

Sun protection policy for early childhood centres

Gawler East Preschool

This policy applies to all centre events on and off site from 1 September to 30 April and whenever ultra violet (UV) radiation levels reach 3 or above at other times and NOT just during terms one and four. Only using sun protection during these terms means children, educators and staff are not protected from UV radiation when they need to be.

Rationale

A balance of ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure is important for health. Too much of the sun's UV radiation can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Sun exposure in the first ten years of life is a major factor in determining future skin cancer risk. Too little UV radiation from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is essential for healthy bones and muscles and for general health.

Objectives

This sun protection policy has been developed to:

- encourage children and staff to use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV Index levels reach 3 and above
- support development and work towards a safe outdoor environment that provides shade for children and staff at appropriate times
- ensure all children and staff have some UV radiation exposure for vitamin D
- assist children to be responsible for their own sun protection
- ensure families and new staff are informed of the centre's sun protection policy.

Procedures

Staff are encouraged to access the SunSmart UV Alert at <http://www.bom.gov.au/sa/uv> 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 1 September to 30 April and whenever UV radiation levels reach 3 and above at other times.

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 under the verandah or inside – No hat play in shade”.

2. Clothing

When outside, loose fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible should be worn. Clothing made from cool, closely woven fabric is recommended. Tops with elbow length sleeves, collars and knee length or longer style shorts and skirts are best. Sleeveless clothing can only be worn indoors.

The preschool has appropriate UV protective shirts for sale and sun safe clothing will be offered if needed and available.

3. Hats

All children are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears, i.e. legionnaire, broad-brimmed or bucket hats (minimum 5cm brim). Baseball or peak caps are not considered a suitable alternative. Children may wear a beanie or hoodie until UV radiation levels reach 3 or above, when a suitable sun hat will be required.

Bucket style hats are available for sale and spare hats are generally not available.

4. Sunscreen

- Children should arrive at preschool wearing SPF 30 or higher broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen or apply it on arrival, when the UV rating is forecasted to be 3 or above.
- SPF 30 or higher, broad spectrum and water resistant sunscreen is available for staff and children's use
- sunscreen is applied at morning group time to allow for activation before outdoor play in peak UV times
- children are encouraged to apply their own sunscreen under the supervision of staff.

On enrolment families are:

- informed of the centre's sun protection 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 possible (i.e. covering the shoulders, chest, upper arms and legs)
- required to give permission for their child to use and apply the sunscreen provided by the centre
- asked to provide SPF 30 or higher, broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen for their child if there is an allergy or sensitivity to the sunscreen being provided by the centre.
- encouraged to practice sun protection measures when attending the centre.

Staff WHS and role modelling

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

- wear sun protective hats (minimum 6cm brim), clothing and sunglasses (optional) when outside
- apply SPF 30 or higher 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 and the UV radiation levels are 3 and above.

Planned experiences

- Sun protection and vitamin D are incorporated into the learning and development program.
- The sun protection policy is reinforced through staff and children's activities and displays.
- Staff and families are provided with a copy of this policy and information on sun exposure, skin protection and vitamin D through various means (e.g. newsletters, bulletin boards etc.)

Date of next policy review : August 201