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 four factors, often occurring simultaneously, which 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.

Aim
The aims of the Waikerie Children’s Centre 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.
- 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 whilst they are not attending the centre.

Implementation
This policy is implemented throughout the whole year.

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 sun. All members of the Waikerie Children’s Centre will be strongly encouraged to use the following skin protection strategies:

1. Avoid 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 (moderate) and above.
Whenever possible, all activities will be conducted indoors or in the shaded areas of the service during this time.

2. Use the shade of trees, pergolas, umbrellas and tents whenever outdoors.
   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.

3. Parents are to provide appropriate clothing which protects the skin.
   Children, staff and parents will be expected to wear a broad-brimmed style hat whenever they are involved in outside activities.
   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.
   Children not complying with the above conditions will be limited to inside 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. Liberally apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an 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.
   Adequate time must be allowed for correct application of sunscreen on children before they go outdoors.
   Parents will be encouraged to apply sunscreen to their children, although there will be bulk sunscreen packs available at the service.
   Sunscreen will be applied before the children’s morning outdoor activities and again before they go outside in the afternoon.
   Parents have a choice to provide sensitive sunscreen for staff to apply.

5. Reinforcing the SunSmart message in all service activities and in general service procedures is an important strategy in the adoption of skin protection behaviours.
   In hot weather children will be encouraged by staff to drink plenty of water and stay in the shade or remain indoors.
   Staff will be encouraged to role model appropriate SunSmart strategies in all service activities.
   Skin cancer prevention will be included in appropriate teaching activities.
   Staff will be encouraged to keep up to date with new information and resources through contact with the Cancer Council SA.
   This SunSmart Policy will be given to all new staff, students and families. Additional information can be sourced from www.sunsmart.org.au

6. Special consideration in infants.
   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 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.

7. The Waikerie Children’s Centre skin protection policy will be evaluated on a two yearly basis.
   Policy issues will be discussed at staff and parent meetings.

SOURCED FROM
www.sunsmart.org.au –Sun Protection
Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20

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