website. Further advice specific to states and territories is available on the [Cancer Council](https://cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/be-sunsmart/sunsmart-in-schools) website.

UV levels peak in the middle of the day when the sun is directly overhead. Where possible, outdoor activities should be scheduled away from times when UV levels are most damaging. When outdoor activities are scheduled at times when the UV Index is forecast to be three and above, maximum use of shade, sun protective hats, clothing and sunscreen should be applied to protect children and staff.

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

#### *1.* 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 with elbow-length sleeves, 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.

#### *2.* Slop *on sunscreen*

* SPF50 or SPF50+ 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 more frequently after sweating, towel drying or swimming).
* To help develop independent skills ready for school, children where developmentally appropriate, are given opportunities to apply their own sunscreen under supervision of staff and are encouraged to do so.
* Sunscreen is stored in a cool place, out of the sun, in accordance with the manufacturer’s directions. The expiry dates are monitored and expired products are not used.
* Where children have allergies or [sensitivities to sunscreen](https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/about-sunscreen/sunscreen-reactions), parents are asked to provide an alternative sunscreen or children should be encouraged to wear a sun protective hat and clothing and play in the shade.
* Cancer Council recommends a [usage test](https://www.cancer.org.au/about-us/policy-and-advocacy/prevention/uv-radiation/related-resources/sunscreen#adverse) before applying a new sunscreen.
* Permission from families for educators to apply sunscreen is provided or included in enrolment information.

#### *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 provided with one where possible.

#### *4.* Seek *shade*

* The outdoor environment includes sufficient shade in the outdoor area, particularly in high-use areas for all children at the service.
* 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 must play in suitable shaded areas protected from the sun.
* Shade provision is considered in future plans and upgrades of the outdoor area. Regulation 114, further guidance available: [Quality Area 3: Physical environment | ACECQA](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/guide-nqf/section-4-operational-requirements/quality-area-3-physical-environment)
* A shade assessment is conducted regularly to determine the current availability and quality of shade.

#### *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 educational program.
* The SunSmart policy is reinforced by educators and through children's activities and displays.
* Educators are encouraged to complete Cancer Council’s free [online learning modules](https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/be-sunsmart/sunsmart-in-schools/primary-school-resources).
* Children are encouraged to be involved in initiatives to promote and model sun protection measures at the service, including taking supervised leadership roles in managing sun protection e.g. accessing daily UV levels and sun protection times, hat reminders and monitoring of sunscreen.

## **Engaging children, staff and families**

* Staff and families are regularly provided with information about sun protection through family newsletters, service handbook, noticeboards, social media and the service’s website.
* When enrolling their child, families are:
* informed of the service’s <INSERT POLICY NAME> policy;
* asked to provide or are provided with a suitable sun protective hat, covering clothing and sunscreen for their child;
* required to give permission for educators to apply sunscreen for their child; and
* encouraged to use SunSmart measures themselves when at the service.
* WH&S and risk management
* As part of WH&S UV risk controls and role-modelling, staff and visitors:
* wear a suitable sun-protective hat, covering clothing and, if practical, sunglasses;
* apply sunscreen; and
* seek shade whenever possible.
* 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.

**Monitoring and review**

* All staff, including management and educators, monitor and review the effectiveness of the <INSERT POLICY NAME> policy and revise the policy when required (at least once every three years) by completing a policy review.
* <INSERT POLICY NAME> policy updates and requirements will be made available to staff, families and visitors.

**Next policy review: . . . . . . . . . .**

*Please note: Certain health conditions and medications mean some people are more sensitive to UV radiation and need to use sun protection at all times regardless of the UV levels. Please make sure your policy includes the particular needs of these children and staff at your service. For further information visit* [*Cancer Council Australia’s website.*](https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/check-for-signs-of-skin-cancer)*.*

**Relevan**t **documents / links**

* [Guide to the National Quality Framework](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/guide-nqf) - ACECQA Policy and Procedure Guidelines
* [Belonging, Being and Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/EYLF-2022-V2.0.pdf) (V2.0, 2022)
* [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/standards) (APST) – Standard 4.4 and 7.2
* ARPANSA [Radiation Protection Standard for Occupational Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation](http://www.arpansa.gov.au/pubs/rps/rps12.pdf) (2006)
* Safe Work Australia: [Guide on exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation (UVR)](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/2001/guide-exposure-solar-ultraviolet-radiation_1.pdf) (2019)
* AS 4174:2018 (Amd 2019) Knitted and woven shade fabrics
* AS/NZS 1067.1:2016 (Amd 2021), 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](https://www.tga.gov.au/sites/default/files/australian-regulatory-guidelines-for-sunscreens.pdf)
* 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

**Relevant** **aspects of the National Quality Standards (NQS)**

Quality Area (QA) / Standard (S) / Element (E)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **QA 1** | **Educational program and practice** |
| **S 1.1 Program** | **The Educational program enhances each child’s learning and development.** |
| E 1.1.1 | Curriculum decision making contributes to each child’s learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators. |
| E 1.1.3 | All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child’s learning. |
| **S 1.2 Practice** | **Educators facilitate and extend each child’s learning and development.** |
| E 1.2.2 | Educators respond to children’s ideas and play and extend children’s learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback. |
| E 1.2.3 | Each child’s agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world. |
| **QA 2** | **Children’s health and safety** |
| **S 2.1 Health** | **Each child’s health and physical activity is supported and promoted** |
| E 2.1.1 | Each child’s wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s need for sleep, rest and relaxation. |
| E 2.1.2 | Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented. |
| E 2.1.3 | Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child. |
| **S 2.2 Safety** | **Each Child is protected** |
| E 2.2.1 | At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard. |
| **QA 3** | **Physical environment** |
| **S 3.1 Design** | **The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operations of a service** |
| E 3.1.1 | Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child. |
| **S 3.2 Use** | **The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.** |
| E 3.2.1 | Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child’s participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments. |
| **QA 5** | **Relationships with children** |
| **S 5.2 Relationships between children** | **Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships** |
| E 5.2.1 Collaborative learning | Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other. |
| **QA 6** | **Collaborative partnerships with families and communities** |
| **S 6.1 Supportive relationships with families** | **Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.** |
| E 6.1.2 | The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share in decision-making about their child’s learning and wellbeing. |
| E 6.1.3 | Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing. |
| **S 6.2 Collaborative partnerships** | **Collaborative partnerships enhance children’s inclusion, learning and wellbeing.** |
| **QA 7** | **Governance and Leadership** |
| **S 7.1 Governance** | **Governance supports the operations of a quality service.** |
| E 7.1.2 | Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service |