

Sample sun protection policy for early childhood services



This SunSmart policy provides guidelines to ensure that children and staff are protected from damaging levels of ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun while engaged in early childhood services.

Hoatu ai te kaupapahere SunSmart i etahi aratohu hei whakarite kei te noho marumaru ngā ākonga, ngā kaimahi me te hapori kura i ngā hihi o te rā i a ratou e whakauru ana ki ngā mahi kura.

Rationale

Excessive exposure to the sun's UV radiation can cause sunburn, skin, and eye damage and lead to skin cancer, the most common cancer in Aotearoa New Zealand. Babies and young children are particularly vulnerable to UV radiation damage. Accumulated UV radiation exposure can be an important risk factor for skin cancer development later in life.

Early childhood settings provide an ideal sun protection opportunity for children, staff, and the early childhood community, through the implementation and monitoring of a comprehensive SunSmart policy. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on ways early childhood services can minimise UV radiation exposure and provide a supportive SunSmart environment. Early childhood services can also provide excellent learning opportunities to encourage good life-long sun protection practices.

Skin cancer is one of the most preventable cancers in Aotearoa New Zealand. More than 95% of skin cancers could be prevented by reducing exposure to UV radiation.

Guidance

- Sun protection should be used whenever **UV Index (UVI)¹ levels are 3 or higher**. For most parts of Aotearoa New Zealand this is between September and April, especially between 10am and 4pm. UVI levels can still be high on cool or cloudy days, so temperature is not a good indicator for deciding when to use sun protection. To check the UVI levels in your area, download the free UVNZ app from your App store² or add the Sun Protection Alert widget to your school website.³
- Use sun protection throughout the year when at high altitudes (mountains) or near reflective surfaces such as water and snow, or outdoors for extended periods of time.
- Outdoor activities are encouraged year-round (with sun protection when UVI levels are 3 or higher), because of broader health benefits, including vitamin D production.

¹ Ultraviolet Index (UVI) measures the level of UV radiation from the Sun. The higher the number on the UVI index, the higher the radiation level. A UV Index of 3 or more indicates that protection from the sun is required.

² UVNZ App available: www.sunsmart.org.nz/resources/uvnz-app/

³ Sun Protection Alert: <https://www.sunsmart.org.nz/resources/sun-protection-alert/>

- All babies **under 12 months** should be kept out of direct sun when UVI levels are 3 or higher. They should be protected by shade, clothing, and broad-brimmed hats. Sunscreen may be used on small areas of a baby's skin but do not rely on sunscreen as the primary method of protection. If you do need to use sunscreen on a baby (at any age), use a sunscreen for sensitive skin or suitable for children if possible, patch test first, and only use on very small areas of skin.
- Widespread use of sunscreen on babies **under 6 months** is not recommended, as they have sensitive skin and should be kept in the shade where possible.
- Children with a health condition or taking medicines (such as antibiotics), that make them sensitive to the sun, should use sun protection year-round. This includes children with autoimmune diseases or medical conditions that weaken the immune system, as well as organ transplant recipients, or those taking medicines that increase sensitivity to UV radiation.

Our sun protection policy:

All children and staff use a combination of sun protection measures whenever UVI levels are 3 and above. Particular care is taken between September and April (between 10am and 4pm) when UVI levels reach their peak.

This policy is adopted from **(DATE)** so that children attending **(NAME OF CENTRE)** are protected from harmful UV radiation from the sun.

This SunSmart policy has been developed to ensure that all children and staff are protected from damaging levels of UV radiation from the sun during all outdoor activities.

Slip, Slop, Slap and Wrap

We will protect students and staff by:

1. Slip into Shade | Whakaritea he wāhi marumaru

- Making sure there are shelters, such as trees and other shade areas providing enough coverage for all children and staff when they are outside.
- Children are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outside.
- The availability of shade is considered when planning outdoor activities, gatherings and excursions. If no shade is available, consider rescheduling outdoor activities to when UV radiation is lower.
- As part of school planning, the school leadership team will consider how to increase shade where it is lacking. When re-modelling, planning new buildings, playgrounds and high use areas, providing shade will be considered from the start of the planning process.

2. Slip on Sun Protective Clothing | Kuhunga he kākahu parekiri

- When outside, children wear loose-fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible. Whānau are encouraged to dress children in tops with sleeves, and if possible, collars and knee length or longer style shorts or skirts.

- Some cover up clothing is provided if required.
- Rash tops are encouraged for outdoor swimming and water play.

3. Slap on a Hat | Whakamauria he pōtae whānui te peha

- When outside, children are required to wear a hat that protect their face, neck and ears, such as a legionnaire, broad-brimmed (minimum 7.5 cm brim) or deep crown bucket hat (minimum 6 cm brim). Baseball caps and visors do not offer enough protection and are therefore not recommended.
- The service provides spare sunhats if required.
- Children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are required to play in the shade or indoors (see hat exemption below).
- Children and staff may be exempt from wearing a sunhat due to cultural or religious beliefs. In this case, other methods of sun protection, such as seeking shade, and wearing sunscreen and sunglasses, should be emphasised.

4. Slop on Sunscreen | Pania he kirīmi pare tīkākā I mua I te putanga ki waho I te whare

- A water-resistant, broad-spectrum sunscreen of at least SPF30 that meets the Australian and NZ standard (AS 2604), is available for staff and children's use. Use a cream, lotion or gel sunscreen if possible. Aerosol sunscreens are not as effective, as it is difficult to ensure enough sunscreen is applied evenly to the skin.
- Children are encouraged to apply their own sunscreen (under supervision).
- Sunscreen is applied at least 20 minutes before going outdoors and re-applied every two hours or more frequently if sweating or swimming (in accordance with manufacturer's instructions). Sunscreen must not be used to extend time outside.
- Routine breaks are provided during outdoor activities for children to reapply sunscreen.
- If children are playing in water, water-resistant sunscreen must be used.
- Sunscreen is stored in a cool place and expired products are not used.
- This policy will form part of any risk assessment for activities/trips outside the centre. Early childhood services may wish to have a sunscreen application chart to facilitate identification of which children need re-application of sunscreen and when. Please note special sunscreen guidance for babies.

5. Wrap on Sunglasses | Kuhunga he mōwhiti rā

- Where practical, sunglasses are recommended.
- Sunglasses should be close fitting and cover as much of the eye area as possible. They should meet the AS/NZ Standard 1067 (this is usually marked on the arm or swing-tag of the sunglasses).

6. Reinforce and role model SunSmart behaviour | Turuki me te whakatauirā whānonga SunSmart

Staff protect themselves and act as role models by:

- Wearing sun protective hats and clothing, and sunglasses when outside.
- Applying water-resistant broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 and re-applying every 2 hours.
- Using shade whenever possible.

7. Sharing SunSmart information and skills | Pārongo Sunsmart me ngā pūkenga

- The children learn about the harmful effects of UV radiation and sun protection through learning programmes. The programme may utilise free curriculum resources from the Cancer Society: www.sunsmart.org.nz/sunsmart-schools/sunsmart-schools-resources/sunsmart-schools-curriculum-resources/
- Educators are aware of the Cancer Society's free SunSmart resources which can be found at www.sunsmart.org.nz.
- The sun protection policy is reinforced through staff and children's activities and displays.
- Staff and families are provided with information on the school sun protection policy and practices at enrolment and through family newsletters, school apps, notice boards and meetings.

When enrolling their child, families are:

- Informed of the early childhood services sun protection policy.
- Asked to ensure their child wears sun protective clothing.
- Asked to provide a water-resistant, broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 for their child (if not provided by the centre).
- Required to give permission for staff to apply sunscreen on their child.
- Encouraged to practice SunSmart behaviours themselves when at the service and in the home environment.
- Required to provide an appropriate sunscreen if a child has allergies or sensitivity to sunscreen provided by the centre.

8. Monitoring and Review | Aroturuki me te Arotake

- Management and staff monitor and review the effectiveness of the sun protection policy at least every two to three years and revise the policy when required.

- Ensure the policy is available to staff, families, and visitors.

Policy prepared by: *[NAME]*

On: *[DATE]*

Policy approved by: *[NAME]*

Policy review due: *[DATE]*

Further information

- Cancer Society SunSmart website: www.sunsmart.org.nz
- General SunSmart information: www.cancernz.org.nz/reducing-cancer-risk/what-you-can-do/sunsmart/
- To find out if the UVI level is 3 or above, download the free UVNZ app for iPhone or Android: www.sunsmart.org.nz/resources/uvnz-app/
- Staff and parents can learn all about sun protection by completing the free SunSmart online professional development module: <https://bit.ly/3j7M4ID>

Aotearoa NZ legislation, requirements and standards

There is no statutory obligation to have a policy to protect children, staff, educators and visitors from the sun, but there are general requirements for organisations and businesses to manage the risk to health and safety from exposure to the sun appropriately:

Children:

- Education (Early childhood Services) Regulations 2008
www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2008/0204/latest/DLM1412619.html
- Ministry of Education: Sun protection in early learning:
<https://www.education.govt.nz/education-professionals/early-learning/health-and-safety/sun-protection-early-learning>
- Ministry of Education. Shade at School: <https://www.education.govt.nz/education-professionals/schools-year-0-13/property/shade-school>

Educators, staff and visitors:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2015/0070/latest/DLM5976660.html
- Worksafe Mahi Haumaru Aotearoa: protect your staff from solar UV radiation
www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/work-related-health/protecting-workers-from-solar-uv-radiation/

For further support and information, please contact your local Cancer Society.