

February 2006



Hello and a very Happy New Year. Welcome to the first edition of the Early Childhood News Bulletin for 2006. Sadly, the summer holidays are over now and early childhood services and kindergartens are all gearing up for another full year. This is a very necessary time for skin protection and for services to have their skin protection policies fully implemented and in place.

If your skin protection policy hasn't been updated or reviewed in the past two years then it would be a very good idea to do so during this term. A SunSmart Checklist is available on our website at www.cancersa.org.au to help you or I am very happy to speak to you about it.

This is also a good time to become a registered SunSmart Centre and receive a large SunSmart Centre sign for your fence. If your centre or service is doing a great job in providing a sun safe environment for the children and staff in your community, why not become a SunSmart Centre? If you would like to join the program you can download an application form from our website www.cancersa.org.au or contact me by email on cmcnamara@cancersa.org.au or on 8291 4149.

Need a new SunSmart School sign?

If you are a 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.

Carmel McNamara
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Temperature and ultraviolet radiation levels – when to let children out to play safely.

I get many calls from centres and childcare services asking about at what temperature should children be kept inside during hot weather. This really relates to two issues – heat and peak ultraviolet radiation levels. The Cancer Council South Australia recommends people protect their skin at times when the ultraviolet radiation (UVR) level is 3 (3–5 is the moderate range) and above – this is in line with the recommendations of The World Health Organisation. With this in mind, the guidelines for South Australia are that a skin protection policy be in place from the beginning of September until the end of

April. The Cancer Council also recommends that particular care should be taken between 10 am–3.00 pm, when the ultraviolet radiation levels are at their highest.

What complicates these messages is that the UVR can be above 3 from as early as 8.00 am and can stay high to extreme until much later in the day. As an example of this, the UVR levels for Adelaide on a warm (28 degrees) day in January this year was above 3 at 8.07 am and did not come down below 3 until 4.08 pm.

The issue for childcare services is when to let children out to play safely, particularly if the UVR levels are already high by 10.00 am. On those days it would be recommended that children go out to play as early as possible (with the appropriate hats, clothing and staying in shaded areas as much as possible) and be back inside before 10.00 am and then go out again after 4.00 pm or later. During days of extreme heat children are often kept inside all day and this is a decision that is made by the respective centre management or governing council.

SunSmart UV Alert

The Cancer Council Australia - in partnership with the Bureau of Meteorology and Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) has launched the **SunSmart UV Alert**.

Early childhood services can use the **SunSmart UV Alert** to gain a clearer understanding about UV radiation levels and when they occur. The Bureau of Meteorology forecasts the UV Index daily. The UV Index, adapted from the World Health Organisation's Global UV Index, provides a measure of solar UV radiation at the earth's surface. The values of the Index range from zero upward and the higher the Index value, the greater the potential for damage to your skin.

On days when the UV Index is forecast to reach 3 or above the Bureau of Meteorology will issue the **SunSmart UV Alert** stating the times the UV will be at

3 and above during the day, when skin protection is most important. The **SunSmart UV Alert** appears daily in The Advertiser and Sunday Mail.

For the best protection from the sun when the UV radiation levels are 3 and above use a combination of sun protection measures including:

- Rescheduling outdoor activities away from 10 am and 3 pm when UV radiation levels are at their strongest
- Use shade as much as possible
- Wear clothing that protects your arms and legs
- Wear a hat that provides shade to your face, neck and ears
- Liberally apply a SPF 30+ broad spectrum sunscreen and reapply every two hours
- Wear wrap around sunglasses to protect your eyes.

Websites to visit for more information:

www.cancersa.org.au

www.sunsmart.org.au

www.bom.gov.au/products/uvindex_national.shtm

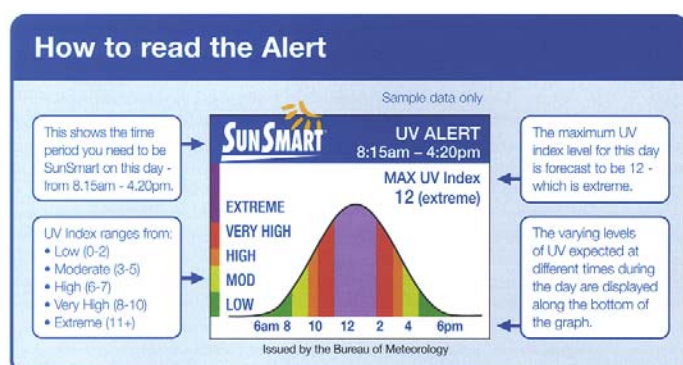
www.arpansa.gov.au/uvindex/daily/ausuvindex.htm

www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs271/en

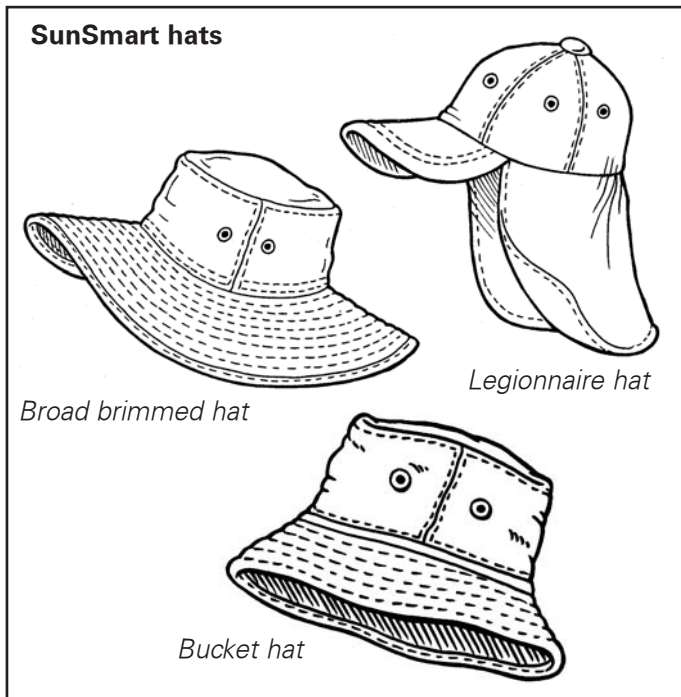
Which hat styles are SunSmart hats?

The best way to check and see if a hat is a SunSmart hat is to see how well it protects a child's (or adult's) face. Any hat that gives good protection to the face, ears and neck is appropriate. Common styles are broad brimmed, legionnaire and bucket style hats. In response to frequent questions about the appropriateness of bucket style hats, The Cancer Council South Australia commissioned research into the sun protectiveness of bucket hats, in 2003. Further research was also undertaken in 2004/2005 to determine suitable hat styles for preschool aged children. In both instances the research was conducted by a senior researcher from the ARPANSA. ARPANSA is the Federal Government agency charged with the responsibility for protecting the health and safety of people, and the environment, from the harmful effects of radiation.

The research showed that a bucket hat with a deep crown and a brim width of **6 cm** for primary school aged children and above, or **5 cm** for children under the age of 5 years, provides good protection from the sun. Broad brimmed



hats with a brim of 7–7.5 cm were tested as a comparison and were found to also provide good protection. As a result of these findings, bucket hats that have the appropriate brim width are now being recommended as SunSmart hats. They have also been included as part of the criteria to gain SunSmart School status.



I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you that The Cancer Council does not recommend baseball caps or sun visors as appropriate hats as they do not provide adequate protection from the sun. It is disappointing to see that some early childhood services still allow baseball caps to be worn. I would strongly encourage those centres to consider eliminating the wearing of all caps by both children and staff.

The Cancer Council South Australia's Speakers' Bureau

Did you know that The Cancer Council South Australia can provide a speaker to come to your centre to talk to staff and/or parent groups about skin cancer – ranging from prevention to early detection. Our Speakers' Bureau has provided well over 300 presentations on a range of topics, cancer prevention and early detection and the work of The Cancer Council.

Skin cancer prevention is a very popular topic and assists early childhood communities remain up to date with information and available resources. Speakers can also provide a presentation on nutrition and cancer prevention.

To book a speaker on skin cancer prevention, nutrition and cancer prevention or any cancer-related topic, please contact the Speakers' Bureau Coordinator on 8291 4111 or download the request forms from the Speakers Bureau section on the website www.cancersa.org.au

Please note that the Speakers Bureau does not cater for children or student groups. Please contact The Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20 for information about student resources.

Early Childhood SunSmart Poster Set.

The 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 sun protection for young children, families and staff.



The Early Childhood Poster Set is available to purchase for \$25 (including postage & GST). Please contact **The Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20**.

Need something to remind parents and carers about the importance of being SunSmart? Here is some information that you can photocopy and distribute to all parents and carers, put up on your noticeboard or include in your next newsletter.

Slip! Slop! Slap!

Do you remember this slogan and the jingle?

Again this is the critical time of year for families with young children to remember to routinely practise sun protection behaviours. It is evident that over exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun during childhood significantly increases the risk of sun damage or skin cancer later in life. Positive encouragement and consistent role modelling of SunSmart behaviour within your family is a way of reducing this long-term risk as well as developing SunSmart habits to last a lifetime.

Ensure that all family members protect their skin when outdoors from the beginning of September through to the end of April by:

- Playing, working or resting in shady places outdoors such as verandahs, under trees and in cubby houses.
- Minimising outdoor activities during the peak UVR times of between 10 am–3 pm where possible.
- Wearing a hat that gives good protection to the face, ears and back of the neck such as a broad brimmed, bucket hat with a brim of 6 cms or a legionnaire style hat.
- Wearing protective clothing such as a shirt with a collar, longer sleeves, skirts and pants. (Remember that mid riff and singlet tops do not provide adequate protection from the sun.)
- Applying SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen 15–20 minutes before going outside. Don't forget to reapply if staying out for an extended period of time (around every 2 hours).

Don't forget that babies and toddlers have the most sensitive skin and should always be protected from the sun.

If you would like more information about skin cancer prevention check the SunSmart website www.sunsmart.org.au or contact Carmel McNamara, Early Childhood and Primary Schools Project Officer at The Cancer Council South Australia on 8291 4149 or cmcnamara@cancersa.org.au

Did you know?

- Skin cancers account for around 80% of all new cancers diagnosed each year in Australia.
- At least 1 in every 2 Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime.
- In Australia, sunburn can occur in as little as 15 minutes on a fine January day.
- Sun exposure in the first 15 years of life contributes significantly to your lifetime risk of skin cancer.
- Solariums can emit levels of UV radiation up to five times as strong as the summer midday sun.
- Most Australians apply too little sunscreen. This results in sunscreen users achieving an SPF of between 50 - 80% less than specified on the product label.
- Clear car glass (side windows) blocks about 97% of the UVB radiation and about 37% of UVA radiation. Laminated windscreens block all of the UVB radiation and about 80% of the UVA radiation.
- Australians are twice as likely to get sunburnt at home than at the beach.
- Most people achieve adequate vitamin D levels through the UVB exposure they receive during typical day to day outdoor activities.

For cancer information and support contact the **Cancer Helpline on 13 11 20.**

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