

Sample SunSmart policy for early childhood services



Services are welcome to copy this SunSmart policy directly and use it as their own or incorporate all of the main points into their own SunSmart policy.

< service>'s SUNSMART policy

This policy applies to all service events on and off site.

Rationale

It's important to have a healthy balance of ultraviolet radiation (UV) exposure. Too much of the sun's UV can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Overexposure to UV during childhood and adolescence is a major factor in determining future skin cancer risk. Too little UV from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is necessary for the development and maintenance of healthy bones and muscles, and for general health.

Objectives

This SunSmart Policy has been developed to:

- Ensure all children and staff get some UV for vitamin D.
- Encourage children and staff to use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV Index levels reach 3 and above to minimise skin and eye damage and skin cancer risk.
- Work towards a safe outdoor environment that provides shade for children and staff at appropriate times.
- Assist children to be responsible for their own sun protection.
- Ensure that families and new staff are informed of the service's SunSmart policy.

Staff are encouraged to access the SunSmart UV Alert at sunsmart.com.au <or on your own service website> to find out daily local sun protection times to assist with the implementation of this policy.

We use a combination of sun protection measures for all outdoor activities from **September to the end of April** and whenever UV levels reach 3 and above, the level that can damage skin and eyes.

- Our SunSmart practises consider the special needs of infants. All babies under 12 months are kept out of direct sun when UV levels are three and above.

1. Shade

- A shade audit is conducted regularly to determine the current availability and quality of shade.

- Management makes sure there is a sufficient number of shelters and trees providing shade in the outdoor area.
- The availability of shade is considered when planning excursions and all other outdoor activities.
- Children are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outside.
- Children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are asked to play in the shade or a suitable area protected from the sun.

2. Clothing

- When outside, children are required to wear loose fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible. Clothing made from cool, densely woven fabric is recommended. Tops with elbow length sleeves, and if possible, collars and knee length or longer style shorts and skirts are best. If a child is wearing a singlet top or dress they wear a t-shirt/ shirt over the top before going outdoors.

3. Hats

- **All** children are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears, i.e. legionnaire, broad-brimmed or bucket hats. Baseball or peak caps are not considered a suitable alternative.

4. Sunglasses [OPTIONAL]

- Children and staff are encouraged to 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.

5. Sunscreen

- SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen is available for staff and children's use.
- Sunscreen is applied at least 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapplied every two hours if outdoors.
- With parental consent, children with naturally very dark skin are not required to wear sunscreen to help with vitamin D requirements.
- From 3 years of age, children are encouraged to apply their own sunscreen under supervision of staff.

When enrolling their child, families are:

- Informed of the service's SunSmart policy
- Asked to provide a suitable hat for their child
- Asked to provide their child with suitable outdoor clothing that is cool and covers as much skin as

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possible (i.e. that cover the shoulders and chest, upper arms and legs)

- Asked to provide SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen for their child
- Required to give permission for staff to apply sunscreen to their child
- Encouraged to practise SunSmart behaviours themselves when at the service

Staff OHS and Role modelling

As part of OHS UV risk controls and role-modelling, when the UV is 3 and above staff:

- wear sun protective hats, clothing and sunglasses when outside
- apply SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen
- seek shade whenever possible

Families and visitors are requested to use a combination of sun protection measures (sun protective clothing and hats, shade, sunglasses and sunscreen) when attending the service.

Planned experiences

- Programs on sun protection and vitamin D are incorporated into planned experiences.
- The SunSmart policy is reinforced through staff and children's activities and displays.
- Staff and families are provided with information on sun protection and vitamin D through family newsletters, noticeboards and meetings.

Review

- Management and staff monitor and review the effectiveness of the SunSmart policy and revise the policy when required (at least once every three years).

Next policy review:

Relevant Documents / Links

- Children's Services Regulations (2009): Section 97, Outdoor space (1c)
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)
- National Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)

- National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care
- Building Quality Standards Handbook (BQSH): Section 7.5.5 Shade Areas
- Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Radiation Protection Standard for Occupational Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation (2006)
- Safe Work Australia: Guidance Note for the Protection of Workers from the Ultraviolet Radiation in Sunlight

Relevant resources

- **SunSmart UV Alert:** The SunSmart UV Alert indicates daily weather forecasts including temperature, local UV levels and times sun protection is or isn't needed. This is available in the weather section of the newspaper, on the SunSmart website at sunsmart.com.au, as a free iPhone app or as a widget that you can add to your website. It even includes a vitamin D tracker and sunscreen application reminder.
- **Creating effective shade:** This online shade audit tool allows you to assess whether the existing shade at your service is adequate. It also helps you develop a list of practical recommendations to improve both built and natural shade sunsmart.com.au/shading-audit/intro
- **Create your own SunSmart poster:** online SunSmart poster templates where children choose the scene, text, upload an image of their own face to place into the scene and print off their very own poster with them as the SunSmart star. There are sun protection, vitamin D and snow posters to choose from www.sunsmart.com.au/createposter
- **Be SunSmart, Play SunSmart** by Anne Stonehouse - with suggested play experiences - incorporates concepts from the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework sunsmart.com.au
- **SunSmart Countdown:** song and associated activities sunsmart.com.au/protecting_others/at_school/sunsmart_countdown
- **Generation SunSmart** - online learning modules for educators at generationsunsmart.com.au - helps meet Professional learning requirements

This information is based on current available evidence at the time of review. It can be photocopied for distribution. Latest update: December 2011