

SUNSMART POLICY



POLICY STATEMENT

To minimise exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun which causes sunburn, skin damage and increases the risk of skin cancer, as well as ensuring Vitamin D needs are met.

RATIONALE

Australia has the highest skin cancer rates in the world, this is due to our predominantly fair skin and geographical location. Childhood and adolescent exposure play a significant role in the future development of skin cancer, including melanoma.

This policy is a requirement of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011 that require the centre to maintain a policy regarding sun protection [Regulation 168 (2)(a)(ii)].

STRATEGIES

RECC was awarded SunSmart status in 2013 by the Cancer Council ACT, for developing and implementing a comprehensive and up to date policy that meets national SunSmart standards when it comes to protecting children, staff and visitors from overexposure to UV radiation yet maintain sensible exposure for Vitamin D requirements. SunSmart information is promoted and displayed at RECC. Sun protection familiarity exercises are incorporated into the curriculum and staff are required to follow the policy to both role model children's requirements and to meet their Work Health and Safety responsibilities with regard to working safely in the sun. This policy has SunSmart approval for three years and will require Sunsmart Review in July 2016.

This policy will be reflected in the planning of all outdoor activities and events. Due to low UV levels experienced in Canberra around the June and July period, sun protection behaviour is generally not required, unless spending extended time outdoor per se. This is to assist both children and workers with their winter Vitamin D requirements.

A combination of the following sun protection measures will be adopted when UV levels reach 3 and above:

- Shade: The centre has adequate shade available in outdoor spaces as required by Regulation 114 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011. The availability of shade is considered when planning outdoor activities and excursions.

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- Outdoor time is minimised, when possible, between 11am and 3pm during the summer/daylight saving period, this is when UV levels peak in Canberra and the risk of potential skin and eye damage is significantly increased.
- Children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are asked to play in the shade or to remain inside if shade is not adequate.
- Clothing: Loose fitting and closely woven fabrics assist in protecting children from exposure to the sun. It is recommended that shirts have a collar to protect the nape of the neck and long sleeves to protect arms. Longer style tops and shorts are acceptable items of clothing to protect children from the sun. Sleeveless shirts, dresses and singlet are not considered appropriate clothing to protect children from the sun and are not to be worn.
- Babies (under 12 months) must have exposed skin covered and/or be under shade when spending time outdoors when UV levels are 3 and above babies are not purposely exposed to the sun when UV levels are 3 and above. It is acceptable to use sunscreen on the face and hands of babies if direct UV exposure is unavoidable. When UV levels are low (under 3) some direct UV exposure to the skin is considered safe, however if spending prolonged periods outdoors, sensible sun protection is still recommended such as seeking shade etc.
- Staff regularly monitor children's clothing and hat positioning.
- Hats: children and staff are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ear, i.e. legionnaire, broad brimmed or bucket (with a deep crown) hats, whenever they are spending time outside when UV levels are 3 and above. Parents are advised to pack at least one hat for their child. Children who do not bring a hat are either provided one by the centre, or will be restricted in their access to outdoor play. Please note that centre-provided hats are washed after each use.
- Eye-protection: Eyes can be protected from over-exposure to UV radiation by wearing an appropriate hat. If sunglasses are worn by children, staff or visitors, RECC recommends that they meet the Australian Standard 1067 (sunglasses: categories 2, 3 or 4).
- Sunscreen: SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen is made available and easily accessible to all children, staff and visitors to apply. Children are assisted to apply sunscreen to exposed body parts before going outside when UV levels are forecast to be 3 and above . If a child presents with an allergic reaction to sunscreen, staff will stop applying the sunscreen, notify the family and request that a hypoallergenic sunscreen be supplied by the family for the child to use. Sunscreen reapplication needs are monitored regularly.
- Children with naturally dark skin are not be required to apply sunscreen. This is a decision parents should make.
- RECC and its workers are aware of their Work Health and Safety responsibilities and duty of care to protect from occupational UV exposure.
- Workers are familiar with the daily SunSmart UV Alert to assist them with the successful implantation of sun protection times etc:
<http://www.bom.gov.au/nsw/uv/canberra.shtml>
- Educational games and activities on sun protection are incorporated into planned experiences. Resources are available from Cancer Council ACT website

MAINTAINING HYDRATION LEVELS

Reviewed and updated in July 2013 with approval from RECC Management Committee

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Infants and children's body/water ratio mass is significantly different than from adults, therefore the risk for dehydration from outdoor play and hot weather is high and can be dangerous. A combination of the following measures are observed to maintain adequate hydration:

- Water will be offered to children throughout the day regardless of indoor or outdoor play settings.
- Children are able to bring in water bottles from home and are encouraged to access water to drink throughout the day.
- Cooled boiled water may be offered to infants and young children after bottle feeds if children show signs of continued thirst.

RELATED POLICIES:

Excursion Policy

Medical Conditions Policy

Staff Clothing and Uniform Policy

Work Health and Safety Policy

SOURCES:

Cancer Council ACT 2013. Policy reviewed by SunSmart Services Coordinator- feedback received. SunSmart Resources for Early childhood Centres. Available at

<http://www.actcancer.org/sun-smart/resources-childhood.aspx>

Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011