

Background

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world. Of all new incidents of cancer diagnosed in Australia each year, 80 per cent are skin cancers. Given that children in early childhood services attend during peak ultraviolet radiation (UVR) times and that they spend much of their day in natural sunlight, Services have a major role in minimising children's UVR exposure. Further, early childhood services provide the ideal opportunity to instil in children long-term positive *SunSmart* habits.

Policy statement

The Service takes every reasonable precaution to protect children and staff from the harmful effects of exposure to the sun while they are at the Service or at any event organised by the Service.

The *Sun Protection Policy* is consistent with the *Cancer Council's SunSmart* recommendations for outdoor environments, clothing, sunscreen, scheduling of activities, and ongoing education for the children, families and staff at the Service.

Strategies and practices

- The *Sun Protection Policy* is explained to parents when they enroll their child in the Service, and their attention is specifically drawn to their responsibilities under this policy. The *Sun Protection Policy* is also included in the Parent Handbook given to all parents.
- The sun safety message is promoted and positively reinforced amongst families through notice boards, newsletters, information nights, educator-parent meetings and providing them with up to date *SunSmart* materials.
- Educators promote sun safety awareness in children by including it in daily routines and intentional teaching such as role-modeling, discussions, songs, stories, games, and *SunSmart* resources.
- The Services enclosed outdoor space provides ample natural sunlight and remains adequately shaded. The built and natural shade features are continuously evaluated for effectiveness and, if required, additional shade structures are installed where required.
- Wherever possible, approved excursions to outdoor areas occur before 10am and after 2pm (11.00 am and after 3.00 pm during daylight saving time). Refer to the Services Excursion Policy.
- All staff model positive *SunSmart* behaviour to the children by: -
 - Wearing broad-brimmed or legionnaire styled hats and appropriate clothing for all activities in the enclosed outdoor space
 - Using minimum SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water resistant sunscreen
 - Seeking shade whenever possible
 - Wearing sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard (AS/NZS1067:2003)
- The Service supplies minimum SPF 30+ broad-spectrum waterproof sunscreen for children and staff. The sunscreen is available in each room and in the enclosed outdoor space. Parents are advised upon enrolment about the use of sunscreen and receive a reminder regularly. Parents are

required to notify the Service in writing if their child is allergic to sunscreen, and to supply an alternative clearly labelled with the child's name.

- On enrolment, every child is given a hat that complies with the *SunSmart* guidelines.
- Any child who does not bring a hat is provided one from the Services set of spares kept for the purpose or is expected to play in the shade. If the spare hat and clothes supply is exhausted, the children without hats or suitable clothing will be required to play in shaded areas.
- Educators ensure children wear clothes with adequate protection from UVR when playing outdoors. Any child who does not have suitable clothing is provided clothing from the Services set of spares kept for the purpose or is expected to play in the shade. Also if the spare clothes supply is exhausted, the children without suitable clothing will be required to play in shaded areas. The *Cancer Council* recommends loose fitting clothes with collars and sleeves, closely woven natural fibre fabric, and of a dark colour.
- Water is offered to children frequently throughout the day. Water bottles are transported with children as they move throughout rooms and the Service.
- Parents are asked to liberally apply a minimum SPF 30+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen to all exposed areas of their child's skin on arrival at the Service, and to notify an educator of the application.
- Educators liberally apply broad spectrum sunscreen with a minimum SPF 30+ to all exposed areas of children's skin 20 minutes before the children enter the enclosed outdoor space and initial the Sunscreen Application Chart to that effect.
- Educators reapply sunscreen every two hours if children are in the enclosed outdoor space for a prolonged period, or more frequently if the children are perspiring or involved with water play. Older children apply their own sunscreen under supervision.
- If parents supply their child with sunglasses that are wrap-around and/or are close fitting (that meet AS 1067-EPF 10 is best), educators will ensure children wear them during play in the enclosed outdoor space.
- Educators are kept up to date with *SunSmart* recommendations.

Additional safe resting practices for babies

- Babies under the age of 12 months are kept out of direct sunlight. However, when in the enclosed outdoor space, a small amount of sunscreen is applied only to those exposed areas not already covered by clothing or hats.
- Educators monitor fluid intake of babies and document it in each child's communication book.

Responsibilities of parents

- To apply sunscreen to their child on arrival at the Service.
- To bring a *SunSmart* hat each time their child attends the Service, and to ensure the hat is clearly named and kept clean.

- To dress their child in *SunSmart* clothing, including spares, each time the child attends the Service.
- To model positive *SunSmart* behaviour to the children when at the Service.
- To notify the Service in writing if their child is allergic to sunscreen, and to supply an alternative sunscreen clearly labelled with the child's name.

Procedures and forms

- Sunscreen Application Chart

Links to other policies

- Clothing Policy
- Educational Program Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Excursion Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

Regs	114	Outdoor space - shade
	168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
QA	2.1.1	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	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
	2.1.3	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child
	2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
	3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child
	4.2.2	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships
	6.1.2	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing
	7.2.3	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated, and individual plans are in place to support learning and development

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2018
- Starting Blocks. Sun protection in child care – what to expect.
<https://www.startingblocks.gov.au/other-resources/factsheets/sun-protection-at-child-care/>
accessed 24 June 2025

Further reading and useful websites

- Cancer Council Australia – <https://www.cancer.org.au> accessed 24 June 2025
- Cancer Council Queensland – <https://www.cancerqld.org.au> accessed 24 June 2025
- Queensland Health. Sun safety at school and early childhood settings –
<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/schools/sun-safety> accessed 24 June 2025

- Cancer Council Queensland. National SunSmart Program – <https://www.cancerqld.org.au/prevention/programs-resources/national-sunsmart-program/> accessed 24 June 2025

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Version Control

Version	Date Reviewed	Approved By	Comments/Amendments	Next Review Date
1	8 January 2018	Kaylene Harper	Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 February 2018.	January 2018
2	6 February 2019	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further readings.	February 2020
3	31 January 2020	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further readings.	January 2021
4	25 September 2020	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further readings.	September 2021
5	18 February 2021	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Adapted to suit service environments.	February 2022
6	23 August 2023	Grace McKinstry	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further readings.	August 2024
7	1 July 2024	Tiffany Boeske	Reviewed policy Accessed sources	July 2025
8	24 June 2025	Gen Mahaki	Reviewed policy. Accessed updated sources and further readings.	June 2026