

SUN PROTECTION POLICY

Updated: November 2024



What are we talking about in this document?	This policy outlines the recommendations and guidelines we follow to ensure children and educator safety in relation to sun protection.
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Who is this for?	This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, students, and visitors of the service.
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Why do we need this policy?	We aim to protect all children, staff, students and visitors attending the service from skin damage caused by harmful UV radiation from the sun.
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'Be Sun Smart. Slip. Slop. Slap. Seek. Slide.' – SunSmart

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Key Terms		
Term	Meaning	Source
UV Level	The UV Level is a tool used to protect us from UV radiation. The levels are divided into- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low (1-2) • Moderate (3-5) • High (6-7) • Very high (8-10) • Extreme (11 and above) 	https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/uv-index



The Important Stuff

Some sun exposure is necessary for vitamin D production. But too much sun exposure can cause skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Any activity that involves children being outdoors when the UV is 3 or above for any period of time without sun protection is potentially placing them at risk of sunburn and other skin damage, increasing their future skin cancer risk. To ensure the safety of the children, the UV Index must be checked daily by the Centre Coordinator/Responsible Person or Room Leader. Basic sun protection measures such as wearing hats will be encouraged year-round to develop sun-safe habits, however, once the UV Index is 3 or above, extra sun protection measures will be put in place as guided by this policy.

Risk Management

In Western Australia, the UV level is likely to reach 3 or above most days of the year, and average 10-15 over the summer months. The service proactively manages the risks associated with sun and heat exposure.

To reduce the risk, educators should regularly review their outdoor play space risk assessment to ensure it covers potential hazards such as:

- Hot equipment
- Hot surfaces
- Sun burn
- Any access to bodies of water.

UV Levels (Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety)

Keiki educators will monitor the UV levels throughout the day through one or more of the following methods:

- Using the smartphone SunSmart app available at iTunes App Store and Google Play store
- Viewing the Bureau of Meteorology website <http://www.bom.gov.au/>
- Visiting www.myuv.com.au
- Using a handheld UV Index monitor (where available). [See procedure below.](#)

When the UV level is 3 or above, educators will take extra steps to ensure children's safety from harmful UV rays, such as applying sunscreen and moving children to environments and spaces that provide additional sun protection.

Shade (Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment)

- Management will ensure there is sufficient shade in outdoor areas. The shade may be provided by built structures and trees.
 - In the months approaching summer (October) educators consider the risk assessment for their outdoor area to determine when outdoor shade structures such as shade sails are to be erected.
- When the UV level is 3 or above:
 - children will be actively encouraged to use shade for outdoor play
 - outdoor activities will be planned to occur in shaded areas.
- The availability of shade is considered when planning excursions and all outdoor activities.
- Shade does not guarantee total protection, so hats, protective clothing and sunscreen should still be used.

Surface Temperatures (Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment)

Due to the hot climate of Western Australia play equipment and the ground can heat up rapidly and retain heat. Many playground surfaces and equipment can exceed temperatures greater than 50°C and if young children come into contact with these surfaces, they can be burned severely within seconds.

Before transitioning children to outdoor areas, and regularly throughout the day, educators will use the touch method to check the temperature of surfaces and equipment and make an informed decision about permitting children to play on the equipment or in the outdoor space. The ground, walls, equipment, sand and soft fall should be checked. If the surface temperature is determined to be too hot or is recorded as at or above 50°C children will not be permitted to play in that area. If the surface feels hot to the touch but not uncomfortable as described below or is recorded at over 35°C children must be wearing shoes. It is essential to check regularly as surface temperatures can rise quickly.

- The touch method – keep your hand on the surface for a slow count of five. If you can comfortably keep your hand on a surface, it is probably safe to allow children to play on equipment. (KidSafe Australia).
- If educators are unsure, a non-contact thermometer may be used as a further guide to decision-making.

Hats (Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety)

All children will wear a wide brim, bucket or legionnaires style hat that protects the face, neck, ears, and crown of the head when the UV level is 3 or above and they are outside, either at the service or on an excursion.

- In order to create sun-safe habits, educators will encourage children to wear hats outside whenever practicable regardless of the UV level.
- Children without hats, or with hats that do not meet sun-safe requirements, will be asked to use a spare hat provided by Keiki when available or be required to remain in the shade or indoors.

Educators and staff will wear hats at all times while in the outdoor environment.

Clothing (Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety)

All children will wear sun protective clothing that protects as much of their skin as practicable. Suitable clothing includes covered shoulders and longer style shorts and skirts.

- Children without appropriate clothing will be asked to wear spare clothing if available or be required to remain in the shade or indoors.
- Children who are not wearing sun protective clothing will not be able to attend planned excursions.

Families are informed of their responsibilities to ensure their children are dressed appropriately for sun protection at orientation, via the family handbook and will be reminded if their child attends the service without sun protective clothing.

Sunscreen (Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety)

Sunscreen must be worn when the UV Index is 3 or above and children are outside. In Perth, the UV Index reaches 3 most days year-round.

- Sunscreen is available and accessible to all staff and children. All children, staff, students and volunteers will apply an SPF30 or higher broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors when the UV level is 3 or above.
 - Sunscreen will be reapplied every 2 hours when the UV level is 3 or above. It will be reapplied more frequently if washed or wiped off, or during activities that may inhibit sunscreen effectiveness (e.g., water play, sand play). These subsequent applications should not restrict outdoor play.
- Sunscreen will be stored in a cool place, out of the sun.
- Children and staff who have an allergy or sensitivity to some sunscreens will be asked to supply sunscreen they can wear. This sunscreen will be stored at the service and its expiry date will be checked as part of the medication audit.

Babies (Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety)

- When the UV level is 3 or above, children under 12 months of age:
 - will not be exposed to direct sunlight
 - will wear sun safe hats and clothing
 - will have small amounts of SPF30+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen applied to their exposed skin 20 minutes prior to going outside, and every 2 hours thereafter.

The widespread use of sunscreen on babies under 6 months is not recommended.

Role Modelling & Workplace Health and Safety (Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children)

Staff, children, families, students and visitors will act as positive role models and demonstrate SunSmart behaviours when attending the service by:

- wearing sun protective hats and clothing
- applying SPF30 or higher broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen when the UV Index is 3 or above
- using and promoting the use of shade.

Educators should discuss sun protection with children and demonstrate a positive and proactive approach to the management of sun protection in the service.

- Staff and educators record the UV Index daily and throughout the day.
- Educators and staff regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of the sun protection policy.

Education (Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities)

- The educational program includes learning about sun protection both intentionally and indirectly through routines and role modelling.
- Sun protection information will be promoted to staff, families, and visitors in a variety of ways.
- Information about sun smart clothing is provided to families.
- Families are informed at induction that their children will have sunscreen applied and families are encouraged to first apply sunscreen to their child at home.



Procedures and Guidelines

Sunscreen Application Procedure

This procedure is to be followed when applying sunscreen to children.

1. Families should apply sunscreen in the morning before leaving their home.
2. Children have the opportunity to apply sunscreen on arrival if needed.
3. Sunscreen must be applied 20 minutes prior to outside play and prior to activities that may inhibit sunscreen effectiveness (e.g., water play, sand play).
4. Sunscreen will be reapplied every 2 hours or more frequently if washed or wiped off. These subsequent applications should not restrict outdoor play.
5. Children over 2.5 years are encouraged to apply their own sunscreen with educators supervision and support.
6. Educators may assist children to apply sunscreen using a tissue, gloves, or directly with their hands.
 - a. Educators will wash their hands prior to application
 - b. Educators will ensure that if any child has visible skin disease or cold that sunscreen will be applied to them last.
 - c. If educators come into contact with bodily fluids they will wash their hands or change their gloves before applying sunscreen to other children.
 - d. Educators will wash their hands after sunscreen has been applied to all children.
7. Discuss with children the importance of applying sunscreen.
8. Children are to wash their hands after applying sunscreen to reduce the risk of having slippery hands.

Sunscreen is to be stored in a cool, dry place and the use-by-date to be monitored. Educators should have clear records of children who have their own sunscreen and ensure that they only apply their own sunscreen and do not access the service's sunscreen.

Handheld UV Index Monitor

Keiki services that have a handheld UV meter can use the meter reading to guide this policy's implementation. The reading should be taken prior to children going outside and regularly throughout the day. Each separate play space should be checked as the UV will differ throughout the outdoor environment.

To get an accurate reading:

- Stand in the area with the most direct view to the sky.
- Hold the meter vertically out in front of your body.
- The value displayed represents the instantaneous UV Index.

The UV is likely to differ throughout the area depending on shade, structures and surfaces. Educators should take a second reading in another area and use the highest reading to guide their decisions.



Supporting Documents

Policies

[Incident, Illness and Administration of First Aid Policy](#)

[Supervision of Children Policy](#)
[Workplace Health and Safety Policy](#)

Resources

[Education and Care Services National Law \(WA\) Act 2012](#)
[Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012](#)
[2022-08-Sun-Protection-Best-practice-Guidelines.pdf \(cancerwa.asn.au\)](#)
[sunscreen-tips-for-early-childhood.pdf](#)



Sources

- ACECQA – Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority.
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
- Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012. (2023).
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012. (2023).
- Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2023).
- Janice Davies, SunSmart Education Coordinator. Cancer Council Western Australia. (2022).
- Cancer Council WA. www.cancerwa.asn.au. (2022).
- SunSmart – Cancer Council WA. www.sunsmart.com.au. (2022).



Links to Regulations

National Quality Standard		
Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice		
1.2.1	Intentional teaching	Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.
1.2.2	Responsive teaching and scaffolding	Educators respond to children’s ideas and play and extend children’s learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.
Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety		
2.1	Health	Each child’s health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child’s wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.1.3	Healthy lifestyle	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
Quality Area 3: Physical Environment		
3.1.1	Fit for purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.

Education and Care Services National Regulations

77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
114	Outdoor space – shade
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available

Education and Care Services National Law

167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
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Review & Document Control	
Policy Reviewed	Modifications
August 2017	Extension of Policy from regulations and set out expectations for all parties
1 st November 2017	Reworded the information about tissues. Sent to families for further review 13/11/17
8th January 2018	Quality Area updated to reflect changes to the NQS.
20th June 2018	Updated to reflect Cancer Council and Sun Safe recommendations of UV Index.
13th November 2018	Added educators and staff to monitor the effectiveness of the policy
11th January 2018	Input from Sally (Cancer Council) – reapply if children have been involved in play that may inhibit sunscreen coverage.
December 2019	Added use of sunscreen not recommended on under 6 months in babies section
November 2020	New template. Spelling mistake. Sun safe routines followed all year
October 2021	Added Key Terms. Added sunscreen application procedure. Added Summer Safety section. Add Law. Added QA3.
February 2022	Added more information to shade regarding the use of infrared thermometer and checking temperature of play equipment and ground cover.
November 2022	New format. Added section on Handheld UV Meter. Update to hats on young children. Update to checking of surface temperatures. Minor wording updates.
December 2022	Checked for readability & to ensure compatibility with the most recent guidelines from SunSmart WA. Minor wording updates for clarity.
January 2024	New template. Moved section on removing risk to top of policy. Reworded sunscreen application section for clarification.
November 2024	Update to clarify educators do not have to wash hand between each application of sunscreen.

Disclaimer

It is each employee, family and visitor to the service’s responsibility to read, understand, follow and address any concerns with management about this policy.

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