

Early Childhood newsletter

October 2007 | Issue 11



Hello and welcome to the next edition of the Early Childhood News Bulletin. This is the time of the year to ensure that the skin protection policy at your service is up to date and actively in place. It is also the time to remind all staff and families in your community about the policy and what their responsibilities are.

The Cancer Council South Australia recommends that all services have a comprehensive skin protection policy in place when the ultraviolet radiation (UVR) level is 3 and above. In South Australia this is generally from the beginning of September until the end of April. Care should also be taken during other months when the UV level is 3 or above. A comprehensive policy should include areas such as

- appropriate hat and clothing wearing
- rescheduling of outdoor activities
- adequate provision of shade
- correct use of sunscreen
- curriculum information where appropriate
- the special needs of babies (if applicable)
- role modelling by staff and visitors

Don't forget that babies (0–12 months old) should be kept out of the direct sun as much as possible. Shade, protective clothing and hats should be used to protect young children's skin and sunscreen applied only in small amounts to areas not protected by hats and clothing.

If you have any questions about skin protection or would like some assistance in updating your skin protection policy, please contact me via the details below. A SunSmart policy review checklist and other information can be downloaded from The Cancer Council South Australia's website www.cancersa.org.au.

Don't get caught out – this is the time of year that people and children often get sunburnt because they tend to stay out in the sun, unprotected, for longer.

Carmel McNamara
Early Childhood & Primary Schools Project Officer
t 08 8291 4149
e cmcnamara@cancersa.org.au

On the back page of this newsletter is some information about the UV Alert that you may like to photocopy and give out to your families or put up on your notice board.

Join the SunSmart Centres Program

If your centre hasn't become a registered SunSmart centre yet then this is a good time to apply. Join hundreds of other early childhood services across Australia that have already gained SunSmart Centre status.

If you would like to become a registered SunSmart Centre simply download the application form from www.cancersa.org.au or contact me directly on Tel: 8291 4149 or by email cmcnamara@cancersa.org.au.

Once a service gains SunSmart status they receive large aluminium SunSmart Centre sign to display in a prominent spot. This lets the wider community know that their service is committed to providing a sun safe environment for its children and staff.

An update from the Parents Jury

The Parents Jury is a web-based network of parents who wish to improve the food and physical activity environments for children in Australia. Below are some interesting facts about food marketing to children which has come from the Parents Jury website at www.parentsjury.org.au

Some facts about food marketing to children

- Australian children (aged 5-12 years) watch 2-3 hours of television a day with the majority on commercial stations.
- According to a 1996 study which compared the levels of advertising across 13 different countries, Australian television shows the highest number of food advertisements per hour during children's programs in the world.
- Australian studies over the last 10 years have consistently shown between 55-81 per cent of food advertisements shown during children's viewing time are for unhealthy foods of low nutritional value such as confectionery, sweetened breakfast cereals and fast food.
- Advertisements directed at children often use sophisticated marketing techniques such as give-aways, competitions, celebrity endorsements, animations and jingles to increase a child's desire to purchase the product.
- Food advertisements often give a distorted message. Advertisements are often misleading and do not provide clear nutritional representation.
- Children aged less than 8 years old generally do not have the critical literacy skills to recognise the persuasive intention of advertisers.
- Television food advertisements influence children's food choices and increase their pestering of parents for particular products. This undermines the attempts of parents to provide children with a healthy diet.
- Australian children are eating a high percentage of energy dense, high fat, high sugar and low fibre foods. This is consistent with the majority of foods advertised during children's television viewing times.
- Approximately 25-30 per cent of Australian children are overweight or obese. Australia has one of the highest rates of childhood obesity in the world and its prevalence is rapidly increasing.
- Overweight and obese children have a high risk (80 per cent) of becoming an overweight or obese adult. Social isolation, poor self-esteem and depression are linked to weight problems. Their chances of developing diabetes, some types of cancer and heart disease are significantly increased.

The Parents Jury would like to thank the Coalition on Food Advertising to Children for its assistance and expertise in the compilation of this material.

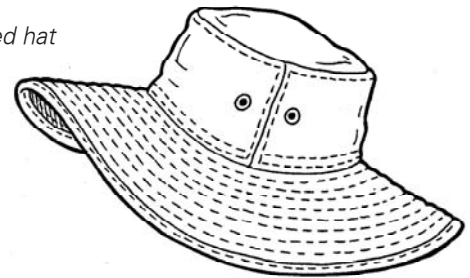
Membership to the Parents Jury is free and open to all Australian parents, grandparents and guardians of children aged 18 years and under.

Register online and have your say www.parentsjury.org.au.

Hat check – make sure your service is following the SunSmart hat guidelines

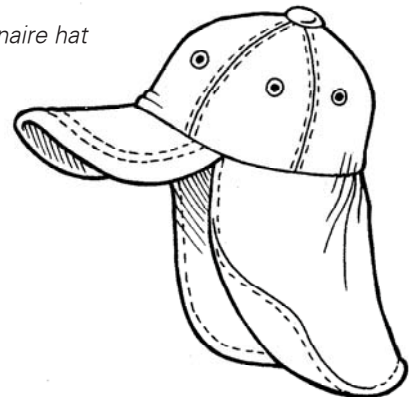
The Cancer Council recommends wearing hats that provide good shade to the face, back of neck and ears when in the sun. These include broad brimmed, legionnaire and bucket hats made of closely woven material.

Broad brimmed hat



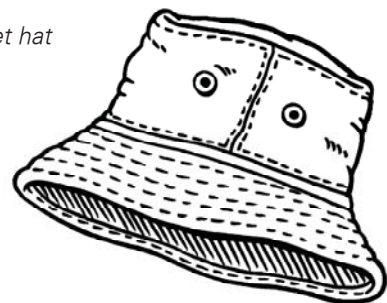
Brim on broad brimmed hats should be at least 7.5cm wide. These hats reduce the amount of ultraviolet radiation reaching the face and eyes by up to 50%.

Legionnaire hat



Legionnaire style hats should have a flap that meets the sides of the front peak to provide protection to the side of the face.

Bucket hat



Bucket hats should have a deep crown and sit low on the head. The brim should be 6cm (5cms for children under 5 years) and provide the face, neck and ears with plenty of shade.

Remember: Baseball caps and sun visors are NOT recommended as they do not provide enough protection to the face and leave the ears and back of the neck exposed.

Family Day Care SunSmart Certificate

Family Day Care providers are also able to apply to become a SunSmart Service. Family Day Care providers that reach the required standard will receive a SunSmart certificate in recognition of their good work in protecting the children in their care from over exposure to the sun. If you are a Family Day Care Provider and would like to join the SunSmart certificate program then contact me on 8291 4149 or by email cmcnamara@cancersa.org.au.



Resources

New Early Childhood poster

By now you would have received a copy of the new poster for early childhood services. This is a free resource and if you would like further copies please contact **The Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20** to order some more.



Early Childhood SunSmart Poster Set

This SunSmart Poster Set has been developed to help early childhood services promote sun protection for young children and their families.

- The set comprises six A3 size colour photograph posters depicting infants, children and adults being SunSmart in typical early childhood settings.
- The posters are laminated and include information about sun protection and ideas for discussion and play with young children printed on the back.
- The posters can be used for display or as a focus for group discussion.



This Poster Set is an essential resource for early childhood services concerned about skin protection for young children, families and staff. Due to an excess of stock there is currently no charge for this poster set so please contact the Helpline on 13 11 20 to order yours.

Need a replacement SunSmart Centre sign?

If you are already SunSmart Centre and your SunSmart Centre sign is looking old and weather beaten, please send me a purchase order for \$20 and I will send you out a brand new sign to brighten up your fence or wall.

Send us your SunSmart photo.

I am always on the lookout for SunSmart photos to use in my newsletters. If you have a good photo that shows how SunSmart your service is and you would like it included in a newsletter please send it to me by email to cmcnamara@cancersa.org.au. It might be at an event, children with great hats on or staff being role models – the more SunSmart the better!

What is the SunSmart UV Alert?

The SunSmart UV Alert is a tool you can use to protect yourself from UV radiation. It is based on the Global Solar UV Index, a rating system adopted from the World Health Organisation which indicates the amount of UV radiation from the sun that reaches the earth's surface. The higher the Index value, the greater the potential for damage to your skin.

The Alert is issued by the Bureau of Meteorology when the UV Index is forecast to reach 3, a level that can damage your skin and lead to skin cancer. At that level, you need to be SunSmart.



Be SunSmart - 5 easy steps



1. Seek shade
2. Wear protective clothing that covers your arms and legs as well as your body
3. Wear a broad-brimmed hat that shades your face and neck
4. Wear wrap-around sunglasses
5. Apply SPF30+ broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen every two hours. Sunscreen should not be used to extend the time you spend in the sun.

Check and Protect

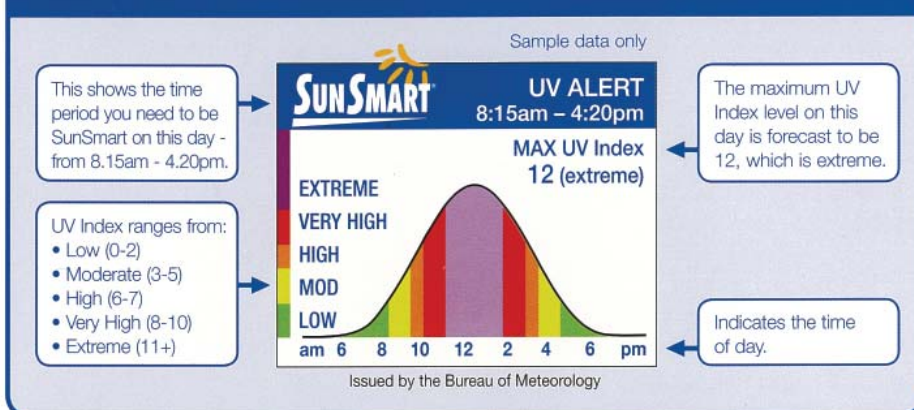
It's important for all Australians, or visitors to Australia, to look and listen for UV Index levels in local weather forecasts.

Remember, you should use a combination of sun protection measures to keep you safe from UV radiation—never rely on just one.

Look for the Alert every day

The SunSmart UV Alert is reported in most newspapers and some television and radio weather forecasts across Australia.

How to read the Alert



Further information can be found at:

Bureau of Meteorology
www.bom.gov.au/info/about_uv.shtml

SunSmart
www.sunsmart.com.au/uvalert

Real time UV levels can be found at:

Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA)
www.arpansa.gov.au/uvindex/realtime/ad_rt.htm