SUN SMART SKIN PROTECTION POLICY

Rationale
Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world, with 2 out of every 3 people developing some form of skin cancer before they are 70. There are factors that contribute to these statistics:

1. The population is predominantly fair skinned.
2. Ultraviolet radiation from the sun is of sufficient intensity to induce skin cancer in this susceptible population.
3. For many years social values have supported the belief that a suntan is healthy and attractive.
4. Lifestyle, work, school and recreational habits expose people to the sun for long periods. Skin damage, including skin cancer, is the result of cumulative exposure to the sun. Much of the damage occurs during childhood and adolescence. Research suggests that severe sunburn is a contributor to skin cancer and other forms of skin damage such as wrinkles, sunspots, blemishes and premature ageing. Most skin damage and skin cancer is, therefore, preventable.

Early childhood services are ideally placed to help reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths by encouraging all members of the services’ community to use effective skin protection.

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 which is essential for healthy bones and muscles and for general health.

Aims and Objectives
The aims and objectives of this Skin Protection Policy are to promote among children, staff and parents:

- Positive attitudes towards skin protection.
- Lifestyle practices which can help reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths.
- Personal responsibility for and decision making about skin protection. Promotion of the UV rating 3 and above and the importance of wearing a hat and body’s vitamin D requirements
- Awareness of the need for environmental changes in our centre to reduce the level of exposure to the sun in the limited time that children are using the centre.
- Encourage children to be aware of their own skin type and get vitamin D through natural sunlight exposure in the winter months of May to August and when the UV Radiation level is rated 3 and below whilst they are not attending the centre.
- Ensure families and new staff are informed of the centre’s SunSmart Policy.

Legislation: This policy relates to the following National Law and Regulations:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167 – Protection from harm and hazards
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulation 100 – Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
  - Regulation 113 – Outdoor space–natural environment
  - Regulation 114 – Outdoor space–shade
  - Regulation 168: Policies and procedures (2)(a)(ii)–sun protection
National Quality Standards
All of the following SunSmart procedures link to: Quality area 2: Children’s health and safety.

There are also links to:
Quality area 1: Educational program and practice
Quality area 3: Physical environment
Quality area 5: Relationships with children
Quality area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
Quality area 7: Leadership and service management

Implementation

This sun protection policy is for implementation from 1st September to 30th April and whenever UV radiation levels reach 3 or above at other times and not just terms one and four.

All other times children will be encouraged to wear hats as a centre practice.

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all members of our Early Childhood Service are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful rays of the UV radiation from the sun.

All members of the Waikerie Children’s Centre will be strongly encouraged to use the following skin protection strategies: This policy applies to all centre events on and off-site.

1. **EDUCATION**
   Quality area 1: Educational program and practice
   Quality area 5: Relationships with children
   Quality area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

   Take care when being in the direct sun between the hours of 10am and 2pm (normal time) and 11am and 3pm (daylight saving) when ultraviolet radiation levels are 3 and above. Whenever possible, all activities will be conducted indoors or in the shaded areas of the service during this time.
   Walking excursions will take place in the morning before UV levels reaches 3 and above and all participants will wear a hat and take water bottles.

   Sun protection and vitamin D information is incorporated and reinforced into the learning and development program, activities and displays.
   Staff will be encouraged to keep up to date with new information and resources through contact with the Cancer Council SA website, SunSmart UV alerts and the SunSmart app to guide in planning outdoor activities.
   Staff and families are provided with information on sun protection and vitamin D through family newsletters, centre handbook, noticeboards and the centre’s website.

2. **CLOTHING**  Quality Area 2: Children’s Health & Safety
   Parents are to provide sun protective clothing made from closely woven and loose fitting material which protects the skin.
   Children will wear shirts with sleeve length midway between elbow and shoulder (available at the centre). Children and staff will be encouraged to wear shirts with collars and longer style shorts/skirts.
   If a child is wearing singlet top or dress the centre will put a t-shirt/shirt over the top before going outdoors.
   Children not complying with the above conditions will be limited to inside activities or on the shaded verandah.

3. **HATS**  Quality Area 2: Children’s Health & Safety
   Children, staff and parents will be expected to where a hat that protects their face, neck and ears, i.e. bucket or broad-brimmed style hat whenever they are involved in outside activities.
   Staff will provide a “loan hat” for children who need to go outside as part of the curriculum (eg. exercises, walk) and this will be laundered by the site after use.

4. **SUNSCREEN**  Quality Area 2: Children’s Health & Safety
   Liberally apply a water resistant, broad-spectrum sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 30+ to clean, dry skin, 15-20 minutes before going outdoors.
   Reapply sunscreen every two hours if outdoors for a prolonged period of time, or more frequently if involved with water play or perspiring.
Parents will be encouraged to apply sunscreen to their children, although there will be bulk sunscreen packs available at the service. Children, once old enough, are encouraged to apply their own sunscreen under the supervision of staff. Parents have a choice to provide sunscreen for their child if they have sensitive skin for staff to apply.

5. **SHADE** Quality Area 2: Children’s health & Safety, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment
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 such as trees, tents, and umbrellas. Children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are asked to play on the shade verandah or inside. Tree planting will be an ongoing event, with priority given to the open space grassed area. All windows exposed to direct sunlight will be appropriately shaded. The further provision of shade areas is a priority for the service.

6. **INFANTS** Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety
Babies’ skin is thinner than adults’ skin; it is extremely sensitive and can burn easily. Babies can be at risk of sunburn even if they are in the shade, so staff will make sure they are covered up when under the shade. Parents will be expected to choose a hat that protects the baby’s face, neck and ears such as a soft legionnaire or bucket style hat, with a flap at the back that will crumple easily when they put their head down. Infants who are kept out of the direct sun or well protected from UV radiation by clothing, hats and shade, need only have sunscreen applied occasionally in very small amounts on their exposed skin. All babies under twelve months are kept out of the direct sun when UV level radiation levels are 3 and above.

7. **ENROLMENT AND FAMILY INFORMATION** Quality area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
When enrolling their child, families are:
- informed of the centre’s SunSmart policy and asked to provide a suitable hat for their child
- asked to provide their child with sun protective 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 staff to apply sunscreen to their child
- families and visitors are encouraged to use a combination of sun protection measures (sun protective clothing and hats, shade, sunglasses and sunscreen) when attending the centre.

8. **STAFF WHS AND ROLE MODELLING** Quality Area 5: Relationships with children and Quality area 2: Children’s Health & Safety
In hot weather and extreme heat children and staff will be encouraged to drink plenty of water and stay in the shade or remain indoors. Staff will wear sun protective hats, clothing and sunglasses when outside. Staff will be encouraged to role model appropriate SunSmart strategies in all service activities. This SunSmart Policy will be given to all new staff, students and families. Additional information can be sourced from www.cancersa.org.au/sunsmart

9. **POLICY REVIEW**: Quality Area 7: Leadership and service management
The Waikerie Children’s Centre skin protection policy will be evaluated on a three yearly basis and will be discussed at staff and parent meetings.

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