Sun Protection Policy

Policy Statement

Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. Research has indicated that young children and babies have sensitive skin and this places them at particular risk of sunburn and skin damage. Exposure during the first 15 years of life can greatly increase the risk of developing skin cancer in later life. Early Childhood Services play a major role in minimising a child's UV exposure as children attend during times when UV radiation levels can be high.

Sun protection times are a forecast for the time of day UV levels will reach 3 or above. At these levels, sun protection is recommended for all skin types and the policy areas should be implemented. In NSW, UV levels are high enough (UV 3 or above) to damage unprotected skin most months of the year. UV levels are particularly high during the summer months and highest in the middle of the day (Cancer Council NSW).

Rationale

Exposure to UV radiation in childhood is a major risk factor for developing skin cancer later in life. By implementing a best-practice Sun Protection Policy, the ECEC can help protect educators and children from UV radiation and teach children good sun protection habits from an early age.

Strategies

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure children are adequately supervised and are protected from harms and hazards.
- Ensure sun protection information is promoted to all staff, educators, families and visitors.
- Provide support and advice to all staff with regard to implementation of the ECEC Sun Protection Policy.
- Ask families to sign permission for their child to have sunscreen applied throughout each day.
- Inform educators each day of the expected UV and sun protection recommendation times for the day.

Educators will:

- Adhere to the strategies and practices of the ECEC Sun Protection Policy.
- Ensure all children, educators and staff are well protected from too much UV exposure by using a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV levels reach 3 and above.
- Encourage families and visitors to role model positive sun safe behaviours while at ECEC.
- Act as role models and demonstrate sun safe behavior by:
  - Wearing a broad brimmed or legionnaire style hat.
  - Wearing appropriate clothing.
- Check the UV Alert on a daily basis during the summer months at www.sunsmart.com.au or using the Sun Smart App.
- Encourage children to develop independent sun protection skills.

Families will:

- Dress their children in sun safe clothing that covers as much skin as possible.
- Sign permission in their child's enrolment form for ECEC staff to apply sunscreen to their child throughout the day at ECEC
- Provide a hat purchased from the Uniform Shop for their child to wear at ECEC daily.
- Provide a letter from a General Practitioner if they do not wish for their child to have sunscreen applied in the months of Winter and Spring. Please note that educators may apply sunscreen to your child if the weather becomes too hot particularly towards the end of Spring.

Scheduling Outdoor Activities

- Sun protection times are a forecast for the time-of-day UV levels will reach 3 or above. At these levels, sun protection is recommended for all skin types and the policy areas should be implemented. In NSW, UV levels are high enough (UV 3 or above) to damage unprotected skin most months of the year.
- UV levels and daily sun protection times are used to plan daily activities and ensure a correct understanding of local sun protection requirements
- When children are on excursions and routine walks through the school campus, all sun protection practices are planned, organised, and understood

Shade

Where possible, outdoor activities will be set up in the shade.

- Shade cloths are fixed in the backyard and one in the front yard to provide sun protection.
- Shade options can include a combination of portable, natural and built shade.
- Activities and portable equipment will be moved as the shade moves throughout the day.
- Shade assessments will be conducted to monitor existing shade structures and assist in planning for additional shade. 'Outdoor activities scheduled outside of peak UV times.

Hats

- Educators and children are required to wear sun-safe hats that protect their face, neck and ears.
- A green bucket hat will be purchased by the parents from the School Uniform Shop.
- Children without hats will remain protected from the sun. For example, play in the shade, stay inside or on the veranda, or be provided with a spare hat.
- Examples of SunSmart hats include:
    - Broad-brimmed hats with a brim size of at least 6cm (adults 7.5cm)
    - Bucket hats with a deep crown and brim size of at least 5cm (adults 6cm)
    - Legionnaire style hats.
    - Baseball caps or visors do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended.

Clothing

- Educators and children are required to wear sun-safe clothing that covers as much skin as possible.
- Children without sun-safe clothing will be provided with sun-safe clothing if available or will play in an area protected from the sun.
- SunSmart clothing includes wearing:
    - Loose fitting shirts and dresses with sleeves and collars or covered neckline.
    - Longer style skirts, shorts and trousers.

- Midriff, crop or singlet tops do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended.

Sunscreen

- Educators and children are required to apply SPF30+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and to reapply every 2 hours.
- The ECEC will provide sunscreen.
- Permission to apply sunscreen is included in the service enrolment form.
- Cancer Council recommends usage tests before applying a new sunscreen
- Families are asked to supply sun cream should their child be allergic to the sun cream provided by the ECEC.
- Sunscreen is stored in a cool, dry place and the use-by-date is monitored by educators.
- In the event that families wish for their child not the have sun screen applied in the months of Winter and Spring a letter must be supplied by a General Practitioner. Please note that educators may apply sun screen to your child if the weather becomes too hot particularly towards the end of Spring.

Education and Information

- Sun protection messages are incorporated into the ECEC Program.
- Children are provided with opportunities to take leadership roles in managing sun protection e.g., accessing daily UV levels and sun protection times, hat reminders and management of sunscreen.
- Children understand why sun safety is important and learn how to take effective sun protection actions.
- Parents are encouraged to download the SunSmart App for easy daily reference.
- Further information is available from the Cancer Council website www.cancercouncil.com.au/sunsmart. Upon enrolment, families will be informed of the implementation of this policy.
- The sun protection policy, updates and requirements will be made available to educators, families and visitors.

Softfall Surfaces

- During the warmer summer months, children are reminded to keep their shoes on while playing on the synthetic grass surfaces.
- In extreme heat, playing on these surfaces will be avoided as ECEC has other outdoor spaces which can be accessed.

Statutory Legislation and Considerations

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Guide to the National Quality Standard ACECQA

Sources

Community Early Learning Australia www.cela.org.au

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) www.acecqa.gov.au

Australian Childcare Alliance www.childcarealliance.org.au

Cancer Council NSW www.cancercouncil.com.au

Sun Smart www.sunsmartnsw.com.au

Review

This policy is reviewed by management, employees and families as required or when legislative requirements change.

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