

7.16 Sun Protection and Protective Clothing Policy

Policy number: 7.16
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Reviewed by: Child Care Team

This policy relates to	
National Quality Standards Early Childhood Education & Care	2.1 Health 2.1.2 Health practices and procedures 2.1.3 Healthy lifestyle 2.2 Safety

Purpose

Beaucare Child Care Services has a duty of care to ensure that children are provided with a high level of sun protection during the hours of care. Educators will protect children by following Sun Safe procedures to minimise UVR exposure and provide an environment where knowledge and practices can positively influence long term behaviours.

Background

Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. 80% of all new cancers diagnosed in Australia are skin cancers. Research indicates that childhood sun exposure is a significant contributing factor to the development of skin cancer later in life and that nearly 80% of a person’s lifetime sun exposure occurs before the age of 21. Over exposure to the sun during childhood and adolescence is a major factor in the development of skin cancer. In untanned skin, exposure to the summer sun between 10am and 3pm for thirteen minutes produces mild sunburn. Reducing children’s exposure to UVR is considered to be the single most effective strategy for reducing future rates of skin cancer in Australia.

Policy

When an educator commences with Beaucare, a coordinator will observe them engaging in sun-smart practices. The coordinator will complete a Sun Safety checklist, which will be sent to the Cancer Council who issue the educator a Sun Smart Service certificate.

In order to be compliant with Sun Safety procedures, educators are required to:

- Where possible, plan daily outdoor activities outside of peak UV times. Outdoor activities must be carefully planned to take place at times during the day when UV levels are low. Outdoor activities should be avoided around the midday hours when UV levels are highest. Multiple sun protection methods are required whenever the UV Index level is forecast to reach 3 or above. In Queensland, the UV index level is 3 or above all year round. UVR is present on cloudy days and can be reflected from light coloured surfaces such as concrete, white house paint and sand. Ensure the outdoor space has adequate, quality shade. Use

a minimum of SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen and have appropriate hats and clothing to guarantee SunSmart outdoor activity.

- All outdoor activities will be planned in shaded areas. Play activities will be set up in the shade and moved throughout the day to utilise daily 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 assist in planning for additional shade.
- Parent's permission is required on enrolment for the application of sunscreen. A broad-spectrum Sunscreen SPF 30+ should be applied 20 minutes prior to outdoor activity in winter and summer, and reapplied every two hours or more frequently if water play is involved. Sunscreen is to be applied to clean dry skin in a manner that will minimise cross infection. This can be achieved by the educator using individual disposable gloves to apply sunscreen or applying sunscreen using individual tissues and allowing older children to apply sunscreen themselves with guidance.
- If a child has an allergic reaction to sunscreen, the service will stop applying the sunscreen, notify the family and request that a hypoallergenic sunscreen be supplied by the family for the child's use.
- Sun Protection needs to be a specific consideration when planning play sessions and excursions.
- Parents are encouraged to provide sunglasses for children's use. It is recommended that sunglasses meet the Australian Standards AS/NZS 1067:2003 with a category number 2, 3 or 4.
- All children must wear an approved sun protective hat that is either broad brimmed, bucket or legionnaire's style when outdoors. The Queensland Cancer Fund recommends an 8-10cm broad brim hat or legionnaire style hat that protects a child's face, neck and ears. Educators need to ensure that children not wearing hats play in shaded areas. Educators are encouraged to provide backup hats for children.
- Encourage parents to ensure clothing provides adequate protection from UV rays. The Queensland Cancer Fund recommends collars with sleeves, dark colours, and closely woven fabric with natural fibres.
- Educators are advised to display sensitivity with regard to possible cultural differences regarding clothing.
- Educators are required to have ample, easily accessed drinking water for children to prevent dehydration when playing outside.
- Educators and Coordinators are encouraged to act as positive role models for children in modelling sun smart behaviour by wearing appropriate hats, sunglasses and clothing, and using sunscreen.

- Babies under 12 months should not be exposed to direct sunlight and are to remain in full shade when outside. They must wear sun-protective hats and clothing. Small amounts of SPF30 or higher sunscreen may be applied to their exposed skin if direct exposure is unavoidable

Clothing

Educators need to take into account individual children and families clothing preferences where practicable to promote children's comfort, safety and protection within the scope of service requirements for health and safety.

In addition to responding to children's personal preferences and meeting sun safe practices, educators need to ensure that children's clothing is added to or removed to provide warmth, or coolness, throughout the day; and that children are assisted with footwear.

Children's clothes should provide adequate protection from heat, and cold depending on climatic conditions. They should be hardwearing but comfortable, allowing the child freedom of movement to play both active and messy games.

Clothing should be:

- Lightweight allowing for unrestricted movement;
- Easy to pull on and off (overalls can be more difficult for a child who is toilet training).
- Simple – to encourage independence in dressing, undressing and toileting;
- Sun Safe (shirts and dresses with sleeves).

In Queensland, the temperatures for much of the year are warm, warm and humid, or hot and dry and styles of clothing reflect this. The use of cotton or natural fibres allows perspiration to evaporate from the child's skin and means the child will feel cooler and more comfortable.

During the colder weather children will need protection from the cold. Layered clothing is the most practical and effective way to cope with the cooler weather as it allows layers to be removed as the child's activity increases, or the temperature rises.

Children should go bare foot as often as possible so that the bones and muscles of their feet can develop. When children are learning to walk, they should have bare feet as much as possible. Senses from their bones and muscles as the foot touches the ground assists in developing balance so that children learn to walk more steadily and safely. Children use their toes to help balance, so activities like climbing, walking and running are most successful in bare feet. It is safer for a child to move over a climbing frame in bare feet than in thongs/shoes. Shoes compromise the grip that they would naturally have in bare feet.

In hot weather, shoes are only necessary as a form of protection over rough and unfamiliar terrain and in places where safety cannot be controlled e.g. Public places. Educators are to be aware that sunscreen needs to be applied to feet.

In colder weather children may need shoes for warmth. Educators should encourage parents to supply shoes, socks and adequate clothing for the seasons.

Relevant Legislation

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 Section 167
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 168
National Standards 2.3
Workplace Health and Safety Act

Key Resources

Cancer Council Qld: Shade Fact Sheet / Early Childhood Settings Sunsmart Policy Guidelines
www.cancerqld.org.au/icms_dcs/54255_Early_Childhood_Settings_SunSmart_Polic_Guidelines.pdf

Cancer Council NSW: *Shade for Early Childhood Services*
www.cancercouncil.com.au/html/prevention/sunsmart/downloads/information-sheet_shade_early_childhood_services.pdf

Qld Government Community Child Health Service: *Sun Protection in Queensland Early Childhood Services*
www.sunsafety.qld.gov.au/documents/29602.pdf

Sunsmart *Sun Protective Clothing*
www.sunsmart.com.au/downloads/resources/info_sheets/Sun_protective_clothing_info_sheet.pdf

Sunsmart VIC: Sunsmart Playgroup Application Checklist
<http://www.sunsmart.com.au/checklist.asp>

The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne: Childcare and Children's Health Vol 9 No 3 (September 2006): *Child Health and the Sun*
www.rch.org.au/emplibrary/econnections/CCH_Vol9No3September2006.pdf

Family Day Care Australia
www.fdca.com.au