

Croydon Child Care Centre

Sun Protection Policy

Version Number 2

Link to CCQA Principles *Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) Quality Practices Guide (2005) – Principle 6.5*

Policy statement

- Current scientific and anecdotal evidence suggests that overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation during childhood contributes to an increased risk of skin cancer throughout an individual's lifetime (*Cancer Council Australia, 2005b*).
- Preventing sunburn and overexposure to UV radiation assists in reducing the probability of skin cancer and further skin damage. Sun protection policies and procedures are a life long commitment to infants, young children and adults to reduce the incidents of skin cancer and eye damage (*Cancer Council Australia, 2005a*).
- Croydon Child Care Centre has a duty of care to ensure that all persons¹ are provided with a high level of sun protection during the hours of the service's operation.
- It is understood by staff, children and families that there is a shared responsibility between the service and other stakeholders that the Sun Protection Policy and procedures are accepted as a high priority.
- In meeting the service's duty of care, it is a requirement under the *Occupational Health & Safety Act* that management and staff implement and endorse the service's Sun Protection Policy, and ensure a level of protection to all persons who access the service's facilities and/or programs.

Rationale

Queensland has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. Of all new cancers diagnosed in Australia each year, 80 percent are skin cancers. Given that children in child care are there during peak ultraviolet radiation (UVR) times throughout the day, early childhood settings play a major role in both minimising children's UVR exposure

¹ Persons – is defined as children, parents, families, staff, carers, coordination unit staff, management, students and volunteers, regardless of age or gender, who access the child care service for any reason.

and providing an environment where policies and procedures can positively influence long-term behaviour.

Skin damage, including skin cancer, is the result of cumulative exposure to the sun. Research shows that sunburn contributes to skin cancer and other forms of skin damage such as sunspots, blemishes and premature ageing. Most skin damage and skin cancer is therefore preventable.

Ultraviolet radiation (UVR) levels are highest during the hours that children are at child care settings. As children will spend a portion of their day outdoors, we are committed to protecting them from the harmful effects of the sun.

With this in mind, Croydon Child Care Centre realises the need to protect children's skin and educate them about SunSmart behaviour, thus reducing the risk of skin damage from exposure to the sun.

Strategies and practices

Managing the physical environment

Times of UV radiation exposure

- The peak UV radiation periods are between 10am and 3pm all year. Outdoor activity will be avoided during these times or when UV levels are 3 and above.
- Educators will utilise the shaded areas of the outdoor environment for play and plan outdoor play experiences before 10am and after 2pm.

Shade provision, outdoor play and outdoor play equipment

- The service will consider the availability of shade when planning and programming for outdoor play experiences or excursions.
- Outdoor equipment that is not fixed will utilise the shaded areas of the outdoor environment at all times of the day.
- The service will continually assess the shade coverage of the outdoor play environment and seek avenues to improve the conditions if required.
- The service will plan and program for outdoor play experiences during non-peak UV radiation hours of the day.
- Outdoor play equipment that is fixed will be monitored for usability throughout the day by staff.
- Infants less than 12 months of age are always kept in dense shade and are not exposed to direct sunlight.
- Educators will ensure that the infants outdoor play environment utilises as much dense shade as possible.

Protective behaviours and practices

Hats

- All children must wear an approved sun protective hat that is either: a broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire's style, when outdoors.
- It is recommended that a sun protective hat adequately covers the face, back of the neck and ears.

- Due to the risk of children becoming entangled in hat cords and choking, the service recommends that the cords are removed from hats.
- Children who do not have a hat will be asked to play indoors, however this may not always be possible due to staffing ratios. Therefore, children without hats will be restricted to shaded areas when outdoors if children cannot be supervised indoors.
- Spare hats may be available for children who do not have a hat. The service will ensure that hats are laundered after each use to minimise cross infection (for example, head lice).

Clothing

- Loose fitting and closely woven fabrics assist in protecting children from exposure to the sun.
- It is recommended that shirts have a collar to protect the nape of the neck and long sleeves.
- Longer style tops and shorts are acceptable items of clothing to protect children from the sun.
- Sleeveless shirts, dresses and singlets are not considered as appropriate clothing to protect children from the sun. Children may need to change their clothing or not be allowed to access outdoor play.
- Infants (between 6-12 months) must have exposed skin covered at all times however; it is acceptable to use sunscreen on the face and hands to protect exposed skin areas.
- If planning for an excursion that involves swimming (either at a pool or beach setting), children must wear an appropriate style of swimwear and protective clothing that reinforces sun protection practices.

Sunscreen

- SPF 30+ broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen is applied to exposed skin of children.
- The service does supply sunscreen.
- Permission will be sought at enrolment from the family for the service to apply sunscreen.
- Sunscreen must be applied at least 20 minutes before commencing outdoor play (or as per manufacturer's instructions).
- Sunscreen must be reapplied every two hours (or as per manufacturer's instructions).
- Some children may present with an allergic reaction to sunscreen. In this situation, the service will stop applying the sunscreen, notify the family and request that a hypoallergenic sunscreen be supplied by the family for the child to use.
- Staff will apply sunscreen to infants and younger children (0-5 years) as appropriate. This will be done using a glove and tissue for each individual child.

Eye protection

- The service supports the use of a sun protective hat to protect eyes from UV radiation.

- If sunglasses are worn when persons are outdoors, the service recommends that sunglasses meet the Australian Standards AS/NZS 1067:2003 with a category number 2, 3 or 4.
- Sunglasses not labelled with Australian Standards codes are considered toys and do not provide sun protection.
- Sunglasses with a category number of 0 or 1 are considered fashion spectacles and do not provide adequate protection against UV radiation.
- The service does not recommend the wearing of sunglasses inside unless it is for medical reasons.

Maintaining hydration levels

- Infants and children's body/water ratio mass is significantly different than from adults, therefore the risk for dehydration from outdoor play and hot weather is high and can be dangerous.
- Water will be offered to children throughout the day regardless of indoor or outdoor play settings.
- Children are able to bring in water bottles from home and are encouraged to access water to drink throughout the day.

Role modelling by educators, students and volunteers

- Children learn through example and role modelling is an important strategy in children's services to maintain quality standards.
- Educators, students and volunteers must comply with the Sun Protection Policy as per *Occupational Health & Safety Act*.
- Educators, students and volunteers must wear a sun protective hat and clothing, apply SPF30+ broad spectrum sunscreen, and seek shade whenever possible when supervising outdoors or facilitating children's play experiences and excursions. It is recommended that appropriate sunglasses are worn when outdoors.

Communication with different stakeholders

Families

- Sun protection behaviours and practices are outlined in the Parent Handbook, enrolment forms, newsletters and excursion permission forms.
- Signed permission will be sought from families in the enrolment form so that staff can apply sunscreen to children's exposed skin areas (face, arms, hands, legs, back of the neck).
- Sun safety information will be displayed on notice boards.
- Families will be encouraged to implement the service's sun protection behaviours and practices when engaged in service experiences and excursions. For example, parents must wear a sun protective hat when volunteering on excursions.

Policy review

- The service will review the Sun Protection Policy and procedures, and related documents, including behaviours and practices every 12 to 18 months.
- Families are encouraged to collaborate with the service to review the policy and procedures.
- Educators are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be encouraged to actively be involved.

Procedures

- Sunscreen will be applied 20 minutes before children go outside. Sunscreen will be applied using a glove and tissue for each individual child. Children will also be required to wear a hat outside at all times. Our policy is 'no hat, no play'.

Links to other policies

The following are a list of examples:

- Allergies
- Enrolment of new children and families to the service
- Health, hygiene and wellbeing
- Occupational health and safety
- Physical activity and outdoor play environments
- Planning play experiences and excursions for children
- Protective behaviours
- Staff as role models

Sources and further reading

- Occupational Health & Safety Act
- The Cancer Council Australia. (2005a). *Position statement: Sun protection in the workplace*. Retrieved November 15, 2006, from http://www.cancer.org.au/documents/Pos_St_Sun_Protection_Workplace_DEC05.pdf
- The Cancer Council Australia. (2005b). *Position statement: Sun protection and infants (0-12 months)*. Retrieved November 15, 2006, from http://www.cancer.org.au/documents/Sun_protection_infants_May_2005.pdf
- The Cancer Council Australia. (2005c). *Position statement: Risks and benefits of sun exposure*. Retrieved November 15, 2006, from http://www.cancer.org.au/documents/Risks_Benefits_Sun_Exposure_MAR05.pdf
- The Cancer Council Australia. (2005d). *Position statement: Eye protection from ultraviolet radiation*. Retrieved November 15, 2006, from http://www.cancer.org.au/documents/AUG06_Eye_protection.pdf
- The Cancer Council Australia. (2005e). *Position statement: Use of SPF30+ sunscreens*. Retrieved November 15, 2006, from http://www.cancer.org.au/documents/Use_of_SPF30_sunscreen_June%202005.pdf

- The Cancer Council NSW. (2006). *SunSmart childcare: A policy guide for service providers*. Sydney: Author.
- *Young warned as skin cancer kills 1500 a year*. (2006). Retrieved November 20, 2006, from <http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/young-warned-as-skin-cancer-kills-1500-a-year/2006/11/19/1163871272971.html>

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Approved by
(Chief Executive Officer
Croydon Shire Council)

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