Introduction

Bega Valley Shire Council Children’s education and care services are committed to encouraging all children and staff to exercise personal responsibility for protecting their skin from damage caused by harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun throughout the year.

The Cancer Council recommends the use of sunscreen to complement other methods of sun protection. The Centre for Community and Child Health (RCH, Melbourne) outlines four principles of sun protection. These are:

- Clothing – the first line of defence. Longer style sleeves, skirts, pants are recommended. Hats should be broad brimmed or legionnaires style to provide protection for face, neck and ears.
- Shade – play places that are shaded to reduce exposure to sun. Trees, sun sails, verandas all offer sun protection.
- Sunscreen – Broad spectrum SPF 30+ applied 20 minutes before exposure to the sun.
- Timing of outdoor play – the most dangerous UV exposure in outdoor play occurs in the middle of the day. Reducing how unshaded outdoor areas are used will reduce exposure to dangerous levels of UV light.

In NSW the UVR levels are highest from September through to the end of April. New information from the Cancer Council (July, 2007) advises that between April and September outdoor activity can take place at any time during the day, and that sun protection should continue between 10 – 2 with the exception of June and July where the UV index is mostly below 3.

These procedures are to be read in conjunction with Bega Valley Shire Council sun safe policies and procedures for employees.

Strategies

Education

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor will encourage educators and staff to:

- Follow BVSC workplace health and safety guidelines for sun-safe practices. Sanctions may apply to staff who breach their conditions of employment by non-compliance.
- access regular skin checks offered through Bega Valley Shire Council employee programs.

Educational Leaders and Educators will:

- include sun and skin protection awareness activities into programs and provide information to families about sun-safe practices.
Shade

All Staff and Educators will encourage families, children and others to:

- ensure that babies under 12 months are not be exposed to direct sunlight.
- reduce outdoor play in unshaded areas during UV danger times ie 10 am - 2 pm (11 - 3 daylight savings time). The outdoor environment will provide shade that allows children’s activities to be set up in sun protected areas whenever possible
- the centre will continue to improve provision of shelter and shade trees using regular environment review and planning processes

Sunscreen

All Staff and Educators will encourage families, children and others to:

- apply SPF 30+ sunscreen on the areas of skin that cannot be protected by clothing. We will ask families to apply this to their child’s skin prior to arriving and educators will reapply this to children regularly throughout the day. Older children will be encouraged to manage their own application of sunscreen.

Protective Clothing

All Staff and Educators will encourage families, children and others to:

- wear clothing that provides as much protection as practicable to the skin when outdoors. This includes long sleeves and longer style shorts and skirts.
- wear hats with a broad brim that protect the face, neck and ears. All hats should be checked for choking risks, and be fitted to support a child’s developing peripheral vision (Kidsafe, 2007). Children without sunsafe hats will be asked to play indoors or provided with a spare hat.

Evaluation

- Children, families and others are aware of sun-safety and encouraged to use sun-safe practices.

Statutory legislation and considerations

- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2011

References

- Bega Valley Shire Council, Work Health and Safety Policy (5.05), and procedure 5.05.1 Work Health and Safety Management System Framework
- Bega Valley Shire Council Children’s Services, Clothing procedure, Operational draft, June 2012
- Community Child Care Co-operative Sample Policy: Sun Protection


- New South Wales Cancer Council (1999) Shade for Child Care Centres, NSW Cancer Council, NSW Health Department.