Sun Protection

Children's Services Policy No 2.11
Date issued: June 2008
Replaces issue/policy: Long Day Care Sun Protection Policy, OOSH Sun Protection Policy; and Family Day Care Sun Care and Sun Safety (2007)
Date effective: June 2008
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Aim:

- To ensure that all children attending Council managed Children's Services are adequately protected from the harmful effects of the sun and ultraviolet (UV) radiation;
- To teach children, staff and families good sun protection habits from an early age to reduce the risks from UV radiation; and
- To promote a positive attitude towards skin protection amongst children, parents/carers and staff.

Background Information:
Unprotected exposure to the sun in childhood significantly increases the risk of developing skin cancer in later life. Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world, with the major cause of skin cancer being UV radiation from the sun.

Relevant Legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Public Health Amendment (Review) Act 2017
- NSW Public Health Regulation 2012
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (NSW)
- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- NSW Public Health Act 2010

Resources:

- Cancer Council (2019):
  - Be SunSmart
  - Early Childhood Education and Care SunSmart Policy and the National Quality Framework Fact Sheet
  - Ultraviolet Index
  - Vitamin D – how much do we need?
  - SunSmart schools and early childhood programs
  - SunSmart sample policies

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority - National Quality Standard
  - **Quality Area 2:**
    - Standard 2.1 - Element 2.1.2 and;
    - Standard 2.2., Element 2.2.1.

Note: In this policy "staff" and "educators" refers to staff employed within Children's Services by Willoughby City Council.

Staff are to read this policy in conjunction with Willoughby City Council's Human Resources Sun Protection Policy 8.13.

Practices: A combination of sun protection strategies will help reduce exposure to ultraviolet radiation. No one strategy is effective in isolation.

Ultraviolet (UV) Radiation
The sun's UV radiation is both a major cause of skin cancer and the best source of vitamin D. The intensity of the sun's UV radiation is measured by the UV Index, which divides UV radiation levels into:

Vitamin D
Vitamin D is an essential nutrient that the body requires for many vital processes, including the building and maintenance of strong bones.

Vitamin D forms in the skin when it is exposed to UV from sunlight and almost all of our vitamin D comes from the sun's UV radiation. We can get a small amount of vitamin D from some foods such as milk, margarines, oily fish and eggs, but usually this is not enough to keep us healthy.

How much sun do you need for vitamin D?

- 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 in some southern parts of Australia, when the UV Index falls below 3, spending time outdoors in the middle of the day with some skin uncovered can be beneficial. Being physically active (e.g. gardening or going for a brisk walk) also helps boost vitamin D levels.

When do I need sun protection?
In NSW, sun protection is required when the sun's rays are the strongest, usually between the hours of 10am and 4pm. It is important to protect the skin from the UV rays, as they can cause skin damage, premature aging and increase the risk of skin cancer.

The UV index is a measure of the strength of UV radiation from the sun:

- a UV index of 0-2 is considered **low**
- a UV index of 3-5 considered **moderate**,
- a UV index of 6-7 is **high**
- a UV index of 8-10 is **very high**
- a UV index of 11 and above being **extreme**

UV levels can be monitored on the Australia Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) website. Sun protection times are issued by the Bureau of Meteorology when the UV Index is forecast to reach 3 or above.

Extra care is taken during the peak UV radiation times and outdoor activities are scheduled outside of these times when possible.

The Ten recommendations from Cancer Council (2019) include:

1. **Scheduling outdoor activities**
   Sun protection times are a forecast for the time of day that UV levels will reach 3 or above. At these levels, sun protection is recommended for all skin types.

   In NSW, UV levels are high enough (UV 3 or above) to damage unprotected skin most months of the year. UV levels are particularly high during the summer months and highest in the middle of the day.

   UV levels and daily sun protection times can be accessed via the SunSmart App, the ARPANSA or the Bureau of Meteorology.

   UV levels and daily sun protection times are to be used to plan daily activities and ensure a correct understanding of local sun protection requirements.

2. **Shade**
   - All outdoor activities are planned to occur in shaded areas.
   - Shade options are provided, maintained and promoted to the children.
   - Play-based learning activities are set up and moved throughout the day to take advantage of shade patterns.
   - Shade options can include a combination of portable, natural and built shade. (The Cancer Council encourages regular shade assessments and the monitoring of existing shade structures, to assist in planning for additional shade).
   - Stay in the shade as much as possible.
   - Whilst in the shade, use other forms of sun protection to reduce exposure from reflected UV radiation from surfaces such as sand or concrete.
   - Apply SPF30+ or higher, broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen on any exposed areas of skin.

3. **Hats**
   - All staff and children are encouraged to wear SunSmart hats* that protect their face, neck and ears. (**Staff are to provide their own hats).
   - Children without a SunSmart hat are to play in an area protected from the sun (e.g. under shade, verandah or indoors). If a spare hat is available, one can be provided, otherwise
     "**No hat, No play**" will be enforced.
   - Baseball caps or visors do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended.

   ***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); and
   - Legionnaire style hats.

4. **Clothing**
   Staff and children are required to wear SunSmart* clothing that covers as much of the skin (especially the shoulders, back and stomach) as possible.

- Children without SunSmart clothing will be required to play in an area protected from the sun (e.g. under shade, verandah or indoors).
- Staff are also required to wear appropriate clothing based on the Children's Services Professional Dress Code.

***SunSmart clothing includes wearing:**

- Loose fitting shirts and dresses with sleeves and collars or covered neckline; and
- Longer style skirts, shorts and trousers.

5. Sunscreen

- All staff and children are required to apply SPF30+ (or higher) broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen at least 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapply every 2 hours.
- Permission to apply sunscreen is included in the service enrolment form. Where children have allergies or sensitivity to the sunscreen, parents are asked to provide an alternative sunscreen, or the child will be encouraged to play in the shade.
- All sunscreen should be labelled and stored in a cool and dry place and the expiry dates monitored.

6: Babies

The Cancer council recommends protecting babies and children's skin with physical barriers such as wraps, clothing, hats and using shade as much as possible throughout the day.

- Babies under 12 months are **not** to be exposed to direct sunlight when UV levels are 3 or higher.
- Babies clothing, hat and shade positioning are to be 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.

7. **Role Modelling**

Staff act as role models and **must** demonstrate SunSmart behaviours by:

- Wearing a SunSmart hat, protective clothing, and wearing sunglasses (optional);
- Applying SPF30+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen;
- Promoting the use of shade; and
- 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.

8. Education

- Sun protection is incorporated regularly into learning programs. Children understand why sun safety is important and learn how to take effective sun protection actions e.g. hat wearing, teaching children about UV index and chart etc.
- SunSmart App daily UV times are promoted to guide staff, parents and children's behaviour. Further information is available from Cancer Council NSW's website.

Long Day Care:

- Each morning staff will check UV rate on SunSmart app, the ARPANSA website or check any warning from Bureau of Meteorology website before going outside.
- Parents need to apply sunscreen on their child on arrival.

9. Information and policy availability

- Council's Sun Protection policy, procedures, requirements and updates are made available to staff, families and visitors.

- Sun protection information and resources are accessible and communicated regularly to families.
- All parents/carers are informed of the Sun Protection policy including appropriate hat, clothing and sunscreen requirements on enrolling their child in the service.

10. Review

- Sun protection policies must be updated and submitted to Cancer Council NSW every three years to maintain current SunSmart status.
- Sun protection practices should be considered when planning excursions and all events held at the service.

In the event that a child is collected from school (after school care) and does not have a hat to wear during the walk back to the centre, the staff will ensure that on arrival at the centre the child is encouraged to play indoors, or in the shade.

Children who do not bring a hat to care will be encouraged and guided to play indoors or under a shaded verandah. At times children will forget to remain in the shaded areas, staff will remind them to play out of the sun as much as practically possible given the ages of the children.

Vacation Care Services only

Children

Parents/carers are to provide a SunSmart hat for their child (refer to point 3 'Hats' of the Ten recommendations from Cancer Council). In the event that a child does not own an "appropriate hat" they will be permitted to wear a hat that has been brought from home. Staff will encourage parents/carers to provide an "appropriate hat". However, where parents/carers do not provide such a hat, the service will remind the child to wear sunscreen.

Staff

Staff are also required to wear a SunSmart hat (refer to point 3 'Hats' of the Ten recommendations from Cancer Council). However, in the event that they forget to bring a hat on any rostered day they will be permitted to wear an alternate hat/cap and will be reminded to bring an appropriate hat for subsequent shifts.

Sunglasses protect the eyes from UV radiation. The staff will reinforce any parent request for their child to wear sunglasses.

Sunscreen

Sunscreen can filter out up to 96% of damaging ultraviolet radiation from reaching skin by creating a barrier. No sunscreen offers 100% protection from the sun.

- To be effective, sunscreen must be applied generously, rubbed in lightly and used with other forms of sun protection.
- It is recommended that services use, broad-spectrum SPF30+ (minimum) sunscreen.
- To allow the sunscreen to bind to the skin for maximum effectiveness, it should be applied before going in the sun and can be applied by the child or with a barrier such as a cotton wool ball, tissue or disposable glove. (A fresh cotton wool ball, tissue or disposable glove should be used for each child).
- Sunscreen should be reapplied either every two hours, or again 20 minutes prior to the child next going outdoors.
- Where a child has an allergy to the sunscreen supplied by the service, parents/carers are to provide an alternative sunscreen that will be used on their child.
- All sunscreen must be labelled with an expiry date and storage instructions.

Allergic reactions to sunscreen are usually caused by perfumes and/or preservatives in the product, not the chemicals that work to filter UV radiation. If a child experiences an allergic reaction to a sunscreen it is recommended that another brand is tried and/or the parents/carers

speaks to a doctor or pharmacist about choosing another product with different ingredients.

Staff are required to act as role models and demonstrate positive sun-safe behaviour. Staff are to talk with children and families about sun safety as a part of the programming at the service.

Outdoor Activities and Excursions
Where possible, children will not play in the outdoor areas during the peak UV radiation times, or it will only be permitted in shaded areas. Staff will ensure that activities are set up in shaded areas as much as possible.

Where excursions are conducted during peak UV radiation times, the amount of exposure to the sun is to be considered and limited where possible. The amount of available shade at the excursion location will also be taken into account.

In instances where the temperature is over 30° Celsius, staff must consider the appropriateness of continuing with outdoor play regardless of the time of day and must ensure children are provided with frequent opportunities to rest and drink water.

Education
Learning about skin and sun protection is incorporated into planned activities. Staff and families will have access to educational material on sun protection, including how they can implement safe sun protection practices. Staff will be provided with education material and training opportunities to increase their understanding of safe sun protection practices and ways to incorporate these into the daily program.