



SUN PROTECTION POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 2

This policy was written in consultation with Cancer Council Victoria's SunSmart Program. The SunSmart Sample Sun Protection Policy was last updated in November 2020 and is incorporated into the ELAA policy. For more detailed information visit the SunSmart website: www.sunsmart.com.au

PURPOSE

This policy will provide:

- guidelines to ensure children, staff, volunteers and others participating in Hurlingham Preschool programs and activities are well protected from overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun
- information for parents/guardians, staff, volunteers and children attending Hurlingham Preschool regarding sun protection.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Hurlingham Preschool is committed to:

- promoting sun protection strategies for children, families, staff and visitors to minimise the harmful effects of over exposure to the sun's UV radiation
- ensuring that curriculum planning will minimise over exposure to the sun's UV radiation and also promote an awareness of sun protection and sun safe strategies
- providing information to children, staff, volunteers, parents/guardians and others at the service about the harmful effects of exposure to the sun's UV radiation.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Person with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Person in day to day Charge, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Hurlingham Preschool.

This policy will apply whenever the sun's UV levels reach three or higher. Whenever this occurs a combination of sun protection measures are to be used for all outdoor activities.

In Victoria UV levels are usually three or higher from mid-August to the end of April. ***Please note that a UV3 level is the determining factor when making decisions with regard to appropriate measures and not the month*** Please check the daily local sun protection times (refer to *Definitions*) to be sure you are using sun protection when it is required. **Information about daily UV indexes have been linked to our Hurlingham website, and parents are advised to view our site daily and make a personal decision as to whether to apply sunscreen to their children on days where UV levels are below 3.**

Active outdoor play is encouraged throughout the day all year, provided appropriate sun protection measures are used when necessary.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Over exposure to the sun's UV radiation can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world.

Children up to four years of age are particularly vulnerable to UV damage due to lower levels of melanin and a thinner stratum corneum (the outermost layer of skin). UV damage accumulated during childhood and adolescence is associated with an increased risk of skin cancer later in life.

A combination of sun protection measures (hats, clothing, sunscreen, shade and sunglasses) is recommended whenever UV levels are three or higher during daily sun protection times (refer to *Definitions*).

It is a requirement under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 that employers provide a healthy and safe environment for all persons who access the service's facilities and/or programs.

Legislation that governs the operation of approved children's services is based on the health, safety and welfare of the children and requires that children are protected from hazards and harm.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) (2004)
- [Children's Services Act 1996](#)
- [Children's Services Regulations 2009](#)
- [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Vic\) \(Part 2: Principles for children\)](#)
- [Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010:](#)
- Section 167: Protection from harm and hazards
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 including :](#)

	• Part 4.2: Children's health and safety
Req 100	<i>Risk assessment must be conducted before excursions</i>
Req 101	
Part 4.3: Physical Environment	
Req 113	<i>Outdoor space: natural environment</i>
Req 114	<i>Outdoor space: shade</i>
Part 4.7: Leadership and service management	
Req 168(2)(a)(ii)	<i>Policies and procedures: Sun protection</i>
Req 170	<i>Policies and procedures to be followed</i>
Req 171	<i>Policies and procedures to be kept available</i>
Req 172	<i>Notification of change to policies or procedures</i>

– National Quality Standards ([expanded](#))

QA 1	Educational program and practice
S 1.1 Program	The Educational program enhances each child's learning and development.
E 1.1.1	<i>Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.</i>
E 1.1.3	<i>All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.</i>
S 1.2 Practice	Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development.
E 1.2.2	<i>Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.</i>
E 1.2.3	<i>Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.</i>
QA 2	Children's health and safety
S 2.1 Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted
E 2.1.1	<i>Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.</i>
E 2.1.2	<i>Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.</i>
E 2.1.3	<i>Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.</i>

S 2.2 Safety	Each Child is protected
E 2.2.1	<i>At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.</i>
QA 3	Physical environment
S 3.1 Design	The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operations of a service
E 3.1.1	<i>Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.</i>
S 3.2 Use	The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.
E 3.2.1	<i>Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.</i>
QA 5	Relationships with children
S 5.2 Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships
E 5.2.1 Collaborative learning	<i>Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.</i>
QA 6	Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
S 6.1 Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
E 6.1.2	<i>The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.</i>
E 6.1.3	<i>Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.</i>
S 6.2 Collaborative partnerships	Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.
QA 7	Governance and Leadership
S 7.1 Governance	Governance supports the operations of a quality service.
E 7.1.2	<i>Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service</i>

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Clothing for sun protection: Clothing that is loose-fitting, made from cool, densely woven fabric and covers as much skin as possible: tops with elbow-length sleeves and, if possible, collars and knee-length or longer shorts and skirts. Singlet tops and shoestring tops/dresses do not provide adequate protection in the sun.

Daily sun protection times: Times when it is estimated that the sun's UV radiation will be three or higher. Information about the daily sun protection times is available in the weather section of the daily



newspaper, on the SunSmart website at: www.sunsmart.com.au, at myuv.com.au, as a free SunSmart app and as a free widget that can be added to websites.

Shade: An area sheltered from direct and indirect sun, such as a large tree, canopy, verandah or artificial cover. Shade can be built, natural or temporary and can reduce overall exposure to the sun's UV by 75%. When combined with appropriate clothing, hats and sunscreen, children can be well protected from UV over exposure when outdoors. Research shows that preschool environments with trees, shrubbery, and broken ground not only provides better sun protection in outdoor play but also triggers more physical activity.

Sunhat: SunSmart recommends broad-brimmed, legionnaire or bucket-style hats that shade the face, neck and ears. Baseball caps and visors offer little protection to the cheeks, ears and neck, and are not recommended.

- **Sunglasses:** Sunglasses are optional. If worn, it is recommended that glasses are a close fitting, wrap-around style that meet the Australian Standard 1067 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4) and cover as much of the eye area as possible. Wearing a hat with a brim that shades the eyes can also reduce UV radiation to the eyes by 50%.
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- **Sunscreen:** SPF 30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen. Sunscreen should be reapplied every two hours, even when labelled 4 hours water resistance. Monitor the expiry date and store in a cool, dry place. From 3 years of age, children are encouraged to apply their own sunscreen under supervision of staff to help develop independent skills ready for school.

SunSmart: The name of the program conducted by Cancer Council to help prevent skin cancer: www.sunsmart.com.au

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources (updated)

- [Belonging, Being and Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework](#) (July 2009)
- [Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework \(VEYLDF\)](#) (May 2016)
- Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) [Building Quality Standards Handbook \(BQSH\): Section 5.1.4 Shade Areas](#) (2020)
- Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) [The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct - Principle 3.2](#)
- [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#) (AITSL) – Standard 4.4 and 7.2
- ARPANSA [Radiation Protection Standard for Occupational Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation](#) (2006)
- Safe Work Australia: [Guide on exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation \(UVR\)](#) (2019)
- AS 4174:2018 Knitted and woven shade fabrics
- AS/NZS 1067.1:2016, Eye and face protection - Sunglasses and fashion spectacles
- AS 4399:2020, Sun protective clothing - Evaluation and classification
- AS/NZS 2604:2012 Sunscreen products - Evaluation and classification
- Australian Government Therapeutics Goods Administration (TGA) – Australian regulatory guidelines for sunscreens: [4. Labelling and advertising – directions for use of the product](#)
- AS/NZS 4685.0:2017, Playground equipment and surfacing - Development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation. *6.2.1 General considerations, 6.3.9 Shade and sun protection, Appendix A Shade and sun protection*
- AS 4685.1: 2014 Playground equipment and surfacing – General safety requirements and test methods
- Safe Work Australia: [Guidance Note – Sun protection for outdoor workers](#) (2016) Updated link <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/sun-protection-outdoor-workers>
- Cancer Council Australia: www.cancer.org.au/sunsmart



- *Get Up & Grow: Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood.* Department of Health resources. Particularly Section 2 of the Director/Coordinator Book and the Staff Book: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources>
- SunSmart: www.sunsmart.com.au

Service policies

- *Excursions and Service Events Policy*
- *Nutrition and Active Play Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Approved Provider and Person with Management or Control is responsible for:

- meeting the standards and requirements of the SunSmart early childhood program
- ensuring that this policy is up to date with current SunSmart recommendations:
www.sunsmart.com.au
- providing all children at Hurlingham Preschool with their own appropriate SunSmart hat to be kept and stored individually at the kinder
- ensuring parents/guardians are informed about the *Sun Protection Policy* on enrolment, including what is considered appropriate clothing for sun protection (refer to *Definitions*) for their child when attending the service
- ensuring parents/guardians are aware that if they send their child in inappropriate clothing for sun protection, that their child will be supplied with spare appropriate clothing that then needs to be laundered ie if a child is wearing a singlet, they will be provided with a tshirt that covers their shoulders
- ensuring parents/guardians are aware of the need to provide a roll on sunscreen for their child which is to be named and kept individually at the service
- providing a supply of sunscreen for use on all persons to whom this policy applies however this is not provided as a replacement for the daily use of sunscreen by children for which the provision of sunscreen is the responsibility of the parent.
- ensuring parents/guardians provide an authority for staff to apply sunscreen prior to their child commencing at the service (Attachment 1) and that this is stored with each child's enrolment record (refer to *General Definitions*)
- ensuring children wear [their own appropriate sunhats supplied by Hurlingham Preschool](#), clothing for sun protection and sunscreen when attending the service
- providing appropriate spare sunhats for children and adults that will be laundered after each use
- ensuring there is adequate shade in the service grounds to protect children from over exposure to UV radiation (Regulation 114)
- ensuring that a regular shade assessment is conducted to determine the current availability
- ensuring that shade provision is considered in future plans and upgrades
- ensuring that program planning includes the application of a combination of sun protection measures for outdoor activities during the times specified in the *Scope* of this policy
- ensuring that the availability of shade is considered in a risk assessment prior to conducting excursions and other outdoor events (Regulations 100, 101)
- ensuring that information on sun protection is incorporated into the educational program (refer to the SunSmart website)



- ensuring all staff, children and other participants at the service wear sunhats, clothing for sun protection and sunglasses (optional) when outside, apply sunscreen and seek shade during the times specified in the *Scope* of this policy
- reinforcing this policy by providing information on sun protection (available on the SunSmart website) to service users via newsletters, noticeboards, meetings and websites etc
- ensuring that any children whose parents have not given permission for their child to apply sunscreen are on the medical office window

The Nominated Supervisor, Person in day to day charge and early childhood teachers are responsible for:

- ensuring all children at Hurlingham Preschool are provided with their own appropriate SunSmart hat to be kept and stored individually at the kinder
- ensuring parents/guardians are informed of the *Sun Protection Policy* on enrolment, including the need to provide an appropriate clothing for sun protection (refer to *Definitions*) for their child when attending the service
- obtaining a parent's/guardian's authority for staff to apply sunscreen prior to their child commencing at the service (Attachment 1) and storing this with each child's enrolment record (refer to *General Definitions*)
- ensuring program planning includes the application of a combination of sun protection measures for outdoor activities during the times specified in the *Scope* of this policy
- ensuring the sun protection times on the SunSmart website or the SunSmart app are accessed daily to assist with the implementation of this policy
- ensuring information on sun protection is incorporated into the educational program (refer to the SunSmart website)
- ensuring that the availability of shade is considered in a risk assessment prior to conducting excursions and other outdoor events (Regulations 100, 101).

All educators are responsible for:

- accessing the daily sun protection times on the Hurlingham Preschool, SunSmart or MyUV websites or the SunSmart app to assist with the implementation of this policy. ***Please note that a UV3 level is the determining factor when making decisions with regard to appropriate measures and not the month.***
- wearing sunhats, clothing for sun protection (refer to *Definitions*) and sunglasses (optional) when outside, applying sunscreen and seeking shade during the times specified in the *Scope* of this policy
- ensuring each child, and any other participant at the service, wears an appropriate sunhat, clothing for sun protection and sunscreen for all outdoor activities during the times specified in the *Scope* of this policy
- ensuring each child, and any other participant at the service, wears their kinder supplied appropriate sunhat, clothing for sun protection and sunscreen for all outdoor activities during the times specified in the *Scope* of this policy
- checking that the Hurlingham Preschool sunhats meet the SunSmart recommendation for adequate protection, are named and stored individually
- ensuring spare sunhats are laundered after each use
- storing sunscreen in a cool place and monitoring the expiry date – including for sunscreen supplied by parents/guardians
- informing parents that Hurlingham Preschool expect that parents are responsible for the application of sunscreen to their children prior to attending their kinder session
- ensuring that every child has their own new bottle of sunscreen supplied at the start of the school year and that it is stored at Hurlingham Preschool for application during the session



- children, where appropriate, will be encouraged to apply sunscreen with the assistance of an educator (sunscreen is to be reapplied every two hours)
- a class check list is to be maintained and signed off on a per session basis by the educator, documenting that the children have applied sunscreen
- ensuring that all sunhats provided by Hurlingham Preschool have the names of the children written clearly on them and are stored at the kinder in the children's individually named pockets
- ensuring that the medical wall is checked for any children whose parents have requested they do not apply sunscreen
- ensuring that children without appropriate sunhats or clothing for sun protection play in the shade or in a suitable area protected from the sun
- encouraging children to seek shade when playing outside and utilise shaded areas for outdoor equipment that is not fixed during the times specified in the *Scope* of this policy
- encouraging children to wear sunhats when travelling to and from the service
- ensuring that sun protection strategies are a priority when planning excursions
- co-operating with their employer with respect to any action taken by the employer to comply with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- applying sunscreen to their child before the commencement of each session during the times specified in the *Scope* of this policy
- providing written authority for staff to apply sunscreen to their child
- providing, at their own expense, a sunscreen to be left at the service
- wearing a sunhat, clothing for sun protection (refer to *Definitions*) and sunglasses (optional) when outside at the service, applying sunscreen and seeking shade during the times specified in the *Scope* of this policy.

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider and Person with Management or Control will:

- regularly seek feedback from educators, staff, parents/guardians, children, management and all affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any significant change to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Authority for staff to administer sunscreen
- Attachment 2: General Information for Families

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Hurlingham Preschool on 10/12/2020.



REVIEW DATE: 10/12/2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This policy has been reviewed and approved by Cancer Council Victoria on July 2019.



ATTACHMENT 1

Authority for staff to administer sunscreen- **See Authority used in Enrolment Form**

Authority for staff to administer sunscreen provided by the service

I, _____, give/do not give permission for the staff at [Service Name] to apply, as appropriate, SPF 30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen to all exposed parts of my child's body.

(Name of child)

Signature (parent/guardian)

Date

Authority for staff to administer sunscreen provided by the parent/guardian

I, _____, give permission for the staff at [Service Name] to apply, as appropriate, to all exposed parts of my child's body the sunscreen that I have supplied and labelled with my child/children's name. This sunscreen is an SPF 30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen. I understand that this sunscreen will be kept at the service.

It is my responsibility to ensure there is always an adequate supply of this sunscreen at the service.

(Name of child)

Signature (parent/guardian)

Date

Attachment 2

General sun protection information

The sun—ultraviolet radiation

The rate of skin cancer in Australia is very high. Too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun can cause sunburn, skin damage, eye damage and skin cancer. The damage done to the skin from even one episode of overexposure to the sun can never be repaired. Sun exposure in the first fifteen years of life contributes significantly to the lifetime risk of skin cancer. Babies under twelve months should be kept out of the direct sun.

You can see sunlight and feel heat (infra-red radiation), but you cannot see or feel UV radiation. It can be damaging to skin on cool, cloudy days and hot, sunny days.

UV radiation comes directly from the sun. It can also be scattered in the air and reflected by surfaces, such as buildings, concrete, sand, snow and water. UV radiation can also pass through light cloud.

‘Correct sun protection practices not only reduce a child’s risk of skin and eye damage and skin cancer but also ensure they obtain enough vitamin D from the sun to allow for healthy bone development and maintenance.’

The SunSmart UV Alert and the UV Index is a rating system that indicates the amount of UV radiation from the sun that reaches the earth’s surface. It ranges from low (UV Index of 1–2) to extreme (11 and above).

Whenever UV Index levels reach 3 (moderate) and above, sun protection is needed because that is when UV radiation can damage the skin and eyes and lead to skin cancer. In Victoria, average UV Index levels are 3 and above from the beginning of September until the end of April. Particular care should be taken between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. (11 a.m. and 3 p.m. during daylight saving time) when UV Index levels reach their peak.

To see what the UV levels are for the day and the times that sun protection is needed, go to SunSmart UV Alert in the weather section of your daily newspaper or visit www.sunsmart.com.au or www.bom.gov.au/announcements/uv/.

From May to August, average UV Index levels in Victoria are usually low (1–2). When UV Index levels are low, the SunSmart UV Alert will say, ‘No UV Alert’ and sun protection is not required, unless you are in alpine regions or near highly reflective surfaces like snow or water.

Adapted from Sun Protection for Early Childhood Services, SunSmart Schools and Early Childhood Program Fact Sheet

The role of early childhood centres

There is enormous potential for early childhood centres to prevent skin cancer in future generations.

Early childhood centres are central to protecting children’s skin. This is because:

- Children attend centres at times when UV radiation levels are high.
- Most damage due to sun exposure occurs during the early years.



- Centres can play a significant role by creating sun-safe environments and changing behaviours through role-modelling and education.

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, which refers to a duty of care to both staff and students, UV radiation is most commonly classified as 'high risk' from September to April in Victoria. A service must therefore make it a high priority to put appropriate measures in place for both students and staff to effectively control this high risk. High risk has now been reassessed as from mid-August to April in Victoria.

When the UV Index level reaches 3 and above, use the SunSmart Outside 5 Countdown

5. Slip on some sun-protective clothing—that covers as much skin as possible.

SunSmart recommends children wear loose-fitting, close-weave clothing that covers as much of their skin as possible when outdoors. Tops with elbow-length sleeves and, if possible, collars and knee-length or longer-style shorts and skirts are best. Garments especially designed for sun protection will carry a UPF (ultraviolet protection factor) level on their tags. The higher the number, the greater the protection from UV radiation. Fabric rated above UPF 30 provides very good protection.

4. Slop on SPF30+ sunscreen—make sure it is broad spectrum and water resistant.

Remind children to apply sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapply it every two hours when outdoors. Use sunscreen to protect areas that cannot be protected by clothing, such as the face and the backs of hands. Sunscreen screens out UV radiation but does not completely block it out, so some UV radiation still reaches the skin. Sunscreen should never be the only method of sun protection.

If your service supplies sunscreen, inform families of the brand/type. Some children may be sensitive to some sunscreens, so families may wish to supply an alternative for their child. Even if all families are asked to provide SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen, the service should still have a supply available. Always check the expiry date.

3. Slap on a hat—that protects the face, head, neck and ears

To protect the neck, ears, temples, face and nose, children should wear a broad-brimmed, legionnaire or bucket hat.

- Broad-brimmed hats should have a brim of at least 7.5 centimetres. The brim width for children under ten should be proportional to the size of the child's head and ensure that their face is well shaded.
- A legionnaire hat should have the front peak and the long, back flap meet at the sides to protect the side of the face, neck and ears.
- Bucket hats should have a deep crown and a brim of at least 6 centimetres (5 centimetres for young children).

Baseball caps and visors offer little protection to the cheeks, ears and neck and are therefore not recommended

2. Seek shade

Try to use shade whenever possible. Even while in the shade, UV radiation can reflect from surfaces, such as water, sand and concrete, so it is important that children continue to wear a hat, appropriate clothing and sunscreen.

1. Slide on some sunglasses—make sure they meet Australian Standards



Where practical, children should wear close-fitting, wrap-around sunglasses that cover as much of the eye area as possible. The sunglasses should meet Australian Standard 1067 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4) and preferably be marked EPF (eye protection factor) 10. There are sunglasses available that have been specifically designed for babies and toddlers, and have soft elastic to keep them in place. If your service prefers not to introduce the wearing of sunglasses, or a child is reluctant to wear them, you can still protect their eyes by avoiding peak UV times, wearing a hat and staying in the shade.

Role models

Children often copy those around them and learn by imitation. If you adopt sun-protection behaviours, the children in your care are more likely to do the same.

Sun exposure for staff is also an Occupational health and safety issue. For information on sun protection in the workplace, contact SunSmart on [\(03\) 95146419](tel:0395146419).

Family information

It is helpful if families understand the centre's Sun protection policy and are aware of how they can assist by providing appropriate clothing, hats and possibly sunglasses, and being good role models themselves. Newsletters and noticeboards are an ideal way of keeping families informed. The above information could be displayed on the noticeboard or provided in a newsletter.

SunSmart can provide materials (posters, brochures and information sheets) for this purpose. Their website also has useful information. Visit www.sunsmart.com.au. This includes frequently asked questions from early childhood centres.

UV and Vitamin D

Some UV radiation exposure is important for a child's vitamin D production. Vitamin D is necessary for bone, joint, muscle and neurological function and is produced in the skin by exposure to UV radiation. Low levels are also present in some foods.

A balance is required between avoiding an increase in a child's risk of skin cancer and achieving enough UV radiation exposure to maintain their vitamin D levels.

During peak UV months in Victoria (from September to April), children usually receive enough sun for Vitamin D production from incidental sun exposure during their day-to-day activities, even if they are adopting recommended SunSmart behaviour. A few minutes of sun exposure in the morning and a few minutes in the late afternoon on most days of the week are generally all that is required. Extra care should always be taken during the middle of the day, when UV Index levels reach their peak. Children with very dark skin may need three to six times more exposure time.

From May until August, UV Index levels in Victoria reach below 3 (low). Generally the lower UV Index levels are not intense enough to damage the skin.

When UV Index levels are low, children need greater exposure time to maintain vitamin D stores. Asking children to follow sun protection throughout the entire year in Victoria is not necessary and may lead to other health concerns for them.

Please contact SunSmart for further information and for a special note regarding children with very dark skin.

Resource

SunSmart Early Childhood Program

The Cancer Council Victoria

Website: www.sunsmart.com.au