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SUN SAFE ENVIRONMENT

The following information will allow you to develop a Sun Safe Environment in your centre using the ***Sun Safety: Information Guide for Child Care and Early Years Centres***.

Research shows that sun exposure during childhood and adolescence is strongly linked to the development of skin cancer later in life. Infants and children have thinner skin than adults, making them more sensitive to ultraviolet rays. One severe sunburn during childhood doubles the risk of developing skin cancer later in life. Child care facilities provide an ideal setting for the promotion of sun-safe practices and for the prevention of skin cancer.

Developing a sun safety policy for your child care facility offers a number of benefits including:

- Ensuring that parents participate in maintaining a sun-safe environment by providing sunscreen, hats, and protective clothing for use at the centre.
- Providing staff with clear and easy steps to follow to keep the children sun safe while in your care.
- Demonstrating your commitment to excellence in child care.

The Sun Safety Information Guide offers you a variety of information including a sample sun safety policy, letter to parents, and access to resources such as posters, bookmarks and a general information fact sheet. A copy of the guide can be found at this link: http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/JFY/ChildcareWorkers/safetyinjuryprevention/Sun_safety.aspx

Should you require further information or resources please contact your Health Connection at (705) 721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit www.simcoemuskokahealth.org.

SUNLIGHT AND YOUR HEALTH - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There continues to be gradual thinning of the ozone layer over southern Ontario. Because of this, adults and children are being exposed to a more intense penetration of ultraviolet radiation (UV) in sunlight. This increase is expected to continue at least until the year 2050 (Environment Canada, 1996).

- Infants and children are at a high risk for over-exposure to sunlight.
- Children receive up to 80% of their total UV life dose before the age of 18 (Health Canada).
- Infants and children have thinner skin than adults and are more sensitive to UV rays (Health Canada).
- All skin colours are at risk for skin damage from UV rays. Those at greatest risk for skin damage are fair-skinned children, especially those who freckle or who burn easily, never tan, or tan poorly.

Health risks associated with excessive sunlight UV exposure include sunburns, aging of skin, eye damage, and skin cancers.

- Reddening of the skin is a sign of too much sun exposure.
- One blistering sunburn during childhood may double the chance for a child to develop skin cancer later in life. This is because the damage to the skin cells does not go away, it adds up with each sunburn over the years.
- The sun's rays can damage cells in the structures of children and adult's eyes; increasing the risk for cataracts later in life.
- One in seven children born today will develop skin cancer in their lifetime (Canadian Dermatology Association).

The health risks associated with excessive sunlight (ultraviolet radiation) are largely **preventable!** Skin damage can be prevented by avoiding sunburns to your skin and reducing overall UV exposure. ***Indoor tanning is no safer than the sun.***

Did you know that...

- Up to 80% of ultraviolet radiation passes through puffy, fair-weather clouds, haze, fog, and layers of thin, light cloud. The sun safety recommendations apply on cloudy and hazy days too.
- Furthermore, a child can receive an additional 10 – 80% more UV if that child is on or near a surface such as sand, cement, water, or snow that reflects the sun's rays.

STANDARD SUN SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important that staff provide a positive “sun-safe” role model for the children by following these recommendations when outside.

Limit the time you spend in the sun during the hours between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.

- Plan daily outdoor activity so that the children are not playing in direct sunlight during the most intense ultraviolet radiation between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Keep babies under one year of age out of direct sunlight.

Look for shaded areas to do outdoor activities (trees, umbrellas, and awnings).

- Do outdoor activities in shady spots (e.g. under a tree or in the shade of a building).
- Create shade by planting trees or use partial roofs, awnings, umbrellas, gazebo tents, etc.

Wear clothing to protect as much of your skin as possible.

- Advise parents that loose fitting long-sleeved shirts and long pants (or at least knee-length shorts) are recommended even on overcast days.
- Tightly woven fabrics block the sun’s rays the best. A fabric that blocks out the light when held up to the sun or a light bulb will act as a shield against ultraviolet light. Apply sunscreen under sheer clothing.

Wear a hat.

- A hat with a wide brim, or a ball cap with a back flap, will help shade eyes, ears and neck areas. Hats made of tightly woven fabric are best.

Put on UV protective sunglasses.

- Adults and children should wear sunglasses that have 100% UVA/UVB or UV400 protection.
- Wide brimmed hats are effective in blocking direct ultraviolet radiation from eyes and are a good choice for young children.

Use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher that gives protection from both UVA and UVB rays.

All staff and children should apply sunscreen before going outdoors to do any activities.

Exception: Sunscreen is not recommended by the Canadian Dermatology Association for infants under 6 months of age.

- Remember that SPF 15 is the minimum protection. If children are going to be outside for longer than two and a half hours a SPF of 30 might be a better choice. No sunscreen offers complete protection but the higher the SPF, the more protection given.
- Babies under 12 months old should be covered with clothing and kept out of direct sunlight in a covered stroller, under an umbrella or gazebo tent or in the shade as much as possible.
- If any child develops an allergic reaction such as redness, itching, blotching or rashes after sunscreen has been applied; stop using the product immediately. Inform the child’s parent of the reaction and suggest that he/she consult with a pharmacist or doctor.
- Use a minimum SPF 15 lip balm. Don’t forget to reapply every hour.

Recommendations are endorsed by Health Canada, Canadian Cancer Society, Canadian Dermatology Association, Environment Canada and other key organizations.

GETTING THE MOST FROM SUNSCREEN!

Read and follow the manufacturer’s recommendations on the bottle or tube.

- Sunscreen should not be used after its expiry date.

Test for allergic reaction when first using a sunscreen.

- Check with the child’s parent for any history of skin reactions to the sunscreen product.
- If this information is not available, suggest that a parent do the following test:
 - ☀ Apply a liberal amount of the sunscreen on the child’s inner forearm for 2-3 days consecutively (e.g. over a weekend).
 - ☀ Instruct the parent to check to see if there are any signs of an adverse reaction (e.g. redness, itching, etc.). Consult with a pharmacist or doctor if a reaction occurs.

Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going out.

- This is *important!* It allows time for the active ingredients in the sunscreen to reach the protection level.

Apply sunscreen generously to dry clean skin.

- Apply a generous amount of sunscreen to dry clean skin. Don’t forget ears, nose, back of neck, backs of legs and tops of feet!

Reapply every 2 hours and after perspiring.

- Sunscreen (including waterproof varieties) should be re-applied every 2 hours and after skin becomes wet from water or perspiration to maintain maximum effectiveness.

Note: Repeated applications of a sunscreen simply re-enforce the sun protection. Reapplication does not increase the amount of time you can spend in the sun beyond the maximum SPF of the sunscreen.

If applying more than one substance (e.g. insect repellent*) on the skin:

- Always put the sunscreen product on first and wait the 30 minutes after applying. Then apply the second substance.

*Note: Application of insect repellent may reduce the effectiveness of the sunscreen. *Caution should be exercised when using insect repellents on children. Do not use insect repellent DEET on children under 6 months of age.*



REMEMBER: Sunscreen does not provide 100% protection. When outside, shade, clothing and hats should be the first choice. Then use sunscreen on all remaining exposed skin.



A COMPREHENSIVE SUN SAFETY PROGRAM FOR CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS CENTRES

EDUCATION	GUIDELINE	SUPPORT
<p>ACTIONS:</p> <p>For Parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include “Fun in the Sun” quiz in your child care newsletter and encourage parents to go to Health Unit website for more information. • Use materials on Health Unit website as resources for parents. <p>For Child Care Providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute a copy of “Sun Safety Information Guide for Child Care and Ontario Early Years Centres” to each worker at your centre and ensure all staff are aware of the sun safety recommendations. • At staff meetings plan ways to implement sun safety recommendations at your child care centre. • Brainstorm fun ways to encourage the children and staff to participate in sun safe activities. <p>For Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the “Sun Safety Activities for Child Care Centres” to teach the children about sun safety. • Teach the children how to apply sunscreen. • Teach the children the importance of sun safe measures (see Standard Sun Safety Recommendations). 	<p>ACTIONS:</p> <p>A Written Sun Safety Guideline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes standards for sun safety in children’s outdoor play areas (e.g. shade trees). • Establishes guidelines on sun safety for: <div data-bbox="800 776 1346 919" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Staff – when work assignment is partly or totally outdoors in a supervisory, teaching or property-care capacity</p> </div> <div data-bbox="800 980 1346 1110" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Children - during outdoor play times - during classes held outdoors</p> </div> <div data-bbox="968 1146 1136 1308" style="text-align: center;"> </div>	<p>ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send the “Dear Parent/Guardian letter” home with consent form when the children are going on an outing outdoors. • Schedule outdoor events before 11:00 a.m. or after 4:00 p.m. if possible. • Assess child care play areas for shade. Provide shade in play areas (e.g. participate in tree planting programs). • Plan sun safety activities during “National Sun Awareness Week” to raise the awareness e.g. “Sun Safe Hat Day”. • Encourage children to bring a wide brimmed hat, long-sleeved shirt and sunscreen to child care centre from the beginning of April to the end of September and use whenever going outside. • Schedule time 30 minutes before going outdoors to have children apply sunscreen. • Encourage all staff to be “sun safe” role models. • Promote your child care centre as a “sun safe” facility all year round.

SAMPLE SUN SAFETY GUIDELINE FOR CHILD CARE FACILITIES

Staff at (name of child care facility) will implement the following Sun Safety Guideline to protect themselves and the children at the facility from the harmful rays of the sun.

RATIONALE:

One in seven children will develop skin cancer in their lifetime. One severe sunburn during childhood doubles the risk of developing skin cancer later in life (Canadian Dermatology Association).

PROCEDURE:

1. Staff will review the **Sun Safety Information Guide for Child Care and Ontario Early Years Centres** and role model sun safe behaviours. For a copy of the guide visit www.simcoemuskokahealth.org. ? put URL
2. Children under one year of age will be protected from direct sunlight by the use of shade, stroller bonnets, awnings, canopies or umbrellas.
3. Outdoor activities, whenever possible, will be held before 11 a.m. and after 4 p.m., especially from the beginning of April until the end of September.
4. Outdoor activities, whenever possible, will occur in areas shaded by trees, umbrellas, awnings or buildings.
5. Staff will look for opportunities to partner with the community to create shade by planting trees or using umbrellas or tents.
6. Parents of children attending our child care facility will be given information on how to protect themselves and their children from harmful ultraviolet rays. (See letter for parents in **Sun Safety Information Guide for Child Care and Ontario Early Years Centre Staff**).
7. Parents will be asked to provide the following items for their children attending the child care facility:
 - a) A wide brimmed hat or a ball cap with a back flap.
 - b) Comfortable loose fitting long sleeved shirt and long pants (or at least knee length shorts) made from fabrics that are tightly woven.
 - c) Sunglasses with 100% UVA\UVB or UV400 protection.
 - d) Sunscreen with a SPF of 15 or higher that offers UVA and UVB protection (which parents have already tested on the child's skin for adverse reactions).
 - e) Items c) and d) will be requested for winter use.
8. Staff will ensure that children use the above items in a consistent and proper manner. Sunscreen will be applied at least 30 minutes before going outside and hats and sunglasses will be worn during outside activities.
9. Staff will follow guidelines for use of sunscreen as outlined on page titled "Getting the Most From Sunscreen" in the Sun Safety Information Guide for Child Care and Early Years Centres.
10. Sun safe behaviours will be practiced year round.

SUN SAFETY ACTIVITIES FOR CHILD CARE CENTRES

1. Talk with the children about the beneficial effects of the sun (makes plants grow, gives warmth/light). Discuss the harmful effects of getting too much sun (e.g. sunburns). Have the children suggest things that they can do to prevent sunburn.

Colouring sheets can be found at Health Canada's website: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/sun-sol/uv-proq/activities-eng.php>

2. Dress a doll/teddy bear in a "sun safe" outfit -- long-sleeved shirt, long pants and wide brimmed hat, and sunglasses. Talk with the children about how the doll/bear is dressed and why.

- Take the doll/bear outside and show the children how the clothing protects the skin from the sun. Point out how the wide brimmed hat keeps eyes, face and neck shaded and protected. Explain how sunglasses protect eyes.
- Keep the doll/bear in a prominent location in the child care centre as a reminder to all.

3. Shadow Games! There are times of the day when the sun is more intense.

Have the children pair up and go outside in the morning. Each child marks their partner's shadow with chalk. Repeat at noon and in the afternoon.

Explain that when your shadow is shorter, the sun is stronger by teaching them this poem:

***When your shadow is short
Stay out of the sun
When your shadow is tall
Go out and have fun!***

4. Find the Shady Spot! Plan an activity around identifying shady places. Talk to the children about the ways we can have fun in the shade (swimming on the shady side of the pool, placing sand boxes under trees, etc.). Encourage them to think of ideas too!

5. Silly Hat Day! Have a "silly hat" day, where children are invited to bring in their silliest sun hats. This will encourage them to choose a fun hat that they love, making them more likely to want to wear it on a regular basis.

RESOURCES ON SUN SAFETY

Canadian Dermatology Association

Visit www.dermatology.ca For educational tools and ordering information, visit http://www.dermatology.ca/sap/info_material.html or click here: [Sun Safety Resources](#)
There may be fees for some of the materials.

- a) Tips for Daycares and Summer Camps -
http://www.dermatology.ca/programs/sap/safety-tips/daycare_e.pdf
- b) Tips for Parents (handout):
http://www.dermatology.ca/sap/safety_resources/sun_exposure/Poster-tips-parents_e.pdf
- c) Teaching Preschoolers Sun Safe Play, Everyday (handout):
http://www.dermatology.ca/sap/safety_resources/sun_exposure/Poster-daycare_e.pdf
- d) Sun Safe Play, Everyday – mini poster with checklist for children to use prior to going outside (2 to 6 years)
- e) Be Sun Safe – stickers (2 to 6 years)
- f) Be Sun Safe – colouring page (2 to 6 years)

Canadian Cancer Society

Contact your local chapter. There is no cost for these materials. Visit www.cancer.ca

Health Canada

Babies, Children and Sun Safety fact sheet. Visit: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/alt_formats/hecs-sesc/pdf/pubs/sun-sol/babies_child-bebes_enfant-eng.pdf

UV Sun Index Sun Awareness program. Visit: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/sun-sol/uv-prog/index-eng.php>

Environment Canada

Sun Protection. Visit: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/uv/default.asp?lang=En&n=DCF1C20A-1>

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

Other Sun Safety resources are available at <http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org>
For more details, call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520.

HANDOUT LETTER TO PARENT

Dear Parent/Guardian:

To protect your child from too much sun on the day of the activity, we are recommending that you follow these sun safety guidelines.

Dress your child in:

- comfortable, loose, **long-sleeved shirt** and **long pants** (or at least knee-length shorts) made from fabrics that are tightly woven.
- a **wide brimmed or a ball cap with a back flap**. Ensure the hat protects the ears, neck, and face. The hat should also be made of a tightly woven fabric.

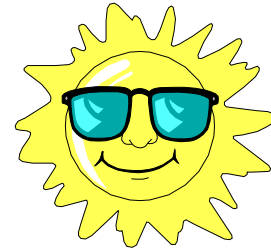
Send your child with:

- **sunscreen** with minimum SPF 15 or higher that gives protection from both UVA & UVB rays. (If your child is going to be outside for longer than two and a half hours SPF 30 would be a better choice.)
- **sunglasses** with 100% UVA / UVB or UV400 sun protection.
- **lip balm** with SPF 15. Apply hourly while outdoors.

Too much sunshine during childhood can cause eye damage, premature skin aging and skin cancer later in life. All skin colours are at risk!

Help your child have a "sun safe" outing.

HANDOUT QUIZ



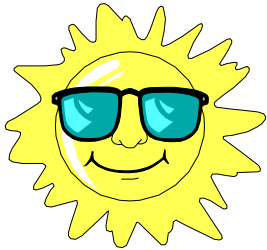
Have Fun in the Sun But Be Safe

Check out your “Sun Safety” sense by answering these true and false questions...

- | | True | False |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. You can't burn on a cloudy day. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Hint:</i> Up to 80% of the sun's rays can pass through light cloud, mist and fog. | | |
| 2. UV rays are their strongest between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., especially between April to October. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Hint:</i> Schedule outdoor activities when the UV rays are weakest. | | |
| 3. 80% of skin cancers occur above the neck. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Hint:</i> Cover everyone's head, neck and ears with a wide brimmed hat when outdoors and wear sunglasses with 100% UVA/UVB or UV400 protection. | | |
| 4. Only fair skinned people are at risk from too much exposure to sunlight. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Hint:</i> Too much sunlight can damage eyes leading to cataracts and can damage the skin, leading to sunburn, premature skin aging and skin cancer. Everyone, regardless of skin colour, needs protection from the sun, although fairer skinned people are at greatest risk for skin damage. | | |
| 5. A suntan is a sign of good health. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Hint:</i> A suntan is a sign that your skin is trying to protect itself against the sun's damaging rays. The tan will fade but the damage to your <i>skin</i> cells remains and adds up over the years. | | |
| 6. Stay in the water and your skin won't burn. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Hint:</i> Ultraviolet radiation penetrates the water and can also reflect off bright surfaces such as sand, cement or snow. | | |
| 7. One blistering sunburn can <i>double</i> your child's chances of developing skin cancer later in life. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Hint:</i> The damage to the skin cells does not go away, but rather accumulates over the years with each sunburn. In fact, one-in-seven children born today will develop skin cancer in their lifetime. | | |

Answers: 1. F - 2. T - 3. T - 4. F
- 5. F - 6. F - 7. T

HANDOUT BE SUN SAFE



Be Sun Safe

If you work or play in the sun you need to protect yourself ...



Limit the time you spend in the sun during the hours of 11 am and 4 pm.



Look for shaded areas to do outdoor activities (trees, umbrellas, awnings).



Wear a wide brimmed hat or ball cap with a back flap to protect the ears, neck, and face.



Wear loose clothing to protect as much of your skin as possible.



Put on sunglasses with 100% UVA/UVB or UV400 protection.



Use a sunscreen with:

- ☼ SPF 15 or higher
- ☼ UVA & UVB protection

Remember: Indoor tanning is no safer than the sun.