

# Be 'SunSmart' in the Summer Sun!

## Early Years Settings

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Young skin is delicate and very easily damaged by the sun. All children, no matter whether they tan easily or not, should be protected from the sun. Think about those children who may be more at risk, for example children with fair or red hair and those with freckles are at more risk. Keep babies under six months out of direct sunlight, especially during the middle part of the day.

### Ten tips for protecting children in the sun:

- **Remember you can burn in the UK** - The Great British sun is quite capable of burning a child.
- **Remember the hottest times of the day** - The sun is at its hottest between the hours of 11am and 3pm. Try and find a shaded area for the children to play at this time of the day.
- **Use shade** - Keep babies in complete shade; under trees, umbrellas, canopies or indoors.
- **Cover them up** - Where possible, dress children in cotton clothing that is baggy, close-weave and cool. Oversized T-shirts are good for covering most of their skin.
- **Use dry clothing** - Remember that wet clothing stretches and can lose up to half of its UV protection - put children in dry clothing after playing in water.
- **Protect shoulders and necks** - Don't put children in vest tops or sundresses if they are spending a lot of time outdoors; shoulders and backs of necks get easily burned.
- **Wear sunglasses** - Buy good quality, wraparound sunglasses for children where possible, as soon as they can wear them. Sunglasses don't have to be expensive brands, but toy sunglasses can do more harm than good.
- **Find hats they like** - Encourage children to wear hats with brims, especially if they are not wearing sunglasses. The wider the brim, the more skin will be shaded from the sun. Have you thought about a 'hat box' by the door for children to pick from as they go into the garden?
- **Use sunscreen wisely** - Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 to protect against UVB and at least four-star UVA protection. The higher the SPF, the better. Go for broad-spectrum sunscreens, which protect against harmful UVA and UVB rays. Make sure the product is not past its expiry date. Most sunscreens have a shelf life of two to three years. Reapply often to be sure of good coverage - don't forget their shoulders, nose, ears, cheeks and tops of feet.
- **Remember sunscreen washes off** - Always use waterproof when children are swimming or playing outdoors with water. Reapply after towelling.

### Other things to think about

- **Room temperatures** - these can increase rapidly during the day. Think about closing curtains when the sun is directly shining through them, keeping windows and doors open and about keeping your quiet areas cool and shaded
- **Keep children well hydrated** - Remember to ensure children drink plenty of water throughout the day - is it on hand for them to take as and when they like?

**Set good habits for the future** - Remember, children spend much more time outside than adults do. By putting these tips into practice you will protect children now and reduce their risk of developing skin cancer in the future. Teaching children safe sun habits while they are young sets a good pattern for later life.

## **What about our policy?**

It is essential that you develop a good practice statement that you can produce to parents and carer, as well as Ofsted inspectors, that show you have understood the importance of and how to implement sun care procedures. The following are recommendations to include in the policy, but you must make sure that you negotiate with staff and parents before finalising anything.

- Only apply sun cream when parents have signed and returned permission slips allowing you to do so. Alternatively, where parents are unable to provide sun cream you should ensure you have a signed declaration stating what cream you provide as a setting and that the parent is happy for their child to use it
- Ensure sun cream dispenser is labelled with each child's name, the date it was first brought in and its expiry date
- Explain in the policy how you intend to apply sun cream to each individual child's need, which may vary day by day
- Inform parents when sun cream is getting low so they know they need to replace it
- Explain that parents are responsible for ensuring that you are aware of any allergic reactions the child may have, which is why they have provided the cream themselves
- Think about shaded areas of the garden and how to continue to encourage children's free-flow play whilst staying safe
- It should also reflect your 'safe in the sun' practice (e.g. providing shaded play space, keeping children out of the sun between 11am-3pm etc.)
- Consider what you will do to prepare when the council issue 'heatwave warnings'; what information will you issue to parents, what practices will you review, how will you keep parts of your accommodation cool and what actions will you take to ensure staff are able to work safely

## **Further information and advice**

- NHS England, Sun safety Q&A - [www.nhs.uk/Livewell/travelhealth/Pages/SunsafetyQA.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/travelhealth/Pages/SunsafetyQA.aspx)
- Heatwave Plan for England - [www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england)