

# Sample sun protection policy for early childhood centres



The Cancer Society recognise that a balance is required between avoiding an increase in the risk of skin cancer and getting enough sun exposure for children to maintain adequate vitamin D levels, particularly in the winter months. Between May and August the UVI is 3 or under in most parts of New Zealand, especially in the South, so it is recommended that children do NOT wear hats, sunscreen or play in the shade during these months. During the winter months, encourage children to actively enjoy the sun.

This policy is adopted from **(DATE)** so that children attending **(NAME OF CENTRE)** are protected from harmful UVR from the sun.

## Aim

**<Name of centre>** SunSmart policy has been developed to ensure that all children and staff are protected from damaging levels of UVR from the sun.

## Our sun protection strategy:

All children and staff use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV Index levels are 3 and above. Particular care is taken between September and April (between 10am and 4pm) when UV levels reach their peak.

## 1. Shade

There are natural shelters, such as trees and other shade areas providing enough coverage for all children playing outside. The availability of shade is considered when planning outdoor activities at the centre and excursions outside of the centre.

Children are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outside. Children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are required to play in the shade or indoors.

As part of centre planning, the leadership team will consider how to increase shade where it is lacking.

**Early childhood centres are welcome to use this sun protection policy directly or incorporate it into your own sun protection policy.**

## Rationale

Excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) from the sun causes sunburn, skin damage and increases the risk of skin cancer.

New Zealand, along with Australia, has the highest melanoma rates in the world. One or more episodes of sunburn in childhood and adolescence have been shown to increase the risk of melanoma later in life.

This policy should be followed whenever the ultraviolet index (UVI) levels reach 3 and above. For most parts of New Zealand this is between September and April, especially between 10am and 4pm.



## 2. Clothing

When outside, children are to wear loose fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible. Parents are encouraged to dress children in tops with elbow length sleeves, and if possible, collars and knee length or longer style shorts and skirts.

Some cover up clothing is provided at the centre if required.

We encourage rash tops for water play. (optional)

## 3. Hats

Children are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears, legionnaire, broad-brimmed (minimum 7.5 cm brim) or deep crown bucket hat (minimum 6 cm brim).

(Please note: Baseball caps do not offer enough protection and are therefore not recommended.) It is recommended that the centre provide a personal sunhat for each child to use.

## 4. Sunscreen

It is recommended that a water-resistant, broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 is available for staff and children's use.

Sunscreen is applied at least 20 minutes before going outdoors and re-applied every two hours. It must not be used to extend time outside. If children are playing in water, sunscreen must also be water resistant.

This policy will form part of any risk assessment for activities/trips outside the centre.

Centre's may wish to have a sunscreen application chart to facilitate identification of which children need re-application of sunscreen and when

## 5. Sunglasses

A good hat significantly reduces the level of UVR reaching the eyes. If parents want their children to also wear sunglasses, these should be close fitting and cover as much of the eye area as possible. Sunglasses should meet the Aus/NZ Standard 1067.

## Role modelling

Staff act as role models by:

- wearing sun protective hats and clothing, and sunglasses when outside

- applying broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 and re-applying every 2 hours.
- using shade whenever possible.

## Sharing information about sun protection

The children learn about skin and ways to protect their skin from the sun. The sun protection policy is reinforced through staff and children's activities, and centre/pre-school displays. Staff and families are provided with information on sun protection at enrolment and through family newsletters, notice boards and meetings. When enrolling their child, families are:

- Informed of the centre / pre-school's sun protection policy
- Asked to ensure their child wears sun protective clothing (and to provide a suitable hat if the centre does not provide one).
- Asked to provide a water-resistant, broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 for their child (if not provided by the centre).
- Required to give permission for staff to apply sunscreen to their child.
- Encouraged to practice SunSmart behaviours themselves when at the centre / pre-school and in the home environment.
- Required to provide an appropriate sunscreen if a child has allergies or sensitivity to sunscreen provided by the centre.

## Review

Management and staff monitor and review the effectiveness of the sun protection policy every three years and revise the policy when required.

Policy Prepared by:

Name or title

on (Date)

Policy approved by:

Name or title

on (Date)

Policy will be reviewed on

(Date)

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## Useful links

- To find out the Ultra Violet Radiation (UVR) levels in your area, check the Sun Protection Alert on the MetService website or download the free UV2Day Smartphone app which will give you an indication of the UVR over the course of the day.
- Staff and parents can learn all about why it's important to be SunSmart and how to do it by completing the free online training module:
- See the Cancer Society Early Childhood SunSmart PD module.

Tips and resources can be accessed from these websites:

- <http://www.undercovercody.co.nz/>. Undercover Cody is the Waikato/Bay of Plenty SunSmart mascot
- [www.cancernz.org.nz](http://www.cancernz.org.nz)

For further information about sun protection, please contact your local Cancer Society or email Cancer Society at: [admin@cancer.org.nz](mailto:admin@cancer.org.nz)