

Why early childhood centers need sun protection policies



Sun protection in Early Childhood Centers

Excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) during childhood and adolescence is a risk factor for skin cancer later in life. New Zealand, along with Australia, has the highest melanoma rates in the world. Episodes of sunburn, particularly in childhood and adolescence, also increase the risk of melanoma later in life.

An emphasis on sun protection and skin cancer prevention in early childhood centers is important for two reasons:

- Centers are places where children spend much of their time during the High UVR months of September to March inclusive.
- Centers provide opportunities through staff professional development and children's activities, for both staff and children to learn about sun protection.

Comprehensive sun protection policy

A sun protection policy needs to:

- outline the way in which the center will protect students and staff from the harmful effects of excessive ultraviolet radiation (UVR).
- include behaviour, environment and policy review.
- be developed in consultation with parents and caregivers.

Sample sun protection policy

On the Cancer Society's website view a sample sun protection policy, which covers all essential sun protection strategies necessary to protect children from excessive sun exposure.

We encourage centers to copy this policy directly or incorporate all of the main points into their own sun protection policy.