

Guidelines for Outdoor Play Sun-Protection Tips For Child Care & Preschool Site Use

Introduction

Skin cancer is now considered epidemic throughout the nation by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Over one million residents in the United States are expected to get skin cancer this year. That's more people than the collective total of all who will get cancers of the breast, prostate, lung, and colon. Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays in sunlight causes 90 percent of all non-melanoma skin cancer cases. Risk for skin cancer can be greatly reduced when certain precautions are practiced.

Following are the basic strategies for preventing skin cancer. On the following page the sun-safety tips are translated into guidelines for outdoor play that child care and preschool staff are encouraged to incorporate into a sun-protection policy they create for their site.

Basic Personal Strategies for Preventing Skin Cancer

1. Reduce exposure to sunlight from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (10 a.m. to 3 p.m. during the winter).
2. Seek **shade** when outside in the sun.
3. Cover up when outside in sunlight by wearing a wide-brimmed hat, long-sleeved shirt, and full-length pants (weather permitting).
4. Use sunglasses that state they protect from 100 percent of UVA and UVB (broad-spectrum). Most sunglasses now offer 100 percent protection. UV-protective coatings should be added to prescription glasses.
5. Fifteen minutes before going outside, apply broad-spectrum (UVA & UVB) sunscreen (SPF 30 or greater) to exposed skin.
6. Use lip balm that has a SPF rating of at least 30.

Suggested Guidelines for Outdoor Play

There may likely be some sun-safety guideline statements presented here that contain elements that are **not feasible** for inclusion in the sun-protection policy developed and adopted by your facility. Administrators are encouraged to include and integrate as many of the directives that prove practical (sometimes with modification) into the guidelines or policy they create.

1. Whenever possible, outdoor activities will be scheduled before 10 a.m. and/or after 4 p.m. (from March through October). The availability of shade will be considered when planning such activities during this time frame.

2. For all outdoor activities occurring on sunny (non-rainy) days (especially between 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.), preschool children will be encouraged to:

A. Play in shaded areas.

B. Wear full-length clothing that includes:

(1) four-inch or more wide-brimmed hats that, when worn, create a shadow that completely covers the head, face, nose, ears, and neck. (Flappy-jacks, patterned somewhat like a baseball hat with neck flaps, may prove a practical alternative.)

(2) long-sleeved shirts and full-length pants made of tightly woven fabric that is lightweight. (This strategy applies when temperatures are reasonable.)

C. Wear sunglasses that protect from 100 percent of UVA & UVB (broad-spectrum). UV-protective coatings should be added to prescription glasses.

D. Accept staff application of a SPF 30 or greater broad-spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen to exposed skin (15 minutes before youngsters go outdoors).

E. Accept staff application of lip balm that has a SPF rating of at least 15.

3. A grounds committee (or other appointed group) will develop and implement, according to an established time table (specify), a plan to place sufficient trees and/or construct shelters that provide shade sufficient for protecting children and staff who engage in outdoor activities occurring at _____ (site).
4. Parents or guardians will be encouraged to supply the above described (choose...) hat, full-length clothing, sunglasses, and sunscreen. Additionally, site staff will recommend parents and guardians to sign and submit the *Parents/Guardian's Permission to Apply Sunscreen to His or Her Child* form (see Appendix Two in the *California Early Childhood Sun Protection Curriculum*). This form permits site staff to apply sunscreen to the specified children, as necessary.
5. Sun-protection (skin cancer prevention) training and materials will be provided to staff and parents to assist in the introduction and implementation of these guidelines.
6. While on duty, staff is encouraged to practice sun-safety principles/strategies to serve as good role models for children.
7. These guidelines will be communicated and reinforced to staff and parents through letters and other notices, and above all - site PRACTICE.
8. Site staff will conduct an annual review of the sun-safety guidelines and the degree to which staff and children practice skin cancer prevention behaviors, onsite.

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