

GOOD BEGINNINGS NEVER END

N.C. Child Care Health & Safety Resource Center • 1-800-246-6731

June 1999

Key Points

- Unprotected sun exposure and skin cancer are serious threats to children's health.
- Children receive up to 80% of their total life's exposure to UV light by the age of 18.
- Research shows a link between sunburns in childhood and an increased risk of the deadliest type of skin cancer, melanoma, later in life.
- Most skin cancers can be prevented by protection from the sun.
- Protection from the sun must begin in childhood.

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Be Sun Smart

Summer is here! It's fun to be outside on warm sunny days. A healthy enjoyment of the outdoors is an important part of growing up. But the sun's rays can be harmful to children if they're not protected when playing outdoors. Protecting a child now can help to prevent skin cancer later.

The sun gives off invisible ultraviolet light rays called UV rays. Two kinds of UV rays reach the earth: UVA and UVB. UVB rays can cause sunburn and damage the thin upper layers of the skin. The UVA rays damage the thicker inner layer of the skin. Both kinds of damage can lead to skin cancer and early wrinkles.

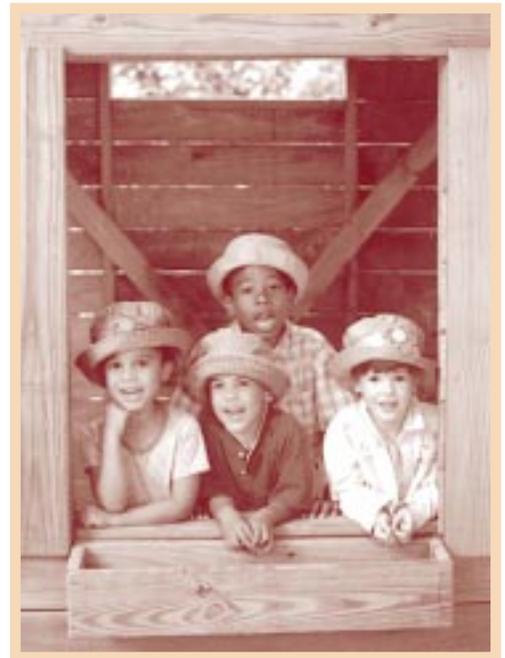
Sunlight activates the melanin-producing cells in the skin. Melanin is the pigment in the skin that makes the skin darker or tan. There are no healthy tans. Tanning is the skin's defense against sun damage. Skin that is naturally dark brown to black is more resistant to the sun.

It doesn't take much effort to think ahead and protect your skin.

Follow the ABC's for Fun in the Sun:

A: AWAY Stay away from the sun in the middle of the day. Limit sun exposure between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. This is the time when the sun's rays are the strongest. Remember that sunlight can reflect off water, sand, concrete, and snow and can reach below the water's surface. UV rays can reach you even on cloudy days.

B: BLOCK Use a sunscreen everyday covering both UVA and UVB rays with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or higher. Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside. It is a good idea for parents to apply sunscreen every morning before bringing their child to you. You will need a medication form



signed to apply sunscreen during the day. (Look on page 4 for a sample.) Reapply sunscreen liberally at least every 2 hours when playing outdoors.

C: COVER-UP Wear clothing to protect as much skin as possible when in the sun. Choose long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Children should wear a hat that shades their face, neck, and ears and sunglasses with 100% UV protection.

D: SHADE Stay in the shade whenever possible. Encourage children to play in the shade by locating popular play equipment such as a sandbox there. Practice the shadow rule. Seek shade when your shadow is shorter than you are tall.

Infants less than 6 months old should stay in the shade. Sunscreen is not recommended for infants less than 6 months old.

The sooner children learn about UV protection and why it's important to cover up the better. Start early in promoting a healthy attitude about sun protection for the children in your care. Your attitude and example are very important. You can be the leader in starting life-long sun protection behavior. So, "Be Sun Smart" and have fun this summer!

Kathy Brownfield, RN, BSN, M.Ed Ida Alaniz Jackson, BS
 Linda Raker Rogers, RN, MSN, FNP Lisa Faison, BS

May Call Statistics

Total number of calls591
 Number of calls from Family Child Care Providers.....150

Primary Reason for Calling	No. of Calls
TV Turnoff	59
Calendar	5
First Aid	8
Asthma	7
Dental Health	6
NC Regulations	15

The Resource Center is here to help you get information to make your child care program a healthy and safe environment. We are open 9-5, Monday through Friday, except state holidays. If you cannot call us during those hours, leave a message on our voice mail and we will return your call!

Immunization	5
Infant Care	14
Summer Safety	10
ABC Book	16
Nutrition	6
Sanitation	5
Special Needs	4

References for June Articles

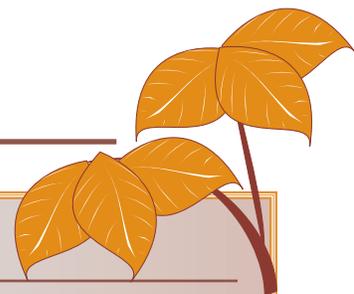
California Early Childhood Sun Protection Curriculum,
by Andrew F. Manthe, 1998.

American Cancer Society
 American Academy of Dermatology
 American Academy of Pediatrics

Training Opportunities

Save The Date:

September 11, 1999
 for the Family Child
 Care Conference



Health and Safety Alert

Poison Ivy

Contact with poison ivy is one of the most frequent causes of skin rash in children during the spring and summer seasons. Poison ivy can be found in every region of North Carolina. It appears as a weed with 3 shiny green leaves and a red stem. The plant grows in the form of a vine. The oils of this plant cause a rash in over 50% of all people who have contact with it.

A red, bumpy skin rash may appear as early as a few hours or as late as 2 weeks after exposure. The rash reaches its peak about 5 days after it begins. The blisters break open, releasing a watery liquid. Healing usually takes 1-2 weeks.

The rash is spread by the oils touching various parts of the body. It is **not** spread by the fluid of the blisters. Therefore, it is **not** contagious.

If you or a child in your care comes in contact with poison ivy:

1. Wash the exposed skin with soap and warm water as soon as possible.

(After 10 minutes, the oils have penetrated the skin and cannot be washed off.)

2. Scrub under the fingernails with a brush to prevent spreading of the oils to other parts of the body by touching or scratching.

3. Wash the clothing and shoes of the exposed person with soap and water. (Oils can linger on these surfaces for several days.)

4. Bathe animals that may have been exposed and can carry the oils on their fur.

5. Keep the child cool. (Body heat and sweating can aggravate itching.)

Call immediately for medical

assistance if the child is suffering a severe allergic reaction such as breaking out in a rash within 4 hours of exposure, swelling and/or difficulty breathing, or has had a severe reaction to a past exposure.

Most cases of poison ivy can be cared for at home and don't require a physician.

However, a physician should be notified if:

- The rash covers more than 1/4 of the body
- The itching is severe and cannot be controlled
- The rash affects the face, lips, eyes, or genitals
- The rash shows signs of infection such as pus, yellow fluid leaking from blisters, odor, or increased tenderness

Prevention

1. Learn to identify poison ivy and teach your children to identify it.
2. Remove poison ivy plants if they are growing near your home.
3. Cover skin with long sleeves, long pants, socks, and shoes when walking in the woods or areas where poison ivy may be growing.
4. Do not burn poison ivy plants. Exposure to the smoke can cause a reaction.

For further information call
 1-800-CHOOSE-1.

The ABC's of Safe and Healthy Child Care...

Shade Tent



The goals of this activity are to help children understand the need for protection from sunlight and that shade can help to keep them cool and safe.

Materials needed: A large sheet, washing line or rope, clothes pins, rocks or bricks, markers or paint.

What to do

1. Use markers to decorate the sheet with the children.
2. Find a place outdoors to put the tent to create a shady spot.
3. Help the children string the rope between two high supports. (Trees work well.) Place the rope high enough so it won't be a hazard to children or staff.
4. Drape the sheet over and weight down the corners with the rocks.
5. Secure the sheet with the clothes pins.
6. Have fun retreating from the heat, enjoying quiet activities such as reading, and playing camping games in the tent.

Things to Talk about

- How does your body feel when it gets too hot?
- What are some ways to keep cool?
- How do you find a shady spot to rest and play?

Sun Fun



The goal of this activity is to help children identify what they need to protect them while playing in the sun.

Materials needed: drawing paper, glue, crayons or markers, cut-out pictures of hats, sunglasses, long-sleeved shirts and pants, sunscreen, and a water bottle.

What to do

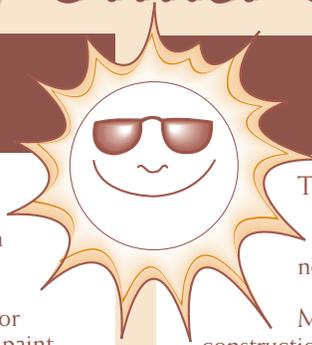
1. Give each child a sheet of drawing paper.
2. Ask them to draw a picture of themselves and a sun.
3. Help them choose pictures of what they need to play in the sun. (If a child is old enough to use scissors he could cut out pictures from magazines and catalogues.)
4. Glue the pictures on the child's drawing.

Things to Talk about

- Why do we need to be protected from the sun?
- What can we do to protect ourselves?
- What parts of the body does a hat cover? Sunglasses? Shirt? Etc.



Sun Pictures



The goals of this activity are for children to understand that too much sun will hurt your skin and that you need to protect your skin.

Materials needed: dark-colored construction paper and small objects with different shapes such as keys, small toys, or small household items (Be sure to use objects that do not get too hot to touch).

What to do

1. Early in the morning after the children arrive place individual sheets of dark-colored construction paper directly in the sun.
2. Place small objects on top of the paper.
3. Do not move the object for several hours.
4. At the end of the day, remove each object. The paper will be faded except in the areas protected by the objects.

Things to Talk about

- Why did the paper change colors?
- What happened to the paper that was covered up by the key (or other object)?
- Has anyone ever gotten a sunburn? How did you feel?
- What can you do to protect your skin?
- Look around the yard and find what the sun has done to the play equipment, house paint, etc..



Photosensitivity



Photosensitivity is an adverse reaction to sunlight characterized by rash, redness, and/or swelling. It can be a side effect of certain medications. Consult your physician or pharmacist before letting a child go out in the sun when taking medication.

Test Your Knowledge



Sandra started a sun safety program for the children in her care. The children enjoy it but she has had some difficulty with the parents' understanding of sun safety. She has heard all of the following comments from parents. Which is the only one that is correct? Call us at 1-800-CHOOSE-1 with your answer and receive a "Sun Smart" t-shirt if you are among the first 100 callers.

1. "He can stay in the sun as long as he wants today. I put sunscreen with SPF 35 on him."
2. "Since it's cloudy today, she won't need any sunscreen."
3. "Just let him take his shirt off outside today. It's so hot he'll burn up if he wears it."
4. "She's 7 months old now. Here is some sunscreen for her if you go outside."
5. "She doesn't like wearing hats. Besides, I think a little tan on her face is healthy."

Medication Policy For Sunscreen

Sunscreen is an over-the-counter medication, available without prescription. Ideally, sunscreen should be applied every morning by the parents before they bring the child to you. However, you will need written permission to reapply sunscreen during the day.

According to the North Carolina Administrative Code Section .0803:

"A written statement from a parent may give blanket permission for up to one year to authorize administration of sunscreen..."

A sample form for administering sunscreen is below:

I _____, give my permission to _____
 to apply the following sunscreen _____ to my child
 _____ as described: _____

 Parent signature _____ Date _____

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This publication is produced monthly by the N.C. Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center and distributed to family child care providers by the Healthy Child Care North Carolina Campaign.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

or if you would like to send suggestions or comments

WRITE:

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OR CALL:

1-800-246-6731

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