



Playgroup Policy

Sun Safety and Heat Stress

Purpose of this requirement

To minimise the possibility of illness or risk to health from heat stress and/or Ultraviolet Radiation (UVR) by ensuring that all children and staff are protected against the harmful effects of the sun's UVR.

Applicability of this requirement

A healthy balance of exposures to the sun's UVR is important for health. Too much UVR from the sun can cause sunburn, skin damage, eye damage and skin cancer. Sun protection is needed whenever UVR levels reach three and above. When UV levels are below three, most people do not require sun protection unless they are near highly reflective surfaces such as water or snow, have very fair skin, or if they are outside for extended periods.

Too little UV from the sun can lead to low Vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is formed in the body when the skin is exposed to UVR from the sun and is essential for the development and maintenance of healthy bones, muscles and teeth. The production of Vitamin D varies according to a number of factors including location, time of year, time of day and skin colour. Those with a very dark skin (dark brown/black), or those who rarely/never burn or tan very easily may need 3-6 times the amount of UV exposure for adequate Vitamin D production compared to people with fair skin. Families with children who have very dark skin (dark brown/black), or those who rarely/never burn or tan very easily are encouraged to contact the local Cancer Council for further information and guidelines in relation to Vitamin D. Families that make an informed decision for their child not to have sun protection measures applied in accordance with the Sun Safety and Heat Stress Procedure must complete an acknowledgement and waiver.

State-specified Sun Protection Measures

- Sun protection measures must be adhered to in accordance with the recommendations for your state as specified below and on all days with a moderate UVR Level of 3 and above.
 - QLD: Sun protection measures required all year round. Plan outdoor activities wherever practicable before 10am and after 3pm, all year round. Outdoor and physical activity must be carefully planned to take place at times during the day when UV levels are lower. Outdoor activities should be avoided around the midday hours when UV levels are highest. Multiple sun protection methods are required whenever the UV Index level is forecast to reach three or above. In Queensland, the UV Index level is usually at three or above all year round.
- During the months when sun protection is not required in your state, use sun protection measures when near highly reflective surfaces such as snow in alpine regions or when outdoors for extended periods.
- Ensure that outdoor spaces provided include adequate shaded areas to protect children from overexposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun (Education and Care Services National Regulation 114).
- Exposure to UVR for children under the age of one year is to be minimised. Engage in play with children under one year in shaded areas, including verandas, under trees or indoors. Because children under one have thinner skin and underdeveloped melanin, their skin burns more easily than that of older children.
- Read sunscreen labels carefully. Many sunscreens are not recommended for children under one. Always check the expiry date of sunscreen.
- If a child arrives during outdoor play, ask parents or guardians if sunscreen has been applied. If not, apply sunscreen and encourage the child to play in a shaded location for 20 minutes to allow the sunscreen to become effective.
- Children who refuse to wear sun safe clothing are encouraged to play in an area protected from the sun. Where a child is encouraged to play in shaded areas, discuss the requirement to provide appropriate sun safe clothing with families.

Education and Awareness

- It is a requirement that all staff at the time of induction and regularly thereafter are provided with training in relation to sun safe practices and heat stress.
- All playgroup staff are to act as role models for children and demonstrate sun safe practices. Families and visitors are also encouraged to act as role models by adopting sun safe practice.
- Sun safety information is available for all families.
- Where possible staff are to incorporate sun safety awareness learning experiences into the educational program.
- Sun safety and the availability of shade will be considered when planning all outdoor activities and excursions.

Provide Personal Protective Equipment/Clothing

- Families are requested to provide sun safe clothing for their child/ren's use.
- Families of children with known skin allergies are required to provide their own sunscreen.
- Staff must wear sun safe clothing and apply sun protection measures.

People who spend a lot of time in the sun risk developing heat stress and heat-related illness, which is a physical response designed to reduce body temperature. Types of heat illness and the symptoms associated with them include:

- Mild heat illness/ discomfort - flushed skin, increased sweating, heat rashes (prickly heat), feeling tired, weak or dizzy, cramps, reduced work / learning capacity, reduced attention span, irritability;
- Heat exhaustion - fainting, headache, low blood pressure, nausea, clammy, pale or flushed skin, normal to high body temperature (up to 39C);
- Heat stroke - irritability, confusion, speech problems, hot dry skin, convulsions, unconsciousness, body temperature above 40C, cardiac arrest - potentially fatal.

If you believe a person or child is suffering from a heat illness, keep them in a cool location and encourage them to drink cool but not cold fluids. Seek immediate first aid from the first aid officer.

To assist in reducing the risk of heat illness:

- Ensure there is cool drinking water accessible at all times.
- Drink water at frequent intervals to reduce fluid loss in sweating;
- Have rest breaks in a cool place;
- Staff / families should inform the Coordinator of any underlying health condition that may increase the risk of heat illness;
- Wear sun safe clothing and apply sun protection measures;
- Use mechanical aids where possible to reduce physical exertion.

Definitions

Heat Discomfort

- Factors which cause discomfort without having adverse health effects. For example, rashes.

Heat Exhaustion

- Heat exhaustion is the result of excessive loss of body fluid through perspiration. Symptoms are: fatigue, nausea, dizziness, headaches and clammy skin.

Heat Strain

- Series of physical responses to heat stress. The responses may vary from discomfort to heat disorders such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Heat Stress

- The combination of environmental and physical work factors which make up the heat load on the body.

Heat Stroke

- Heat stroke is more unusual and more dangerous than heat exhaustion. It occurs when the body's heat regulating mechanism fails completely. Early recognition and medical attention are essential. Warning signs include confusion, irritability, fitting and hot dry skin.

Sun Safe Clothing and Equipment - Sun Smart Clothing

- Hats must protect the face, neck and ears, i.e. legionnaire, broad brimmed or bucket hats. Baseball caps do not offer enough protection and therefore are not acceptable
- Sleeved shirts with high neck collars – made of UPF 50+ material (close-weave material that blocks UVR)
- Shorts - loose and long-legged
- Sunglasses:
- 100% UV resistant conforming to Australian Standard 1067 (as labelled on the swing tag) - having side protection from the sun's rays, but which do NOT obscure peripheral vision.
- Sunscreen: Broad spectrum, water resistant SPF 30+ sunscreen. Apply at least 20 minutes before exposure so that cream can be "absorbed" into the skin, for effective protection.

Note: With higher SPF sunscreens a small number of people may be sensitive to some types of sunscreens. If skin rashes occur, choose a brand designed for sensitive skin.

SPF

- Sun protection factor refers to the ability of a sunscreen to block ultraviolet rays, which cause sunburn.

UPF

- Ultraviolet protection factor. The UPF rating indicates how effective a fabric is at blocking out ultraviolet radiation.

UV/UVR

- Ultraviolet radiation is found in sunlight. Ultraviolet radiation is invisible to the human eye. There is limited correlation between UV level and daytime temperature. This means that UV levels can still be dangerously high, even on cooler days. UV radiation can also penetrate through clouds. Over-exposure to UV radiation causes eye damage, skin damage, freckles, sun spots, wrinkles, sunburn, and skin cancer.

This requirement is to be implemented by: All Mapoon playgroup staff