

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.

Definition

Heatwave	Heatwave conditions occur when excessively high temperatures are combined with high humidity levels and are sustained over days. That means, although the predicted maximum temperature for a region may be in the mid-to-high 30s, unless this coincides with high humidity and lasts for a few days, it is considered 'hot' rather than a 'heat wave'.
-----------------	--

Five strategies of sun protection

<p>1. Slip on sun safe clothing</p> 	<p>Slip</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tightly woven fabric, high collars, long sleeves and long pants to cover exposed skin. Short sleeved shirts and shorts / skirts are acceptable, assuming exposed skin has sunscreen applied and hats are worn. Staff, parents / guardians and visitors will act as positive role models for children by wearing recommended clothing.
<p>2. Slop on sunscreen*</p> 	<p>Slop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply broad spectrum, water resistant SPF50+ sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and every two (2) hours. With educator support, children are encouraged to apply their own sunscreen. Refer to <i>Be sun safe</i> poster for further information.
<p>3. Slap on a hat</p> 	<p>Slap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear a suitable hat that protects the face, neck, ears, back of neck and crown of head. This can be a bucket-style legionnaire or broad-brimmed hat. Avoid baseball, peaked caps or sun visors. Parents / guardians are required to provide a suitable hat (named) for their child daily. Services will have spare suitable hats for children, staff or visitors who do not have a hat. Spare hats are required to be laundered after each use. Staff will ensure children who are not wearing hats play in shaded areas when outdoors.

<p>4. Seek shade</p> <p>Seek</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will actively encourage and teach children to seek and play in shaded areas. • Playgrounds will provide built and natural shade.
<p>5. Slide on sunglasses</p> <p>Slide</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children, staff and visitors are encouraged to wear sun glasses that meet Australian standards, i.e.: the minimum requirement intended for protection against solar radiation for general use

Sunscreen

Parental choice

- Parents / guardians can elect to supply their own sunscreen for their child. The *Form Sunscreen* should be completed by the parent / guardian if they supply their own sunscreen.
- Educators will only apply sunscreen that meets Australian Regulatory Guidelines. Educators are unable to apply 'home made' sunscreen.
- 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

- At the time of enrolment (via *Enrolment Booklet*), parents / guardians are asked to provide written authorisation for educators to apply sunscreen to their child.
- Sunscreen can be applied when written consent of the child's parent / guardian has been obtained.

Application

- Parents / guardians are asked to apply sunscreen to their child's exposed skin daily prior to or immediately upon arrival and complete the sunscreen register.
- If parents / guardians have not applied sunscreen, educators will apply and complete the sunscreen register.
- Sunscreen should be applied at least 20 minutes before spending time in the sun. If a child arrives at the centre without sunscreen applied, the child will be asked to play in shaded areas for 20 minutes before spending time in the sun.
- As per Cancer Council Guidelines, sunscreen must be reapplied every two (2) hours or if the sunscreen has washed off.
- Re-application of sunscreen is recorded on the sunscreen register.

Sunscreen register

- Services are required to create and print a weekly sunscreen register for each room / group. Branch services may complete this task via Kidsoft (refer to Procedure Rolls, Sunscreen Records and Sign In Out - Kindergarten or Procedure Printing Rolls and Sunscreen - Childcare.)
- The register is completed by parents / guardians and educators whenever sunscreen is applied / reapplied.

- Sunscreen registers must be retained/ archived for three years after the child's last day of attendance.

Supply and storage

- A centre will supply sunscreen (50+SPF broad spectrum and water resistant) for communal use.
- Where a parent / guardian supplies sunscreen for their child, it must be 50+SPF broad spectrum, water resistant and must be used for that child only. Educators will inform the child's parent / guardian if the sunscreen supply is low, to allow time for the parent / guardian to source and supply.
- Sunscreen must be stored in a cool place (below 30°C) and be inaccessible to children when not in use.
- Expired sunscreen will not be used and must be immediately discarded.
- Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) must be kept for each sunscreen product / brand.

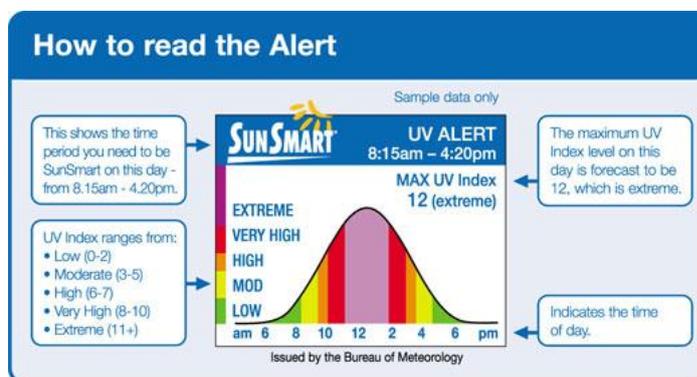
Educators will minimise exposure of infants (0-12 months) to UVR by:

- Planning activities to minimise exposure to the sun, especially between 10am and 3pm.
- Covering as much skin as possible with loose fitting, sun smart clothing.
- Choosing a hat with a broad-brim or in a legionnaire style.
- Making use of available shade.
- Checking clothing, hat and shade positioning regularly to maximise sun protection.
- Applying sunscreen sparingly on infants less than six (6) months of age.

Managing the risks of the sun

Extreme Ultra Violet 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, educators will implement sun protection strategies throughout the year - including winter months.
- Cancer Council Australia sources the daily UV index. Services are encouraged to access and determine the daily UV index to effectively implement and adjust sun smart practices.



- A detailed *Form Risk assessment* is required when outdoor activities take place in peak UVR times. The following items should be considered:
 - UVR levels
 - Routine daily outdoor activities, excursions, special outdoor activities and events
 - Excessive heat and / or longer than normal periods of extreme level UVR
 - Increasing the amount and quality of shaded outdoor areas
 - Encouraging and teaching positive sun care behaviour
 - Having sufficient supplies of sun protection items
 - Ensuring appropriate clothing is worn
 - Maintaining hydration
 - Monitoring for signs and symptoms of heat stress or sun stroke.

Extreme heat / heatwave

- Young children and older adults are most at risk during extreme heat conditions when the temperatures reach approximately 5⁰C above the average for sustained periods of time.
- Heat-related conditions range from swelling of hands and feet, prickly heat, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and fatal heatstroke. For further information regarding heat-related conditions, treatment and prevention visit the [QLD Health Website](#).
- Provide adequate and 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. During extreme heat, keep out of the sun as much as possible. Routines and activities should be re-organised to limit the exposure to the sun, especially during the hotter times of the day.
- Use cooling devices such as air conditioners and fans.
- Provide children opportunities for water play and risk assess accordingly
- 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.

Hydration

- Inking plenty of fluids, particularly water, is vital in minimizing the risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- Services will provide easy access to clean, drinking water throughout the day.
- Educators will encourage and ensure children drink sufficient amounts of water throughout the day, particularly during outdoor and physical activity.

Communication with children and families

- Educators will promote sun protection strategies by acting as positive role models.
- Services will provide families with sun safety information at and throughout enrolment (e.g. newsletters and centre displays).
- Educators will incorporate sun protection information within the learning program:
 - Facilitate planned and spontaneous discussions with children regarding sun safety.
 - Encourage children to consider what they need to remember before spending time in the sun.

- 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 *Be Sun safe* poster.
- Children to develop an understanding that hats are non-negotiable when spending time in the sun.

Acknowledgements

- Bureau of Meteorology. 2012. *Ultraviolet (UV) index forecast*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.bom.gov.au/qld/uv/index.shtml>. [Accessed August 2017].
- Cancer Council Australia. 2012. *Sun protection*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.cancer.org.au/preventing-cancer/sun-protection/>. [Accessed August 2017].
- Cancer Council Australia. 2017. *Position statement: Sun protection and infants (0-12 months)*. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://wiki.cancer.org.au/policy/Position_statement_-_Sun_protection_and_infants_\(0-12_months\)](http://wiki.cancer.org.au/policy/Position_statement_-_Sun_protection_and_infants_(0-12_months))
[http://wiki.cancer.org.au/policy/Position statement - Sun protection and infants \(0-12 months\)](http://wiki.cancer.org.au/policy/Position_statement_-_Sun_protection_and_infants_(0-12_months)) [Accessed August 2017].
- Cancer Council Queensland. 2015. *Early childhood settings: Sun smart policy guidelines*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.cancer.org.au/preventing-cancer/sun-protection/sunsmart-schools/> [Accessed August 2017].