

Sample SunSmart Policy for Early Learning Services



Policy statement

Our service recognises the value of outdoor play and learning in a sun safe way. We are committed to ensuring all children, educators and staff are protected from ultraviolet (UV) radiation for all outdoor activities.

This includes:

- Providing shade in the outdoor environment
- Ensuring all sun protection measures are promoted and utilised
- Encouraging and supporting children to develop independent sun protection skills
- Providing learning opportunities for children, staff and families

This Policy relates to the following National Law, Regulations, Standards and Quality Areas:

Children's Services Act 1996

Children's Services Regulations 2009

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

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Rationale

The sun's UV can't be seen or felt. 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. More than two in three Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime. Over-exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UV) in childhood is a major risk factor for developing skin cancer later in life. 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). By teaching sensible sun protection habits from an early age and implementing best-practice sun protection measures, early childhood services can play a significant role toward reducing the life time risk of skin cancer.

The sun protection policy has been developed to ensure that all children, employees and visitors attending the centre are protected from skin damage caused by harmful UV radiation from the sun, particularly when the UV levels are 3 and above.

In Tasmania, the UV is 3 and above from September to April.

Objectives

- Ensure all children, educators and staff are protected from over-exposure to UV;
- Educate staff and children on appropriate sun protection;
- Ensure the outdoor environment provides shade for children, educators and staff;
- Support duty of care and regulatory requirements; and
- Support appropriate WHS strategies to minimise UV risk and associated harms for educators, staff and visitors.

Sample SunSmart Policy for Early Learning Services



Procedures

- To assist with the implementation of this policy, educators and staff are encouraged to access, display and communicate the local sun protection times on a daily basis at <http://www.cancertas.org.au/>, <http://www.bom.gov.au/tas/uv/>, www.myuv.com or on the free SunSmart Global UV app.
- The sun protection measures listed below are used for all outdoor activities during the daily local sun protection times. In Tasmania average peak UV levels reach 3 and above from September to April.

Environment

Seek shade (QA 2, 3 and 7)

The service is committed to providing shade (natural, built or temporary) in areas where children gather such as play areas.

The use of these areas is actively encouraged for outdoor play and considered when planning outdoor activities such as excursions. Where possible, minimise outdoor time between 11am-3pm.

Children are encouraged to choose and use available areas of shade when outside.

In consultation with the service's committee, shade provision is considered in future plans and upgrades.

A shade assessment is conducted regularly to determine the current availability and quality of shade. Children without a sun-safe hat or clothing are required to play in areas protected from the sun.

Behaviours (QA 2, 3 7)

Slap on a sun protective hat

All educators, staff and children are required to wear sun-safe hats that protect the face, neck and ears when outside. Recommended sun-safe hats include legionnaire, broad-brimmed and bucket hats. Caps and sun visors do not offer enough protection and are not recommended. Children without a sun protective hat are provided with a spare hat where possible.

Slip on sun-protective clothing

Staff, educators and children are required to wear sun-safe clothing that covers as much of the skin as possible. Tops should have long or three quarter length sleeves, preferably with a collar. Shorts, pants and skirts should be long or at least knee length. Clothing exposing large amounts of shoulder and upper torso (singlets, tank tops and strappy dresses) are not considered suitable and children will be asked to choose a t-shirt/shirt to wear over this before going outdoors.

Slop on sunscreen

SPF 50 broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen is supplied by the service and/or families. Sunscreen is to be applied at least 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapplied every 2 hours or more frequently if swimming or heavily sweating. Sunscreen is stored in a supervised, cool, dry place, out of the sun and the expiry date monitored.

To help develop independent skills ready for school, children from three years of age are encouraged and given opportunities to apply their own sunscreen under supervision of staff.

Parents are encouraged to apply sunscreen to children before attending the service.

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.

Sample SunSmart Policy for Early Learning Services



Slide on sunglasses [if practical] (QA 1, 2, 4, 5)

Where practical children 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.

Scheduling outdoor activities

Ensure SunSmart policy is reflected in the planning of all outdoor events and excursions.

From September to April: minimise activities in direct sun between 11am and 3pm.

Sun protection practices are required at all times when UV is 3 or above. Where possible, activities are scheduled outside of the peak UV times of the day when the UV radiation levels are at their highest.

Special note regarding infants

Our SunSmart practices consider the special needs of infants. All babies under 12 months are kept out of direct sun when UV levels are 3 or higher. Our service acknowledges that 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 exposed skin not protected by clothing or hats, we apply approved sunscreen to infants six months and older.

Occupational, Health and Safety

- As part of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) UV risk controls and role-modelling, educators, staff and visitors:
 - wear a suitable sun-protective hat, covering clothing and, if practical, sunglasses;
 - apply SPF50 sunscreen; and
 - seek shade whenever possible.
- Sun protection considerations and actions are included in risk assessments for excursions and excursion checklists.

Learning and skills

Sun protection information will be promoted to staff, families and visitors. SunSmart policy updates and requirements will be made available to staff, families and visitors.

- 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.
- Educators, staff and families are provided with information about sun protection through family newsletters, service handbook, noticeboards and the service's website.
- Children are encouraged to be involved in initiatives to promote and model sun protection measures at the service including taking leadership roles in managing sun protection e.g., accessing daily sun protection times, hat reminders and supporting sunscreen application.

When enrolling their child, families are:

- informed of the service's SunSmart policy;

Sample SunSmart Policy for Early Learning Services



- asked to provide a suitable sun protective hat, covering clothing and sunscreen for their child;
- asked to provide written authority for staff to apply sunscreen to their child; and
- encouraged to use SunSmart measures themselves when at the service

Monitoring and Review

- All staff, monitor and review the effectiveness of our SunSmart policy (with input from families where possible) and revise the policy as required.
- The service's Sun Smart Policy will be updated and submitted to Cancer Council Tasmania every three years to maintain SunSmart status.
- As registered SunSmart members, we have submitted a copy of our policy to SunSmart and commit to implementing the sun protection measures as documented.
- Our SunSmart policy is available to staff, families and visitors.

Policy date:

Review date:

Relevant documents / links

[Work Health and Safety Act 2012 Tasmania](#)

<https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety>

<http://www.generationsunsmart.com.au/>

<https://www.sunsmart.com.au/>

[Sun protection advice for parents and carers](#)

[Sun protection information in different languages](#)

[Safe Work Australia: Guide on exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation \(UVR\)](#)

Please Note: Cancer Council Tasmania recognises the importance of and encourages regular outdoor play for children. The above recommendations help to ensure this can occur in a safe way.

This information is based on current evidence available at time of review. Last updated: July 2023.

For more information

e: sunsmart@cancertas.org.au w: www.cancertas.org.au/prevent-cancer/sunsmart/