



Mountain Community Children's Centre Inc.

Sun Protection Policy

Rationale: Many people living in Australia suffer the long-term effects of illness / injury caused by exposure to the sun. Babies and young children have very little pigment to protect them from the sun and are at a great risk of permanent damage to their skin from exposure to the sun.

Aim: To work together with families and the local community to address and promote key sun safety messages through sun protection education and program implementation.

Policy Statement

We are committed to providing an environment that ensures all children and staff are protected from ultraviolet (UV) radiation during all outdoor activities. This includes:

- Ensuring all children and staff are protected from too much UV exposure by using a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV levels reach 3 and above.
- Ensuring the outdoor environment is sun safe and provides shade for children and staff.
- Ensuring children are encouraged and supported to develop independent sun protection skills.
- Supporting duty of care and regulatory requirements.
- Supporting appropriate Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) strategies to minimise UV risk and associated harms for educators, staff and visitors.

This policy has been adapted from the Cancer Council NSW sample SunSmart policy and procedures for early childhood. For further details visit <https://www.sunsmartnsw.com.au/early-childhood/>

Background

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require policies and procedures to be in place in relation to sun protection.

The sun's UV can't be seen or felt. Whatever the weather, it is important for people of all skin types to use sun protection whenever UV levels are three or higher.

High levels of UV can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, with two in three Australians developing some form of skin cancer before age 70. 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 strongly associated with an increased risk of skin cancer later in life.

By teaching sensible sun protection habits from an early age and implementing sun protection measures, early childhood services can play a significant role in reducing skin cancer risk.

Strategies / How will it be done?

1. **Outdoor Activity** Quality Area 1 – Educational program and practice, Quality Area 2 – Children's Health and Safety

UV levels and daily sun protection times are used to plan daily activities and ensure a correct understanding of local sun protection requirements. A combination of sun protection measures will be used whenever **UV Index levels reach 3 and above**. These measures include:

- **Slip** on clothing that covers as much skin as possible
- **Slop** on sunscreen
- **Slap** on a hat
- **Seek** shade

When children are on excursions all sun protection practices are planned, organised, understood and available.

2. Shade Quality Area 3 – Physical Environment

- All outdoor activities will be planned to occur in shaded areas.
- Children are encouraged to choose and use available areas of shade when outside.
- Children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are asked to choose a shady play space or a suitable area protected from the sun or are offered centre spare appropriate hats and outdoor clothing.
- In consultation with the service’s committee, shade provision is considered in future plans and upgrades to the services outdoor space.
- The program will be set up in the shade and moved throughout the day to take advantage of shade patterns.
- The service will provide and maintain adequate shade for outdoor play.
- Shade options can include a combination of portable, natural and built shade.
- Regular shade assessments will be conducted to monitor existing shade structures and quality of shade.

3. Hats Quality Area 2 – Children’s Health and Safety

- Educators, staff and children are required to wear SunSmart hats that protect their face, neck and ears. A SunSmart hat is:
 - Legionnaire hat;
 - Bucket hat with a deep crown and brim size of at least 5cm (adults 6cm);
 - Broad brimmed hat with a brim size of at least 6cm (adults 7.5cm);
- Baseball caps or visors do not provide enough sun protection and not considered a suitable alternative.
- Children without a SunSmart hat will be asked to play in an area protected from the sun (e.g. under shade, veranda or indoors) or can be provided with a spare hat.

4. Clothing Quality Area 2 – Children’s Health and Safety

- When outdoors, educators, staff and children will wear SunSmart clothing that covers as much of the skin (especially the shoulders, back and stomach) as possible. This includes wearing:
 - Loose fitting shirts and dresses with sleeves and collars or covered neckline.
 - Longer style skirts, shorts and trousers.
- Children who are not wearing SunSmart clothing are encouraged to play in an area protected from the sun (e.g. under shade, veranda or indoors) or are provided with spare clothing.
- Midriff, crop or singlet tops do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended.

5. Sunscreen Quality Area 2 – Children’s Health and Safety

- All staff and children will apply SPF50+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors, and re-apply every 2 hours.
- Where appropriate, children are encouraged and supported to apply their own sunscreen, under the supervision of staff.
- Permission to apply sunscreen is included in the service enrolment form. Where children have allergies or sensitivity to the sunscreen, parents are asked to provide an alternative SPF50 sunscreen.
- All sunscreen is stored in a cool, dry place, and the expiry date is monitored.

6. Babies Quality Area 2 – Children’s Health and Safety

- Babies under 12 months will not be exposed to direct sunlight when UV levels are 3 or higher.
- Clothing, hats and shade positioning are checked regularly to ensure that babies will be well protected from UV.
- The use of sunscreen on babies under 6 months is not recommended due to their sensitive skin.

7. Role Modelling of staff, families, and visitors Quality Area 1 – Educational program and practice, Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children

As part of WH&S UV risk controls and role modelling, staff, families, and visitors demonstrate SunSmart behaviours when outside, including:

- Wearing a SunSmart hat, protective clothing, and wearing sunglasses (optional)
- Applying SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen
- Promoting the use of shade
- Discussing sun protection with children and demonstrating a positive and proactive approach to the management of sun protection in the service.

Sun safety is everyone’s responsibility. By being role models ourselves and leading the way with our own sun safety, we can inspire our children to be SunSmart when they step outside.

8. Education Quality Area 1 – Educational program and practice, Quality Area 4 – Staffing Arrangements, Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children

- Sun protection is incorporated regularly into learning programs and role-modelled by educators.
- SunSmart Global UV App lists the time UV is above 3. These times are promoted to guide staff, parents and children’s behaviour.
- Educators are encouraged to complete Cancer Council’s free [Generation SunSmart](#) online learning modules.
- Children are encouraged to be involved in initiatives to promote and model sun protection measures at the service; including taking leadership roles in managing sun protection (e.g. accessing daily UV levels and sun protection times, hat reminders and management of sunscreen).
- Visitor, student and new employee inductions embed the transfer of information relating to the service’s Sun Protection Policy.

9. Information and policy availability **Quality Area 6– Collaborative partnerships with families, Quality Area 7 – Governance and leadership**

Sun Protection policy, procedures, requirements and updates are made available to staff, families and visitors.

- Sun protection information and resources are accessible and communicated regularly to families.
- All parents/families are informed of the *Sun Protection* policy including appropriate hat, clothing and sunscreen requirements on enrolling their child in the service.

Workplace Health and Safety

As part of WHS UV staff and visitors:

- Wear a suitable sun-protective hat, covering clothing and, if practical, sunglasses
- Apply sunscreen and
- Seek shade whenever possible.

Sun protection considerations and actions are included in risk assessments for excursions and excursion checklists.

Review

- Management and staff regularly monitor and review how effectively they implement their *Sun Protection* policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met. • Take reasonable steps to ensure that the nominated supervisor and staff follow the sun protection policy and procedures. • Ensure adequate shading over areas for both active and passive outdoor play. • Ensure access to an adequate supply of sunscreen for children, educators and staff. • Ensure staff dress code/uniform includes sun protective clothing and hats. • Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible and available to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, volunteers and families. • Ensure families are aware of, and agree to, support the service’s sun protection policy and procedures.
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure sun protection information is promoted to all staff, children, families and visitors. • Provide support and advice to all staff with regard to the implementation of the Sun Protection Policy. • Implement the <i>sun protection</i> policy and procedures as outlined in the document. • Monitor the daily sun protection times for their location.

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support the implementation of sun protection measures during the sun protection times.
Early Childhood Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adhere to the strategies and practices of the Sun Protection Policy. ● Educators and staff will act as role models and demonstrate SunSmart behaviour by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wearing a SunSmart hat (see <i>Hats</i>). ○ Wearing protective clothing, and sunglasses (if practical) (see <i>Clothing</i>). ○ Applying SPF50+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and every 2 hours after (see <i>Sunscreen</i>). ○ Using and promoting the use of shade. ● Encouraging families and visitors to role model positive sun safe behaviours when at the service. ● Check the UV Alert on a daily basis at www.sunsmart.com.au or using the SunSmart Global UV App. ● Discussing sun protection with children and demonstrating a positive and proactive approach to the management of sun protection in the service.
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dressing their child in cool clothing which covers as much skin as possible (e.g. tops that cover the shoulders, arms and chest, collared shirts, longer style shorts). ● Providing a sun protective hat that shades the face, neck and ears (e.g. wide brimmed, bucket or legionnaire style). ● Provide permission for educators/staff to apply SPF50 or higher broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen supplied by the service to all exposed parts of my child’s skin including their face, neck, ears, arms and legs, or ● Provide permission for educators/staff to apply SPF50 or higher broad-spectrum sunscreen (that is labelled with the child/children’s name) to all exposed parts of the child’s skin including their face, neck, ears, arms and legs. This sunscreen will be kept at the service and it is the responsibility of the family to make sure there is always an adequate supply available. ● Practicing SunSmart behaviours themselves when at the service.

10. Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review Quality Area 4 – Staffing arrangements, Quality Area 7 – Governance and leadership

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process, and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family’s ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Related Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 100, 113, 114, 116, 168(2)(a)(ii), 169, 170, 171, 172
- Model WHS laws, 2011

Sources

- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) V2.0 2022
www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/EYLF-2022-V2.0.pdf
- ACECQA Sun protection policy and procedure guidelines (August 2021)
www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-08/SunProtectionGuidelines.pdf
- Be SunSmart, Play SunSmart www.sunsmart.com.au/downloads/schools-early-childhood/be-sunsmart-play-sunsmart.pdf
- Suggested learning experiences for sun protection www.sunsmart.com.au/advice-for/schools-early-childhood/education-resources/early-childhood-resources/learning-experiences
- Sun protection advice for parents and carers
www.sunsmart.com.au/advice-for/parents-carers
- Sun protection information for babies and toddlers
www.sunsmart.com.au/downloads/resources/info-sheets/sun-protection-babies-toddlers-info-sheet.pdf
- Sun protection information in different languages
www.sunsmart.com.au/publications-posters/?keyword=&type=Brochures+%26+booklets,&category=Early%20childhood,&language=
- Get Up & Grow: Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood (Section 2) 2009
www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/get-up-grow-resource-collection
- Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL) – Standard 4.4 and 7.2
www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/standards
- Safe Work Australia: Guide on exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation (UVR) (2019)
www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/2001/guide-exposure-solar-ultraviolet-radiation_1.pdf
- AS 4174:2018 (Amd 2019) Knitted and woven shade fabrics