

Introduction

Too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun can cause sunburn, dehydration, heat illness, eye damage and significantly increases the risk of skin cancer. Australia has one of the highest skin cancer rates in the world, with more than two in three Australians diagnosed during their lifetime. Young children are especially vulnerable to UV damage and sun exposure during childhood can lead to skin cancer later in life. By implementing and fostering sun protective behaviours from an early age, C&K can play a crucial role in helping reduce this risk.

C&K recognise the value of outdoor play and physical activity for children's health and wellbeing. We are committed to ensuring children, teachers, educators, volunteers, visitors and contractors are protected from harmful UV exposure. Implementing this procedure addresses and manages the risks of exposure to the sun and extreme heat.

Managing the risks of the sun

Centre Director/Nominated Supervisor or RPIC will:

- Implement the sun protection strategies outlined in this procedure every day (in Queensland, UV levels exceed 3 all year round).
- Access and display local sun protection times using the [SunSmart](#) widget or app.
- Regularly monitor and assess centre compliance to this procedure.
- Encourage teachers and educators to access and complete the Cancer Council's free ECEC and OSHC [learning modules](#).
- Regularly promote sun protective behaviours via new family orientation activities, newsletters, Storypark posts, team meetings and teacher/educator induction.
- Encourage everyone to be sun safety role models.
- Include sun protective strategies when planning emergency evacuation drills, incursions, excursions and centre events.
- Undertake and document a risk assessment for sun protection and extreme heat whenever there is a significant change to centre context or outdoor learning environment e.g. temporary removal of shade sails.

Teachers and educators will:

- Be sun safety role models for children.
- Incorporate sun safety in the learning program. Teach children about the dangers of the sun, including hot surfaces and playground equipment.
- Implement the sun protection strategies outlined in this procedure every day (in Queensland, UV levels exceed 3 all year round): **Slip** on protection clothing, **Slop** on sunscreen, **Slap** on a hat, **Seek** shade and **Slide** on sunglasses (optional).
- Monitor heat and UV levels via the [SunSmart Widget](#) or [App](#).
- Where practical, minimise time outdoors when the UV level is high to extreme (UV 6 or above) i.e. plan indoor activities, verandah or shade-covered outdoor play.
- Provide children with easy access to clean drinking water and encourage regular hydration.
- When possible, reduce reflective surfaces in the outdoor environment.
- Include sun safety measures when planning excursions.
- Know how to test outdoor surface temperatures and follow manufacturer/installer instructions for equipment use.

Hot outdoor surfaces

Teachers and educators will:

- Recognise and identify what centre outdoor surfaces attract and retain heat, posing a potential risk of serious burns. Check all equipment and surfaces are suitable for outdoor use by checking manufacturers' warnings and instructions.
- During hot weather:
 - Before going outdoors, assess surface temperatures that children may walk, stand, hold, slide, kneel, sit or lie on:
 - With care, hover hand above surface. If it is too hot to do this comfortably for 5 seconds—it is too hot for children. Assess surface temperature periodically while outdoors.
 - Consider (centre purchasing and) using an infra-red thermometer to measure outdoor surface temperatures. Measure surface temperature periodically while outdoors.
 - If surface temperature is assessed as too hot for children or measures 50°C or more, remove or restrict access.
 - Consider when to restrict access or remove equipment, when children need to wear shoes and when to modify routines to reduce time outdoors.
- Be First Aid trained, including the treatment of [burns](#). (Permanent educators - mandatory, Casual including relief educators – preferred).

Outdoor surfaces that may attract and retain heat:

- wood
- metal
- concrete
- brick
- stone
- sand
- rubber
- plastic
- safety mats
- loose soft fall
- synthetic grass

Five Sun Smart Strategies

1. Slip on sun protective clothing

SunSmart clothing is loose fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible i.e. shirts that cover neck and shoulders, and long style shorts or skirts.

Teachers and educators will:

- Wear SunSmart clothing when attending work.
- Provide parents/guardians with SunSmart clothing information upon and throughout enrolment.
- Encourage parents/guardians to dress children in SunSmart clothing.
- When appropriate, assist children to choose SunSmart clothing.
- Keep a supply of spare SunSmart clothing available for children.

Parents/Guardians will:

- Dress their child in SunSmart clothing suitable for the weather.
- Provide a spare set of SunSmart clothing daily for their child; clearly labelled with child's name.

2. Slop on sunscreen

SunSmart sunscreen is SPF50+, broad-spectrum and water-resistant.

Centre Director/Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in Charge (RPIC) will:

- Ensure an adequate supply of SPF50+, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen for communal use.
- Print *Sunscreen Register* (each room/group daily) - refer to [*Creating and Printing a Weekly Roll and Sunscreen Record*](#).
- Keep sunscreen Safety Data Sheets in the Chemical Register folder.

Teachers and educators will:

- When a parent/guardian has not provided written authorisation (via enrolment booklet/online form) to apply sunscreen to their child, implement the four remaining SunSmart strategies.
- (Except for infants under 6mths of age*) apply a generous amount (about 7 teaspoons or 35mls) of SPF50+, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen to children's clean, dry skin, at least 20 minutes before sun exposure.
- Reapply sunscreen to children every 2hrs or more regularly when washed off.
- Record children's sunscreen applications on the *Sunscreen Register*.
- When developmentally appropriate, support and supervise children from 3 years to apply their own sunscreen. Set up a sunscreen station daily with a mirror, tissues and pictorial prompts.
- When not in use, store sunscreen in a location that is cool, out of direct sunlight and inaccessible to children.
- When a child has a skin condition/illness, apply sunscreen to child with gloves and wash hands after.
- When requested (in writing via [*Sunscreen, Insect Repellent, Cream and Ointment Authorisation Record*](#)) and provided by parents/guardians, apply supplied sunscreen to their child. Promptly inform parents/guardians when sunscreen supply will soon expire, is expired, or is low.
- Discard expired sunscreen products out of reach of children.

Parents/Guardians will:

- When possible, apply sunscreen to their child at home before leaving for centre. If not possible, apply sunscreen to their child upon arrival at the centre.
- Record child's sunscreen application on *Sunscreen Register*.
- Upon written request ([*Sunscreen, Insect Repellent, Cream and Ointment Authorisation Record*](#)), provide their child a sunscreen product of their choice; clearly labelled with child's name, meets [Australian Regulatory Guidelines for Sunscreens](#) and is SPF50+, broad-spectrum and water-resistant. Maintain an adequate supply and replace promptly when requested.

3. Slap on a hat

A SunSmart hat is a broad-brimmed, legionnaire or bucket style hat that shades the face, nose, neck and ears.

Centre Director/Nominated Supervisor or RPIC will:

- Wear a SunSmart hat when outdoors.
- Maintain an adequate supply of spare SunSmart hats for communal use. Launder hats between individual use.
- Advise parents/guardians to provide a SunSmart hat daily for the child, upon and throughout enrolment.
- Outline [KidSafe](#) and [Australian Competition and Consumer Commission \(ACCC\)](#) guidance regarding entrapment risks of hats and other clothing with neck drawstrings/toggles, upon and throughout enrolment.

*[Cancer Council](#) and [Qld Health](#) do not recommend sunscreen for infants under 6mths of age.

Teachers and educators will:

- Wear a SunSmart hat when outdoors.
- Store hats in a location where children can easily access.
- Support children to wear hats in the sun; provide spare hats if needed.
- When outdoors, encourage children without hats to play in the shade, under verandah or indoors.
- Tuck cords/toggles under hats or seek parental consent to remove them.

Parents/Guardians will:

- Provide a clearly labelled SunSmart hat for their child daily.

4. Seek shade

Be SunSmart - Seek natural, built and portable shade when outdoors.

Centre Director/Nominated Supervisor or RPIC will:

- Factor in available shade when planning emergency evacuation drills, incursions, excursions, and outdoor events i.e. built, natural and portable.
- Conduct periodic assessments of shade and UV reflective surfaces to inform short and long-term shade goals in (Branch Centre only) centre *10 Year Enhanced Physical Environment Plan*.

Teachers and educators will:

- Consider shade when setting up outdoor equipment. When needed, reposition moveable equipment and shade structures to maximise access to shade; remove/pack-away or restrict access to equipment during periods of hot temperatures.
- Support children to identify and seek shade while outside.
- Minimise infant exposure to direct sunlight; plan indoor activities or shade-covered outdoor play between 10am and 3pm.

5. Slide on sunglasses

SunSmart sunglasses are close-fitting wraparound sunglasses that meet Australian Standard AS/NSZ 1067. Sunglasses are encouraged but optional for children, teachers, educators and visitors.

Heatwaves

Heatwaves involve excessively high temperatures and humidity sustained over several days posing a risk to children and older adults.

Centre Director/Nominated Supervisor or RPIC will:

- Monitor weather forecasts.
- Communicate extreme weather predictions with families and team.
- Store multiple 10-litre bottles of water for emergencies.
- Ensure air conditioners and fans are maintained and functional; submit maintenance requests when needed.

Teachers and educators will:

- Recognise signs of heat-related illness e.g. swelling, prickly heat, cramps, exhaustion, heatstroke. Closely monitor children with medical conditions.
- Limit outdoor physical activity.
- Keep indoor areas cool by closing windows and doors, closing blinds, using air conditioners and fans. Set air conditioners to "recirculate."
- Provide accessible drinking water; set a timer to remind children to drink every 20 minutes.
- Monitor urine colour for signs of dehydration.
- Remind colleagues to hydrate and avoid caffeinated and sugary drinks.
- Encourage children to stay in the shade and wear loose clothing and be SunSmart outdoors.
- Adapt activities based on weather conditions.
- Offer water play opportunities.
- Instruct children to wear shoes as needed when going outdoors.
- Use cool washers or sponges to help with heat relief.
- Ensure centre pets/animals have shade, water and ventilation.

References and acknowledgements

- Cancer Council Australia: [Sun protection](#)
- Cancer Council Australia: [Position Statement - Sun Protection and Infants](#)
- Cancer Council Queensland: [Early Childhood Settings: Sun Smart Policy Guidelines](#)
- Cancer Council Queensland: [Sun protection and young children](#)
- Early Childhood Education and Care (2024) [Hot Day, Safe Play](#)
- Queensland Cancer Council: [Schools and Early Childhood Sun Protection Policy Guide](#)
- Queensland Health: [Early Childhood Sun Safety](#)
- Queensland Health: [How to keep your baby safe from the sun](#)
- SunSmart: [Sunscreen Tips for Early Childhood](#)

This Procedure is reviewed every 2 years and reflects Cancer Council sun protection recommendations. Teacher, educators and centre stakeholders are encouraged and invited to provide feedback about this procedure via policyfeedback@candk.asn.au. This procedure is available via the [C&K Website](#). A copy of this procedure can be provided upon request.