



Introduction

Exposure to Ultra-violet Rays (UVR) poses significant health risks including sunburn, skin cancer, eye damage, dehydration and heat illness. Children typically attend early childhood education and care centres when daily ultraviolet (UV) radiation levels are at their peak. Therefore, educators are uniquely placed to encourage and advocate for sun protection and minimise UVR exposure.

UVR risks need to be balanced with the health, developmental and learning benefits of outdoor play and physical activity, and the benefits of exposure to sunlight. Sunlight is the best source of vitamin D, which is essential for good health. Sensible sun protection does not put people at risk of vitamin D deficiency.

Five strategies of sun protection

1. Slip on sun safe clothing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear tightly woven fabric, high collars, long sleeves and long pants to cover exposed skin. Wear short sleeved shirts and shorts/skirts (assuming exposed skin has sunscreen applied and hats are worn).
2. Slop on sunscreen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply broad spectrum, water resistant SPF50+ sunscreen 20mins before going outdoors and every 2hrs. With educator support, encourage children to apply their own sunscreen.
3. Slap on a hat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear a hat that protects the face, neck, ears, back of neck and crown of head e.g. bucket-style legionnaire or broad-brimmed hat. No baseball, peaked caps, or visors. Centres will provide spare sun safe hats for children, staff or visitors as required. Launder after each use. Children, staff and visitors not wearing hats are encouraged to spend time in the shade or indoors.
4. Seek shade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and teach children to seek and play in shaded areas. Playgrounds will provide built and natural shade.
5. Slide on sunglasses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear sunglasses that meet Australian Standards (encouraged but optional).

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- Consider sun safe clothing for child.
- Provide a named sun safe hat for child daily.
- Apply sunscreen to child at home or upon centre arrival and record via *Sunscreen Register*. If sunscreen is applied upon arrival, your child will be asked to spend time in shaded areas for 20 minutes.
- If preferred, provide a sunscreen product of your choice and record request via *Sunscreen Form*. Sunscreen supplied must be clearly labelled with child's name, meet Australian Regulatory Guidelines and be 50+SPF broad spectrum and water resistant. Maintain supply and replace promptly when requested by staff.

Teacher/Educator Responsibilities

Sunscreen

Application

- Educators will apply sunscreen to children at arrival if not applied by parents/guardians.
- As per *Cancer Council Guidelines*, reapply sunscreen every 2hrs or if the sunscreen has washed off.
- Apply sunscreen sparingly on infants less than 6mths of age
- When sunscreen is supplied by parent/guardian, only apply to relevant child. Inform families promptly when sunscreen supply is low.
- When a parent/guardian does not provide their consent to apply sunscreen to their child, document and implement a risk management plan for child. Implement remaining sun safe strategies as listed above.

Sunscreen register

- Maintain a sunscreen register for each room/group. Branch centres refer to *Creating and printing a weekly Roll and Sunscreen Record (All Centres) Procedure*.
- Record sunscreen applications.
- Archive completed sunscreen registers for 3yrs after the child's last day of attendance.

Supply and storage

- Maintain a supply sunscreen (50+SPF broad spectrum and water resistant) for communal use.

- Store sunscreen in a location that is cool (below 30°C) and inaccessible to children when not in use.
- Do not use expired sunscreen. Discard when expired.
- Keep Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for individual sunscreen products.

Managing the risks of the sun

Minimise UVR exposure of infants (0-12 months)

- Whenever possible, plan indoor activities between 10am and 3pm.
- Adjust activities to occur in available shade.

Hydration

- Provide children with easy access to clean, drinking water throughout the day.
- Encourage and ensure children to drink water throughout the day.

Extreme Ultra-Violet (UV) Radiation

- The UV index in Queensland is always at level that requires the implementation of sun safety strategies all year round. Centres will access the [SunSmart App](#), to support informed decisions regarding outdoor activities.

Extreme heat and sun exposure

Heatwave conditions occur when excessively high temperatures are combined with high humidity levels and are sustained over days. Young children and older adults are at risk during extreme heat conditions. Teachers and educators will:

- Monitor children (and each other) for heat-related illness signs such as swelling of hands and feet, prickly heat, cramps, exhaustion and heatstroke.
- Provide accessible drinking water to children, staff and visitors.
- When applicable and whilst remaining sun smart, reduce clothing or dress children in loose fitted clothing.
- When outside, encourage children to seek shade.
- Adapt program to suit local weather conditions.
- Use cooling devices such as air conditioners and fans.
- Provide children opportunities for water play.
- Draw blinds and curtains to keep heat out.
- Ensure centre pets/animals are kept out of the sun and have plenty of water and ventilation.
- Document and implement [Extreme Heat and Sun Exposure](#) risk minimising strategies specific to your centre location with consideration to:
 - Amount and quality of shade
 - Promoting children's understanding of sun safety
 - Sufficient supplies of sun protection items
 - Ensuring sun safe appropriate clothing is worn
 - Maintaining hydration
 - Monitoring signs of heat stress or sun stroke
 - consider having infra-red guns to test outdoor equipment temperatures before allowing children to play, cool down cement paths with water, reminders for children to wear shoes.

Communication with children and families

- Promote sun protection strategies by acting as a positive role model.
- Provide families with regular sun safety information e.g. newsletters and centre displays.
- Incorporate sun safety concepts in the learning program:
 - Facilitate planned and spontaneous discussions.
 - Encourage children to consider peak UV times by referring to clock SunSmart App.
 - Create sunscreen station(s) i.e. mirror, sunscreen, wipes/tissues, register.
 - Display and refer to [Sun Safety Poster](#).
 - Hats are non-negotiable when spending time in the sun.

Acknowledgements

- Cancer Council Australia: [Sun protection](#)
- Cancer Council Australia: [Position Statement - Sun Protection and Infants](#)
- Cancer Council Queensland: [Early Childhood Settings: Sun Smart Policy Guidelines](#)