



MAITLAND CHILDREN'S CENTRE SKIN PROTECTION POLICY



RATIONALE



Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world with two out of every three people developing some form of skin cancer before they are 70. Skin damage, including skin cancer, is the result of cumulative exposure to the sun. Sun exposure in the first ten years of life determines, to a substantial degree, the likelihood of skin cancer developing later in life.



Cancer Council SA advises people protect their skin at times when the ultraviolet (UV) radiation level is 3 and above.



Cancer Council SA recommends that a skin protection policy be fully implemented when the ultraviolet radiation (UVR) level is 3 and above which, in South Australia, is primarily from the beginning of September until the end of April. Skin protection should also be considered if the centre is involved in an all day outdoor activity, on a clear sunny day from May to August, when UV levels could still be 3 or above. It is not necessary to wear hats and sunscreen during winter months (May-August) when the UV is below 3.



"Safe" sun exposure for the production of vitamin D-particularly over the winter months is vital for healthy bone development.



The Department of Education and Child Development is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for its employees, children and visitors. This will be achieved through an effective preventative approach to the management of exposure to UV radiation and the sun.



AIMS



The aims of the Maitland 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 sun exposure when the UV radiation level is 3 and above.



IMPLEMENTATION



This policy will be implemented from 1 September to 30 April. Outside this time care should be taken when the ultraviolet radiation level is 3 and above.



It is an expectation that all staff, children and parents of Maitland Children's Centre will use the following skin protection strategies:



- Staff will display the days UV level on the parent notice board informing parents and children whether hats and sunscreen need to be worn/applied.
- Parents/ Caregivers are to provide a named broad-brimmed or legionnaire style hat for their child every day, to be kept in the child's bag.
- Suitable hats (as recommended above) are to be worn outside at all times of the year, when the UV rays are above 3 regardless of weather.
- Spare hats will be available for emergency use and will be individually named for the time being used. The child will keep the hat in their bag or locker for the duration of the day and then put aside for washing.
- Parents will be informed of the need to provide an appropriate hat for their child's use at the Centre.
- Broad spectrum SPF 30+ Sunscreen is recommended to be applied to all children at home before coming to the Centre.
- Sunscreen is available for use by families and staff when at the Centre.





- Sunscreen is to be applied 15-20 minutes before going outside and will be reapplied at lunchtime to children attending a full day, when children are outside for an extended period of time (every 2 hours) and when children are involved in water play.
- Special considerations will be made in regard to applying sunscreen to babies especially under 12 months old. The baby will be covered or in full shade whilst outside and sunscreen only applied to areas of skin that cannot be covered by clothing.
- A patch test is recommended to ensure no allergy exists before sunscreen is applied and communication between staff and parents is encouraged.
- Hygiene issues should be considered when sunscreen is applied by staff. It is recommended that a tissue, damp cloth or damp paper towel be used to apply sunscreen, thus ensuring germs are not transferred from one child's skin to another.
- Considerations for children's individual needs are discussed by the parent with staff.
- Parents may provide sunscreen from home to be applied on their child.
- If a parent specifically requests that sunscreen is not applied to their child due perhaps to their cultural norms or a severe allergy, consultation with the parent will decide whether the child will be permitted to play outside. If the parent wishes their child to play outside appropriate clothing will be discussed and staff will ensure a well shaded area for their play. To ensure duty of care to the child, the parent will be notified in writing of a recommendation that precautions against harmful UV rays should be taken.
- Children will wear appropriate clothing to ensure that shoulders, neck and back are covered.
- Mid-riff and singlet tops are inappropriate clothing as they do not provide adequate protection from the sun and children wearing these types of clothes to the Centre will be provided additional or replacement clothing to wear whilst outdoors and parents will be informed.
- Children and adults will be encouraged to use shaded areas to avoid direct sun and the direct heat of the day.
- Staff will set up outdoor activities in the shade and direct children to use shaded areas, between 10.00am and 3.00pm, particularly during daylight saving hours.
- The availability of shade will be considered when planning all outdoor excursions and activities. Portable shade structures may be used if the area does not have much natural or artificial shade.
- Children and staff participating in excursions will be covered by the policy and broad brimmed or legionnaire style hats, sunscreen and protective clothing should be worn on all excursions.
- Learning about ways to protect skin from the sun will be incorporated into programmed activities and educational material is available.

The Sun Safe Policy will be reinforced in a positive way through parent newsletters, noticeboards and meetings, and will be available in writing to parents on request.

SOURCES
The Cancer Council SA – www.sunsmart.org.au

Chairperson, Governing Council **Centre Director**

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