Rationale

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world. There are three factors, often occurring simultaneously, which contribute to this fact.

- Ultraviolet light from the sun is of sufficient intensity to induce skin cancer in the population.
- For most of this century social values have supported the belief that a suntan is healthy and attractive.
- Lifestyle, work, school and recreational habits expose people to the sun for long periods.

Early childhood services are ideally placed to help reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths by encouraging all members of the service’s community to use effective skin protection.

Skin damage, including skin cancer, is the result of cumulative exposure to the sun. Much of the damage occurs during childhood and adolescence. Research suggests that severe sunburn is a contributor to skin cancer and other forms of skin damage such as wrinkles, sunspots, blemishes and premature aging. Most skin damage and skin cancer is, therefore, preventable. The cumulative danger of ultraviolet radiation is increasing due to the ozone layer depletion.

We need to balance the risk of skin cancer from too much sun exposure with maintaining vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is necessary to maintain good health, in particular to keep bones and muscles strong and healthy.

To provide adequate Ultra Violet (UV) protection for children and staff, this policy will be observed during terms 1, 3 & 4 or whenever the UV level is 3 and above at other times. During term 2, when the UV is normally 2 and below, this policy will be relaxed for vitamin D exposure but in the event of UV being 3 and above at this time, sun protection will be implemented.

Aims

The aims of the SunSmart Policy are to promote among students, children and families at Morgan Preschool:

- Positive attitudes towards skin protection.
- Lifestyle practices, which can help, reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths.
- Personal responsibility for and decision-making about skin protection.
- Awareness of the need for environmental changes in our centre to reduce the level of exposure to the sun.

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all children attending preschool are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun.
Strategies

All members of the Morgan Preschool community will be strongly encouraged to use the following skin protection strategies when the UV level is 3 and above:

♦ Children, staff, families and visitors will be expected to wear a broad-brimmed style or bucket style hat when they are involved in outside activities.
♦ Children and staff will wear shirts with collars and sleeve length midway between elbow and shoulder and longer style shorts, skirts and dresses.
♦ Children without adequate sun protection will be limited to inside activities or shaded areas, or be provided with a spare t-shirt and/or hat from the centre supply, if available.
♦ Shaded areas will be used for active play activities and children will be encouraged to move between them.
♦ Extra care will be taken during the peak UV radiation times and outdoor activities will be scheduled outside these times where possible.
♦ Parents will be encouraged to apply sunscreen with a SPF30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen to their children before preschool however the centre will provide sunscreen for application in the morning for use by parents.
♦ Sunscreen will be applied 20 minutes before any outdoor activities if not already done so and again before they go outside in the afternoon. If outside for extended periods or during water activities, sunscreen will be reapplied every 2 hours.
♦ The centre will provide sufficient shade. The centre has numerous trees and shade structures to provide adequate sun protection areas.

Reinforcing the SunSmart message

♦ Staff, parents and visitors at the centre will be encouraged to role model appropriate sun strategies in all service activities including wearing appropriate hats and clothing when outdoors.

♦ Staff will be encouraged to keep up to date with new information and resources through contact with the Cancer Council of South Australia.

♦ Appropriate skin cancer prevention, sun protection and vitamin D information will be included in teaching activities.

♦ The SunSmart Policy and the importance of skin cancer prevention, sun protection and vitamin D will be enforced and promoted to whole centre community in the centre’s newsletter.

The Morgan Preschool Skin Protection Policy will be evaluated every two years to ensure the policy remains current and relevant.

Director: Trish Zerner
Policy Updated: March 2016
Review 2019

National Quality Standard 2.3

Regulation 168 (2) (a) (ii)

Related Key Regulations: 114