



Factsheet for Families

Sun safety in child care

According to Cancer Council Australia, two in three Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer by the time they are 70. We can reduce the risk of our children developing skin cancer later in life by adopting some simple sun protection measures now, and the early and middle childhood years are a good time to start children learning lifelong sun safe habits. Your child care service should have a sun protection policy that has been based on information from an authority such as your state or territory Cancer Council.

Why is being sun safe important for your child?

Young children are especially susceptible to skin damage from the sun because they have very little pigment, known as 'melanin', in their skin to protect them from sunburn.

A lot of permanent skin damage, which can result in moles, freckles, wrinkles and skin cancer later in life, occurs in early and middle childhood. Also, depending on the extent of the sunburn, the effects can range from being uncomfortable to extremely painful, and other potential health risks include infection (from the burn), dehydration and heat stroke.

What may your service ask you to do to protect your child from the sun while at child care?

Your service may ask you to:

- Dress your child in clothes that offer good protection from the sun, such as sleeved and collared shirts and longer shorts/skirts/dresses
- Provide a hat for your child that has a broad brim or has a flap at the front and back (legionnaire style) to protect the face, ears and neck
- Apply sunscreen to your child prior to or on arrival at the service.

Some services may also request that older children be provided with sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard for sunglasses (AS/NZS 1067:2003).

How will your service protect your child from the sun?

The Cancer Council Australia recommends implementing sun safe factors when the UV rating is 3 and above. Because the climate varies across the country, the UV rating will also vary between each state and territory and at different times of the year. Therefore every service will implement their policy differently, but there are some basic practices that should be a regular part of everyday sun safety for children and adults. These include:

- During outdoor times, wearing clothing that offers protection from the sun, such as sleeved shirts and longer shorts and skirts
- Applying sunscreen
- Wearing sun safe hats when outdoors
- Encouraging older children to wear sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard for sunglasses
- Making use of shaded areas when outdoors
- Avoiding the outdoors during peak UV times
- Educators adopting sun safe behaviour and setting positive examples for children
- Teaching children about sun safety and assisting them to become independent in protecting themselves from the sun.

To find out about our service's sun safe policy and procedures please speak to:

or telephone: