

Introduction

Exposure to Ultra-violet Rays (UVR) can pose significant health risks to children and adults, including sunburn, skin cancer and melanoma, 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

Display and refer to the *C&K Be Sun Safe Poster*.

- Slip

 **Slip on sun safe clothing**

 - 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).
- Slop

 **Slop on sunscreen**

 - Apply broad spectrum, water resistant SPF50+ sunscreen 20mins before going outdoors and every 2hrs.
 - With educator support, encourage children apply their own sunscreen.
- Slap

 **Slap on a hat**

 - 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. Baseball, peaked caps and visors are not sun safe.
 - Parents / guardians are required to provide a suitable hat (named) for their child daily.
 - Centres will have spare sun safe hats for children, staff or visitors who do not have a hat. Launder after each use.
 - Children, staff and visitors not wearing hats are required to spend time in the shade or indoors.
- Seek

 **Seek shade**

 - Encourage and teach children to seek and play in shaded areas.
 - Playgrounds will provide built and natural shade.
- Slide

 **Slide on sunglasses**

 - Wear sunglasses that meet Australian standards.

Sunscreen

Parental choice

- Parents / guardians can supply their own sunscreen for their child and required to complete the *Sunscreen Form*.
- Sunscreen supplied must meet Australian Regulatory Guidelines and be 50+SPF broad spectrum, water resistant and must be used for that child only. Educators will inform the child's parent / guardian when sunscreen supply is low, to allow time to source and supply more product.
- If a parent / guardian does not permit sunscreen to be applied to their child or 'home made' screen is applied by parents / guardians, educators will implement other sun protection strategies.

Parental authorisation

- Centre supplied sunscreen can be applied when written consent of the child's parent / guardian has been obtained via the *Enrolment Booklet*.

Application

- Parents / guardians are asked to apply sunscreen to their child daily prior to or immediately upon arrival and complete the sunscreen register. Educators will perform this task if not actioned by parents.
- If sunscreen is applied upon arrival at the centre, the child will be asked to spend time in shaded areas for 20 minutes before spending time in the sun.
- As per *Cancer Council Guidelines*, sunscreen is reapplied every 2hrs or if the sunscreen has washed off.

Sunscreen register

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

Supply and storage

- Centres will 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 Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for each sunscreen product / brand.

Managing the risks of the sun

Minimise UVR exposure of infants (0-12 months)

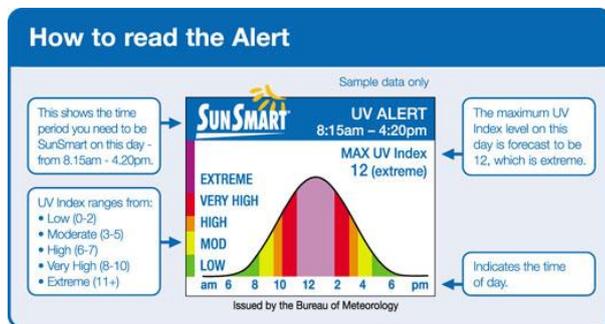
- Whenever possible, plan indoor activities between 10am and 3pm.
- Adjust activities to occur in available shade.
- Applying sunscreen sparingly on infants less than 6mths of age.

Hydration

- Drinking plenty of fluids, particularly water, is vital in minimising the risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- Centres will provide easy access to clean, drinking water throughout the day.
- Educators will encourage and ensure children drink water throughout the day.

Extreme Ultra-Violet (UV) Radiation

- UV radiation can be high, even on cool and overcast days. Clear skies and high temperatures do not determine high UVR levels.
- The UV index in Queensland is always at level that requires the implementation of sun safety strategies. Therefore, sun protection strategies are required all year round.
- Centres are encouraged to source the daily UV index for their location via the [Cancer Council Australia](#) website, to make informed decisions regarding activity and time spent in the sun.



- A document a *Risk Assessment* is required when outdoor activities take place in peak UVR times. The following items must be considered:
 - 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
 - In areas that regularly experience extreme high temperatures: 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.

Extreme heat / heatwave

- 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.
- 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, seek shade.
- Decisions to adapt the program to suit local weather are made at the discretion of the director.
- Use cooling devices such as air conditioners and fans.
- Provide children opportunities for water play.
- Draw blinds and curtains to keep heat out.
- Ensure any centre pets / animals are kept out of the sun and have plenty of water and ventilation.

Communication with children and families

- Educators will promote sun protection strategies by acting as positive role models.
- Centres will provide families with regular sun safety information (e.g. newsletters and centre displays).
- Educators will incorporate sun protection information within the learning program:
 - Facilitate planned and spontaneous discussions.
 - Encourage children to consider peak UV times (when the sun is strongest) by referring to clock.
 - Create sunscreen station(s) (i.e. mirror, sunscreen, wipes / tissues, register).
 - Refer to children to the *C&K Be Sun Safe poster*.
 - Hats are non-negotiable when spending time in the sun.

Acknowledgements

- Bureau of Meteorology: [Ultraviolet \(UV\) Index Forecast](#)
- Cancer Council Australia: [Sun protection](#)
- Cancer Council Australia: [Position Statement - Sun Protection and Infants](#)
- Cancer Council Queensland: [Early Childhood Settings: Sun Smart Policy Guidelines](#)