

Sun Safe Environment

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. A few serious sunburns during childhood double 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.

Children are often outside when the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays are the strongest. Shade is one of the best defenses against the sun's radiation. It protects against the damaging effect of ultraviolet radiation. Shade alone can reduce overall exposure to sun's UVR by 75%. Shade should be used with other sun safety practices, which include; protective clothing, wide-brimmed hat, hats, sunglasses and sunscreen.

Developing a sun safety policy for your childcare 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

Durham Region Health Department offers a variety of resources that can support your efforts in making your centre sun safe. Posters, bookmarks and a general information sheet are available at no cost. Staff is also available to assist you in the development of sun safety policy for your centre. A sample sun safety policy and a letter to parents are included in this manual.

Should you require further information or resources, please contact Durham Region Health Department at 1-800-841-2729 or 905-666-6241 or visit durham.ca/sunsafety